

FRANKFURTER  
KUNSTVEREIN

Zwölf Erzählungen aktueller Kunst aus Spanien  
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WIE GEHT  
ES JETZT  
WEITER?

PRESS RELEASE

## Where will we go from here? Twelve art stories from Spain

14 October 2022 — 29 January 2023

Press preview: Thursday, 13 October 2022, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, 13 October 2022, 7 pm

Participating artists: María Alcaide, Noa and Lara Castro, Fito Conesa, Regina de Miguel, El Palomar, Antoni Hervàs, Momu & No Es, Andrea Muniáin, Paloma Polo, Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa, Putochinomarcicón, Petrit Halilaj and Álvaro Urbano

Curated by Rosa Ferré and Ana Ara

The Frankfurter Kunstverein will open its doors to the Guest of Honour Spain from 14 October 2022 to 29 January 2023 as part of the cultural programme for the Frankfurt Book Fair 2022.

Curated by Rosa Ferré and Ana Ara, the exhibition *Where will we go from here?* encompasses twelve works, twelve visual stories coming from Spain in an exhibition conceived around a question that arises from a globalized context of shared uncertainty, and that rehearses a multiple answer from a specific geopolitical and cultural framework.

In this third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, fundamental changes are taking place, and at such a pace, that we can barely process them. We realise that to chart the present day means we are compelled to engage with the environmental and resource-related crisis, which plays a key role, set against the backdrop of all the other crises, including the war, and which crucially shapes the actions of the world's societies. Politics is proving incapable of dealing with a reality that is too complex and interconnected, which is dominated by automated financial mechanisms. After a global pandemic, in the midst of a Europe of dwindling significance, we are at that moment of assimilating that the world in which we lived no longer exists. Whatever happened to the technological utopia and potential for emancipation of the Internet? We are still far from imagining the future, trying to find tools that anchor us in a new epistemology that we will have to inhabit. For the present crisis is not just one of the environment, it is also one of world views, of relationships, a crisis of language, of awareness, a crisis of narrative. This exhibition aims to explore the role played by "fiction" in the artistic practice of the recent Spanish context for the construction of imaginaries that help us to recover our present. It aims to offer a journey through the work of certain artists in which the fable, the narrative structures inherited from stories and

myths, have a deep imprint in their procedures and in their visual language, proposing stories that question the cultural and social constructions with which we operate, that is to say, our ideology.

*Where will we go from here?* is a collection of stories that address the tales that we have been told and that have led us to this uncertain present, that propose alternative narratives on the concept of identity —of our own, of the collective—, twisting the inherited ideas of progress, recovering pre-modern fables, investigating in procedures of the absurd and humor, from autofiction or taking possession of the estrangement of science fiction. Gender identity as fiction? History as fiction? Human identity itself as fiction?

Several stories are told through the moving image, while others are installations or architecture, which work with the space themselves as a form of speculation on other worlds. Installations that see the room and those in it as potential protagonists in a story.

*Where will we go from here?* is supported by Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) as part of Spain's Guest of Honour appearance at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2022.

## EXHIBITION PARCOURS

The stories are read in the room like an anthology of tales, in twelve chapters, from one to twelve. Each story is an independent unit, each opening and closing, but in the successive reading in the room, the stories dialogue with each other and form a single book.

### 1. A moral tale

The architectural intervention *Calvary Chapel* by the artist duo **Momu & No Es** (Lucía Moreno, \*1982, Basel, CH & Eva Noguera, \*1979, Barcelona, ES) extends across the vertical window in the stairwell of the Frankfurter Kunstverein and accompanies the ascent and descent of the visitors inside in their procession through the exhibition. A stained-glass window depicting the sins of our time, breathing life into new idols, with images of desire based on promises of success and hedonism, generating frustration and depression. The bizarre, the extraordinary, the images of the hyper-concrete, the virtual, the mythical, the cosmic - everything is reality and takes on significance in this absurd and loud remix that reflects our globalised, hyper-excited and voracious consumerist present.

### 2. An invocation of the apocalypse

The film *Helicon* by **Fito Conesa** (\*1980, Cartagena, ES) sketches an apocalyptic scenario of our present. A brass band plays a melody in front of an artificial polluted lake and tries, in a futile gesture, to draw a response from the earth and thus instigate the end of the world. The melody is played repeatedly, like an unanswered prayer. Tension lies in the expectation of disaster. The instruments invoke an

apocalypse, a word meaning unveiling or revelation in the original Greek. The musicians aim at nature, challenging it in a desperate gesture to struggle against an invisible opponent.

