



Top 10 Museums and galleries

1 MACBA, Barcelona

This art space spotlights oft-overlooked artists. The History of Hallucination, an exhibition taking in abstract painting, psychedelia and neurological research, is in the pipeline for 2013.

2 La Conservera, Murcia

Less than a year old, this contemporary art centre, located in a former canning factory, finances the production of new sculptures, installations, paintings and videos it exhibits.

3 LABoral, Gijón

Launched in 2007, this foundation-run art centre is the only one in Spain devoted entirely to creative industries such as architecture, design, fashion and video games.

4 Raña Lupa, Barcelona

Limited-edition art books are sold in Rocio Santa Cruz's gallery, which specialises in photography, drawing and painting. The space is situated in a 1900s flat.

5 La Virreina, Barcelona

It is not art for art's sake, says new director Carles Guerra, at this public-run art centre housed in an 18th-century palace. Photography, film and video push debate on urban issues affecting the city such as tourism and immigration.

6 MUSAC, León

This government-run experimental art museum is celebrating its fifth birthday

by quarantining artists Sergio Prego, Txomin Badiola and Jon Mikel Euba inside their own exhibitions for 40 days. The idea? To transform the artists, the 15 volunteers accompanying them, and the exhibits.

7 MEIAC, Badajoz

Situated in a former prison in Extremadura, this contemporary art museum offers an eclectic programme ranging from digital technology to the influence of 1929 Surrealist film masterpiece *An Andalusian Dog*, by Spanish-turned-Mexican citizen director Luis Buñuel.

8 ARTIUM, Vitoria-Gasteiz

Theatre, dance and concerts complement the contemporary art programme at this museum, which opened in 2002. Part of the permanent collection recently inspired a bespoke composition performed by 50 young saxophonists.

9 La Fresh Gallery, Madrid

Work by young, home-grown and international talent can be paid for in instalments at this buzzy, accessibly priced private gallery that launched two years ago.

10 Luis Adalantado Gallery, Valencia

Cutting-edge contemporary art is the order of the day at this five-storey gallery, which opened in 1985. An annual competition designed to identify the brightest international young talent keeps it ahead of the game. — SL

Art market

Contemporary art was a sexy issue among Spanish politicians through the late 1980s and 1990s, says director of Barcelona art institution *MACBA*, Bartomeu Mari. Museums sprang up across the peninsula. The public got its first contemporary-art fix. International collectors, whose work was showcased, became "superstars", and Spanish collectors took note.

Emergent now, Mari says, is a new generation of collectors who realise that "passion, daring and being well informed" is more important than money. He thinks that in 20 years Spain may have private contemporary art collections to rival the world's best. This spring's *ARCO* art fair in Madrid will be the acid test, says Maria de Corral, co-curator of the 2005 Venice Biennale and ex-director of the art museum Reina Sofia in Madrid. "ARCO will show how strong and consolidated the art market is. We have really strong collectors here, people who don't collect just to be fashionable."

The buoyancy of the art scene is key. Performance artists and sculptors *AGGTELEK* from Barcelona are one hot tip. And the art space *Matadero* has drawn up a list of 100 Madrid-based artists, of which 20 per cent are non-Spanish. Matadero director Pablo Berástegui says: "Artists are settling here for the sake of it. The need to live in Paris, London or New York has passed." — SL

● ● **Art space:** Spain has close to 500 museums, 82 of which are for contemporary art. Twelve of its 830 private galleries specialise in urban art such as graffiti.