

# FERNANDO SÁNCHEZ CASTILLO. BEYOND

## 23 OCT 15 — 28 FEB 16



Stone Soul Army, 2013. Video

## CA2M

Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo

[www.ca2m.org](http://www.ca2m.org)

Visitors to CA2M are met in the lobby by the figures of four heads of state, four dictators that spit at each other, mimicking their grotesque desire for confrontation. Throughout the last century, this arrogant attitude led to the death of millions of Europeans in probably the worst episode in the continent's history. A counterpoint to this reflection on the monument is the anonymous hero who held up the column of tanks which was going to massacre protestors in Tiananmen Square in 1989, armed with just two shopping bags. Here, he is depicted in a huge sculpture as well as an industrial product, a toy doll, which associates the arrival of freedom with the advent of mass consumer capitalism, as well as the use of certain images that we assimilate and incorporate into our shared heritage.

The very notion of the monument calls into question the way in which history has always been written by the winners and how it has made use of art to transmit it in time and towards the future. When rereading conventional statuary, Fernando Sánchez Castillo subverts power relationships and reclaims art's faculty to question them. Take *Narón* for instance: this work captures the moment in which a sculpture is destroyed, otherwise a recurrent iconoclastic act throughout the whole of history, though here it is ironically transformed into an act of creation. In the same room, a series of pieces reflect on monuments and bronze's potential for transmutation. A similar idea of destruction and creation is addressed again in another series of pieces in the exhibition engaging with the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco in 1973 which also took the lives of his chauffeur and a police inspector. And while nine years ago he reproduced the state of the car, converting it into a shiny silvery piece, now he has fixed his sights on two persistent elements that underscore the stubbornness of historical events. In front of number 104 in calle Claudio Coello in Madrid, one can still perceive the outline of the hole left by the explosion in the form of cracks in the road surface. The street has probably been resurfaced several times over the intervening forty years, yet the hurried repair job done at the time, without proper compaction, seems to be the reason why, over and over again, this wound reappears in the tarmac. Fernando Sánchez Castillo turns it into a *frottage* that condenses, in the style of abstract

Fernando Sánchez Castillo's work casts a critical gaze over history, both ancient and recent, while at once examining art's role in depicting and shaping our view of it. The exhibition title, *Más allá* or *Beyond* in English, suggests manifold readings. First of all, it plays with the sobriquet given to Móstoles years ago because of its distance from the centre of Madrid. Móstoles is where Fernando Sánchez Castillo grew up and his emotional attachment to it remains intact. For a long time, from a practical and also symbolic point of view, living in this town which is home to CA2M was to live beyond: the celebrated wit of Madrid did the rest and converted Móstoles's beyondness into the stuff of urban legend. Secondly, it explores the apparent attraction towards occultism and all things esoteric of many leaders, especially in the twentieth century, closely tied to their longing to procure divine legitimacy for their charisma and power. Finally, the title of the exhibition is, above all else, a declaration of intent on behalf of the artist: to always take his work one step further, to go beyond. The exhibition is conceived around already existing works that have engendered other newer pieces, with a determination to accentuate positions, increase the intensity, take on greater risks and cross boundaries. The changes are not always in themselves radical, but rather seek to expand and deepen readings one could intuit in earlier works. Other times, it is a question of taking giant leaps forward in an artist's practice.

As part of this quest, the exhibition recreates the living room in the artist's home: a place dotted with dozens of preliminary forms for sculptures, impromptu or meditated reflections, that have been with him throughout his life and which could direct our gaze towards some of his future projects. The same room also includes some new output. The machine that produces an updated version of war games is a rethinking of the value of images and the banalisation of violence. One can also see a carefully folded white flag conceived to be flown on the flagpole in Plaza de Colón, replacing the gigantic Spanish flag that flies there and outsizeing it by 20 centimetres.

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art, a crucial episode in the history of Spain. He also includes another unexpected discovery: a reproduction in Calatorao marble of the tunnel opening used by the terrorists to place the bomb.



