

Nacho Criado Collaborating Agents



No es la voz que clama en el desierto (detalle)
Reconstrucción actual a partir del original de 1990

DATES:	4th May 2012 – 1st October 2012
PLACE:	Palacio de Velázquez and Palacio de Cristal (Parque del Retiro, Madrid)
ORGANISATION:	Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
CURATED BY:	Remo Guidieri
CO-ORDINATED BY:	Gema Bayón and Soledad Liaño
ITINERARY:	Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo (Sevilla) (29th November 2012 – 3rd March 2013)
RELATED ACTIVITIES:	Conference. 14 June, 6 p.m. Sabatini Auditorium. Participating: Fernando Castro Flores, Juan Manuel Bonet and Pepe Díaz Cuyás

The work of pioneering Spanish experimental artist, **Nacho Criado** (Mengíbar, Jaén, 1943 – Madrid, 2010), occupies the **Reina Sofía Museum's two venues in the Parque del Retiro** (Retiro Park): the **Palacio de Velázquez** (Velázquez Palace) and the **Palacio de Cristal** (Crystal Palace).

The show spans more than four decades in which Criado used a variety of media (installation, sculpture, photography, video, architecture) to reflect on concepts such as time and transformation, the contrast between idea and matter, the destiny of the artwork as part of a dialectic of construction and destruction, or the meaning of ruins and detritus. Criado's work drifts between very different poles but, generally speaking, it is inseparable from strategies of conceptual art in the broadest sense. Whatever materials were to hand could become vehicles for discourse: genres such as performance, land art and body art were not so much labels as research tools for Criado.

The exhibition's title (***Collaborating agents***) stems from Criado's concern with delimiting the artist's involvement in the production of his work, and allowing elements in the world to complete it by acting as "collaborating agents": atmospheric factors, accidents or microorganisms. This conviction determined his pieces as living elements: finite as objects, but unfinished as artworks.

PALACIO DE VELÁZQUEZ

The Palacio de Velázquez contains a retrospective selection of works by Criado that reveals his capacity to adopt various practices without ever associating himself with any specific movement or art group. His practice began to take shape within the discourse of Minimalism that reigned during the second half of the 1960s, responding to its basic principles in pieces such as those that make up his ***Homage to Rothko (1970-1994)***.

In addition, his use of humble materials can be linked to *arte povera*, which used industrial materials in its reaction against academic convention. Yet Criado's practice focused on process, connecting him directly to another leading figure of modern art — Marcel Duchamp— to whom he dedicated ***Prêt-à-porter (MaDe in...)*** (1976). Duchamp and other creators to whom he paid homage, or made reference (Bruno Taut, Matthias

Grünewald, Samuel Beckett), were not simply quoted or treated as sources of inspiration. Drawing on the past, Criado took on the role of a new collaborating agent, reactivating and updating those artists' ideas—which remain a part of the history of thought—not as artworks, but rather as process.

All of these starting points converge in a mature work, *It Is Not the Voice That Calls Out in the Desert* (1990), an iron and glass installation that plays a pivotal role in the show. This work's title also references another of his interests: the tension between discourse and silence, destruction and construction. This artwork explores the destiny of all human organism, which, as part of the dynamics of the biological world, contains the germs of their own destruction.

PALACIO DE CRISTAL

The second venue, the Palacio de Cristal, houses a reconstruction of *Piezas de Agua y Cristal* (Pieces of Water and Glass), an exhibition that Criado presented in the same space in 1991. That show, which marked the midpoint of his career, bore witness to the consistency and evolution of his interests. In *Umbrá Zenobia* (1991), the collaborating agent was the fungus farm he placed on the building's glass walls; *Trasvase* (Decanting) (1991), by contrast, employs glass as a found objet.

This use of broken glass resonated with the space's architecture while simultaneously creating a new tension: a work "in a state of ruin", it contested the Palacio de Cristal's utopian architecture. Pieces like *Ellos no pueden venir esta noche...* (They Cannot Come Tonight) (1991), or *La herida alpina* (The Alpine Wound) (1991), constitute an anti-architecture, designed from conception to be ephemeral, they explored questions relating to destiny and transformation.

FTP ACCESS DETAILS FOR NACHO CRIADO'S EXHIBITION:

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Login: CriadoExpo

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