### 3. A tale rescued from the ashes

What are the stories that make up the culture of a city, who tells them, who are the protagonists? In *Under the firelight, the ash shines like glitter* (2022) **Antoni Hervàs** (\*1981, Barcelona, ES) defends and celebrates the history of Varieté in the theatres and popular stages of the free-spirited and libertine Barcelona of the Avenida de el Paralelo by using papier-mâché scenographies and cardboard transformations. He chooses the iconographic fan-shaped gable of the legendary theatre, El Arnau, as a starting point to honour the stories, the voices, and the dramatic intensity of the actors' lives: 'The creation of a mutant sculpture made of materials that reject nobility and celebrate recognisable scars and contrasts. The forms of the fan, star, skirt, leg merge. The installation determines the room with the loud arrival and bearing of a star. Come and see, we don't know what might happen, it's cabaret.' Cabaret, the shameless party as a space of freedom.

### 4. Autofiction: a musical tale for a bazaar in the year 3000.

The audiovisual piece *áfóñg* explores the issues of representation and visibility experienced by the artist Chenta Tsai aka **Putochinomarción** (\*1990, Taipei, TW) as a dissident, as a person of color from the Taiwanese diaspora who has grown up in Spain. *áfóñg* questions the possibility of building platforms for East and Southeast Asian gender and sexual dissidents, spaces that fully embrace us without having to fragment, simplify or hide parts of our identities to fit into hegemonic spaces. Utopian futures where our bodies are far from tokenisation, instrumentalisation and fetishisation, building speculative spaces of communal healing through pop as a tool of resistance and political critique.

### 5. Chronicles of the self. A family tale (in a double sense)

*Carne de mi carne* (Meat of My Meat) is a first-person narration of **María Alcaide** (\*1992, Aracena, ES) as a female and feminist body in her family and cultural environment: her parents are butchers in a small village a few kilometres from Jabugo (Huelva), known as the home of the Iberian pig and the best ham in Spain.

In the video installation *Piel* (Skin) the artist reflects on identity and identities, to question roles and stances regarding gender inequalities and the determinism of genetics and origin. She examines the spaces in which women are represented and what it means to carry out manual work today, attempting to dispel some myths about rural communities based on knowledge she has acquired in person.

The skin as a repository of genetics, experiences, desires, and as a surface of resistance to the aggression of a hetero-patriarchal society.

## 6. A hyper-realistic tale

The artist, architect, and researcher **Andrea Muniáin** (\*1994, Tudela, ES) focuses in her recent work on the development of prototypes, which she calls 'bodyscapes'. By means of walk-in sceneries that allow viewers to become part of the installation, she creates scenic narratives that intertwine physical and virtual space. Her installations reveal the repercussions of new digital technologies on subjectivities, bodies, spaces, and identities, in the continuous and mutual relationship between the reality of the screens and that of the world.

*DILSS. Digital Intercontinental Large Supermarkets* is a prototype of a generic supermarket where images of real people are for sale: faces, bodies, fragments of bodies. There are goods on offer, a selection of best-selling bodies, employees of the month, as in any such market. What might seem like a scene from a dystopian novel or a science fiction film - a body store - is nothing more than the physical realisation of online reality: a digital shop, 3dScanStore, where you can buy 3D scanned body models, i.e. photogrammetric bodies of real people who have decided to sell their digital body. Bodies that, by becoming downloadable models, transfer their specific way of moving as well as their digital agency.

## 7. Rewritten memories of a sick society

The video installation *Schreber is a Woman* by the artist duo **El Palomar** (Mariokissime, Mario Páez, \*1980, Campillos, Málaga, ES & R. Marcos Mota, Rafa Marcos, \*1988, Tarragona, ES) is constructed on the basis of the clinical case study and *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* (1903) of Daniel Paul Schreber, a German judge who was committed to a mental asylum in Sonnenstein, Saxony, in 1894, shortly after being appointed president of the Supreme Court. She herself recounts that she felt like a woman, among other experiences understood by the medical authorities as delusions. The video installation is, both narratively and musically, a kind of 'techno operetta' in which the artists reinterpret the visions and voices described by Schreber in her memoirs from transfeminist and queer perspectives. In the play, Schreber is played by a non-binary person, and the goddesses she refers to in her writings by two trans women.

In the film the artists wanted to remove 'the feelings of guilt and moral judgement that Schreber herself transferred to her memoirs in her day, liberating the character sexually from the prevailing queer claims, opening up a space of joy for her - at least - in fiction.'

The piece is an invitation symbolically to kill the figure of the father as a representation of a patriarchal form of morality and capitalism. The artists also want to deny the discourse of psychoanalysis that identifies homosexuality and transsexuality as a problem derived from trauma.

## 8. A tale for the revolution

**Paloma Polo** (\*1983, Madrid, ES) ist eine profunde Kennerin der Philippinen, einer ehemaligen spanischen Kolonie. She reflects on the problematic interrelations that arise when art is placed at the service of politics in the context of revolution. She became personally involved with the reality of a country marked by the confrontation between the government and the New People's Army (NPA), who

has been fighting for emancipation, social justice, the implementation of new socio-political, cultural and land protection models. Out of this concern comes the film *What is Thought in the Thought of People*, a hybrid narrative of fiction and documentary about the history of the country's indigenous communities. The film picks up two strands that interweave with unexpected fluidity and naturalness, given the difference in languages: on the one hand, there are the landscapes filmed with cool distance by Polo; and on the other, the iconic animated illustrations by Leonilo Doloricon (Surigao del Sur, Philippines 1957). The work has arisen as a collaboration between two artists who wish to create a story of resistance and respect, and hence a complex revolutionary story.

