

***I will fear no evil*, exhibition by José Antonio Hernández-Díez at MACBA**

- ▶ The museum hosts the first solo exhibition in an institution in our city of the Venezuelan artist residing in Barcelona, José Antonio Hernández-Díez.
- ▶ *I will fear no evil* features his first experimental videos and other early works of the late eighties and early nineties, and presents them in dialogue with a new project created for the occasion.
- ▶ A 'new Christian iconography' in a series of works articulated around death, consciousness and resurrection.

Title: *No tinc por de cap mal* (I will fear no evil). **Opening:** Thursday 17 March 2016, at 7.30 pm **Dates:** 18 March to 26 June 2016 **Organisation and production:** Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) **Curators:** Latitudes (Max Andrews & Mariana Cánepa Luna)

MACBA presents *I will fear no evil*, an exhibition by the artist José Antonio Hernández-Díez (Caracas, 1964) curated by Latitudes (Max Andrews & Mariana Cánepa Luna). The early experimental video works of Hernández-Díez, together with other early works of the late eighties and early nineties, have been reconstructed and placed in dialogue with a new project created for the occasion. The exhibition focuses on what the artist termed a 'new Christian iconography' in his first solo exhibition held at the Sala RG in Caracas in 1991, through a series of works articulated around death, consciousness and resurrection. A disquieting series of installations that deal with the application of medical and communication technologies and their interlacing with systems of paranormal belief.

Hernández-Díez emerged in the international arena at a time when the idea of contemporary art as a global language was being proposed, and the dominance of artists from Europe and the United States was being questioned. He has participated in a number of important exhibitions including *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* at the 45th Venice Biennale (1993), *Beyond Borders*, the 1st Gwangju Biennale (1995) and *Cocido y crudo* (The Cooked and the Raw) at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1994). His exhibitions have spanned photography, sculpture, video and drawing; metaphysics besides adolescent humour; high-end production as well as 'poor' and unconventional materials.

I will fear no evil

I will fear no evil recreates the first experimental video works of José Antonio Hernández-Díez, together with other iconic early works, and displays them in dialogue with a new project created specifically for this occasion.

Inspired by literary horror and Romanticism, illusionism and special effects, works like ***Annabel Lee*** (1988) – a diorama representing a cross-section of a tomb and showing a video of a girl underground in a convulsive trance – and ***Houdini*** (1989), announced many of the themes that the artist developed in the nineties: the relationship between orthodoxy and superstition, anatomy and technology, sacred symbolism and the transgressive place occupied by children and animals in devotional consciousness.

The presentation includes some works that have not been seen since his first landmark exhibition *San Guinefort y otras devociones* (Saint Guinefort and other devotions), held in 1991 at Sala RG in Caracas. These include the work in the MACBA Collection, ***San Guinefort*** (1991), as well as ***El resplandor de la Santa Conjunción aleja a los demonios*** (The shining of the Holy union wards off demons), 1991, and ***Sagrado corazón activo*** (Active Sacred Heart), 1991. These heralded what the artist called a 'new Christian iconography', offering – as artist-colleague Meyer Vaisman described – 'a techno-pop view of Catholicism's most beloved symbols'. A disquieting series of works that deal with the application of medical and communication technologies and their interlacing with systems of paranormal belief, most prominently Christian theology.

In other works like ***La caja*** (The Box), 1991, he addresses social injustice by referring to the *gamins*, children living rough in the streets of Caracas and Bogotá who are deprived of the most fundamental rights. ***Vas pa'l cielo y vas llorando*** (You're going to heaven and you're crying), 1992, refers to the *velorio del angelito*, a ritual for dead children performed in some rural cultures in Central and South America in which the deceased child becomes an object of adoration. ***La hermandad*** (The Brotherhood), 1994, marks a turning point by setting aside earlier themes of an explicit gothic and religious nature. Still present, however, are some of the earlier conceptual concerns, such as an obsession with the thin and often violent line separating life from death. The violence of birth, life and death occurs at the same time, and is shown through a simultaneous installation of three videos linking food to the disintegration of the flesh. This piece reflects an archaic form of a key critical trope that gained traction in the nineties: the abject.

In addition to the challenge of bringing these historical works back to life, the exhibition presents *Filamentos* (Filaments), 2016, a new project that could be seen as a conceptual echo. This new series includes an iconographic study of light bulb filaments, not only as an addendum to Hernández-Díez's earlier works' consideration

of electrical revelation and visibility, but as a provocation to consider what lies behind the great metaphors of light itself.

The Convent dels Àngels, a popular legend

In times past, in the church of the Convent del Àngels there was an image of Saint Roch, the patron saint of dogs, accompanied by a greyhound. Legend has it that thieves fled when the statue miraculously began to bark. This dog is none other than the future Saint Guinefort, revered in the French region of Dombes, according to the chronicles of the Dominican inquisitor Brother Étienne de Bourbon, who by 1260 had concluded that this saint was actually a dog.

PHOTOS here <http://www.macba.cat/press/JAHD5684>

RELATED ACTIVITIES

MACBA Amics

Visit with the artist and Latitudes

Thursday, 31 March, 7 pm. Exclusive to the Amic card. Limited places.

Prior booking at www.macba.cat

#MACBAAmic

Experience MACBA

The secrets of conservation in *I will fear no evil*, by José Antonio Hernández-Díez

Visit with the artist, Latitudes and Lluís Roqué

Saturday 2 April, 7 pm. Museum galleries. 5 €. Free with museum ticket and with MACBA Amics cards. Limited places. Ticket includes free admission to current exhibitions until 9 pm.

#MACBAesviu

Film Programme

Shadows and silences or the ghosts that return as if for the first time

Curated by Andrés Duque

4 and 18 May; 8 and 22 June, 7 pm. Meier Auditorium. 5 €/session. Free with Amic card. No prior booking. Limited places

Kurutta Ippéji, Teinosuke Kinugasa, 1926, Japan, 70 min.

Finis Terrae, Jean Epstein, 1929, France, 80 min

He Who Gets Slapped, Victor Sjöström, 1924, France, 89 min

Schastye, Aleksandr Medvedkin, 1935, France, 95 min

Experience MACBA

Nieve Fuga: music around *I will fear no evil*

Saturday 25 June, 7 pm. Museum galleries. 5 €. Free with museum ticket and with MACBA Amics cards. Limited places. Ticket includes free admission to current exhibitions until 9 pm.

#MACBAesviu

Publication

Quaderns portàtils, 32:

José Antonio Hernández-Díez. I will fear no evil

English version in PDF available at www.macba.cat/en/quadern-portatil-latitudes

- ADMISSION VALID FOR ONE MONTH
- DAILY GUIDED TOURS (included in museum ticket)
Check times and languages at www.macba.cat
- MORE INFORMATION www.macba.cat and @MACBA_Barcelona
Follow us at: #HernandezDiez
- MACBA Plaça dels Angels, 1, 08001 Barcelona, www.macba.cat
- Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 am to 7.30 pm; Saturdays, 10 am to 9 pm; Sundays and holidays, 10 am to 3 pm; Tuesdays except holidays, closed.

Press MACBA 934 813 356/934 813 354 press@macba.cat