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Tank Man, 2013. Polyurethane and resin

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The wounds of history are equally visible in *Dos de mayo 2008*, a piece made using x-rays taken at the Prado Museum of Goya's *El dos de mayo de 1808 en Madrid* or *La carga con los Mamelucos*, in which the painter reproduces the events that would lend their name, two centuries later, to CA2M (Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo). The painting in question was damaged when, given the imminent danger from the bombardments over Madrid during the Civil War, it was moved to Geneva for its own safety, along with other works of art, by the Government of the Republic. The transportation was underwritten by directors of European museums at the time as a sign of support for the Spanish people. After recovering the painting, Franco's regime chose not to repair the damage, leaving it as a sign of the alleged barbarism of the Reds. Another piece in the exhibition recalls the same episode, showing a digital animation and the original plans by José Lino Vaamonde, the architect responsible for the Prado during the war, for the construction of a bunker that would ensure the survival of its masterpieces. The need to protect Spanish heritage from the aggression of Spaniards themselves is also addressed in *Urna*, a life-size reproduction of the structure designed by the architect José María de Paredes to safeguard Guernica at Casón del Buen Retiro after its return to Spain.

The artist has engaged with the figure of Francisco Franco on numerous occasions. In this exhibition, the presence of the dictator is concentrated in one single room in three pieces that are, in turn, based on disparate takes on the notion of reliquary. One of them is a fragment of *Azor*, the yacht Franco used for recreational purposes which featured prominently in the recent political history of Spain. A few years ago, Fernando Sánchez Castillo bought the yacht as scrap after it had been aground, surprisingly enough, in the middle of the fields of Castile, in an unsuccessful attempt to convert it into a tourist attraction. After fragmenting and compressing it, he turned it into a commanding minimalist piece. On show here is one of those blocks, surrounded by other elements salvaged from the process. Another of the pieces shows two supposed eyelashes of the dictator together with a video *Baraka* that tells the story of how they were found and the later interpretation given to them and other traces of the body. True

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A plethora of recurrent elements cuts through Fernando Sánchez Castillo's overall body of work: humour, which gives rise to absurd situations and whose sincerity unsettles institutions and people alike; dance, equally capable of generating a certain state of suspension with respect to the relationship with our bodies; the formal weight of his work, with its meticulous control of scale, materials and processes; the constant relationship with the history of art, visible not only in the references to the Baroque and Romanticism, but also to Cubism and Minimalism as movements charged with intense political content; and, in short, the desire to evoke and activate the imagination to understand the nature of power, rather than to uncover a truth that, in all probability, doesn't exist.

Ferran Barenblit, exhibition curator



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Talking Leaders, 2008. Bronze

to his desire to take the piece *beyond*, he is also exhibiting the safe in which the detailed analysis of the DNA of the samples was stored. This piece goes even further, presenting a tyre from the hearse that carried Franco's coffin, whose inner tube, never touched since, still contains the air pumped into it in November 1975. Taken as a whole, these works revolve around the notion of reliquary, which is connected here with the concept of the fetish, that artefact that feeds desiring machines as well as laying the foundations of modern capitalism based on the production and trade of commodities worldwide.



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Barricada, 2014 — 2015, bronze

<b>Fernando Sánchez Castillo. Más allá</b>	<b>23 oct 2015 — 28 feb 2016</b>	<b>Exhibition tours</b> Wednesdays and Saturdays 18:30 h.
<b>Other exhibitions</b>	<b>Colección XII</b>	Until 31 Jan 2016
	<b>Boundary Objets</b>	Until 28 Feb 2016
	<b>Patricia Esquivias. A veces decorado</b>	18 feb — Jun 2016
<b>Activities</b>	<b>Cinema on Sundays</b> <i>Sexualities in Troubled Times.</i> Sundays 18 Oct — 22 Nov 18:30 h.	<b>Adult Learning</b> <i>The Affective Life of Objects</i> 21 oct — 25 nov Wednesdays 18:30 h.
	<b>Families</b> <i>Ni pa' tras ni pa' lante. Here. Singing.</i> Workshop for families with Poderío Vital Saturdays from 7 Nov. 12:00 — 14:00 h. or 16:30 — 18:30 h.	<b>Teens</b> <i>UHF. Shoot under the Water</i> Experimental Sound Workshop with Alex Reynolds Fridays and Saturdays: 23, 24, 30 and 31 oct. Fridays 17:30 — 20:00 h. Saturdays 12:00 — 14:00 h.
<b>CA2M</b> Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo www.ca2m.org	Av. Constitución 23 28931 Móstoles, Madrid Tel. 91 276 02 21 ca2m@madrid.org	Open: Tuesday — Sunday 11:00 to 21:00 h. <b>Free entry to the Centre and to all activities</b>
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