### 9. Tales without moral

The title of this series of drawings deliberately quotes the artist Carl Andre: 'Art is what we do. Culture is what is done to us.' For **Juan Pérez Agirregoikoa** (\*1963, Donostia-San Sebastián, ES), culture is what is inflicted on us as a punishment, a system of values that shapes our way of seeing the world and traps us by conveying meaning, to condition us into submission. In the works presented at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, the artist questions a tradition that is both specific and shared, the culture on which Western societies are founded: values, ideas, customs, institutions, ideological superstructures such as one's homeland and patriarchy, voracious capitalism, the family, romantic idealism, the Catholic religion.

A genealogical tree of eyes that observe one other, suspicious, wary. The rats of capitalism gather in an endless dance, their tails forming dollar signs. Another rat sings, his right fist raised, the *Cara al sol* (Facing the sun), the hymn of the fascist movement Falange Española de las JONS. These and many more works from this series form images of the ironic, the grotesque, the threatening, the shameful, the disillusioned. These visual aphorisms each contain a title and a text that work as a counterpoint, resembling a fairy tale illustration, a fable.

### 10. Dreamed memories

**Noa and Lara Castro** (\*1998, Ferrol, ES) work as an artistic duo, creating films that tell stories containing elements of fable, memories, landscapes, and dreams. They immerse themselves in the unconscious and memory of their homeland, their goal to protect everything there that is threatened by extinction, and to cast a critical light on questionable developments.

Their works are always located in Galicia, and in particular on the rugged Costa da Morte (Death Coast) in the region's northwest; their protagonists are those close to the artists, their relatives, friends and other people they know. Their working method is marked by a personal love for the subject and by careful execution. They build connections between viewers and the surroundings they grew up in, surrounded by a dangerous sea, which is sometimes idealised, a region in which fishing has long been engaged in and which was marked by poor conditions that have increasingly been forgotten.

They are interested in the fragmented and unpredictable narrative structure of dreams. Their stories are characterised by phenomena, upheavals, and transitions, permeated by unusual, illogical associations. Their most recent work *Sempre se encontra consolo* (There is always comfort to be found), 2022, explores the relationship between work and play, examining assigned gender roles that define human and non-human relations. They ask why the lives of non-human beings are despised,

instrumentalised or ignored, even though these beings can offer real consolation by their sheer existence.

### 11. A love story in letters

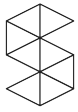
**Petrit Halilaj's and Álvaro Urbano's** (\*1986, Kostërrc, XK; \*1983, Madrid, ES) contribution to this exhibition at the Frankfurter Kunstverein consists of a space that is dominated by two huge flowers, which, in their over-sized dimensions, transform the physical space into a dream-like scenario, confronting people with new power relations. The two sculptures *10<sup>th</sup> of May 2016 (Cherry)*, from 2020, are part of a series forming an enormous 'bouquet' of experiences. These artworks, consisting of a lightweight, steel structure and painted canvas, were created for the Palacio de Cristal, in Madrid, where the artists planned to marry in spring 2020. Each of these flowers represents a significant date, while the choice of each species, or flower variety, is related to the artists' personal story that unites them; it also, by making them public, aims to transcend the artwork's social context and political dimension. The installation is also inhabited by two raccoon costumes, *Wilshire & Cochran*, tailored for Halilaj's and Urbano's body respectively. The artists became interested in these animals, which are regularly seen to roam and inhabit the city of Los Angeles, when Halilaj and Urbano walked the gardens, alleyways and green urban areas where nature and humans encounter each other. There, the raccoon is neither fully wild nor domestic, but rather a hybrid-like neighbour in the city. Under cover of night, it tends to move quickly through the urban space, searching for food in bins. Having observed the raccoon's subtle way of stalking, the artists developed a performance imitating this behavioural habit. In this way, the raccoon is turned into a performance as an alter ego.

### 12. Chronicles of a medium

In the film *Intoxicated waters, never-seen-before comets and a meeting of suicides* science fiction narration underpins the powerful imaginary of **Regina de Miguel's** (\*1977, Málaga, ES) desolate, strange landscapes, but hers is not a dystopian, nihilistic or reactionary fiction. Faced with 'a world that leaves a suicide note', the protagonist receives messages from parallel universes, from other times and places: 'The more remote, the more urgent the question'.

In De Miguel's story, the assumption of uncertainty, vulnerability, fragility, of listening, and empathy operate as a form of resistance and art is the medium for this. Perhaps the most disturbing thing about this chronicle, this detailed report, is that it has no specific addressee, but concerns us all. The end remains open.

Where will we go from here? is supported by Acción Cultural Española (AC/E) as part of Spain's Guest of Honour appearance at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2022:



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