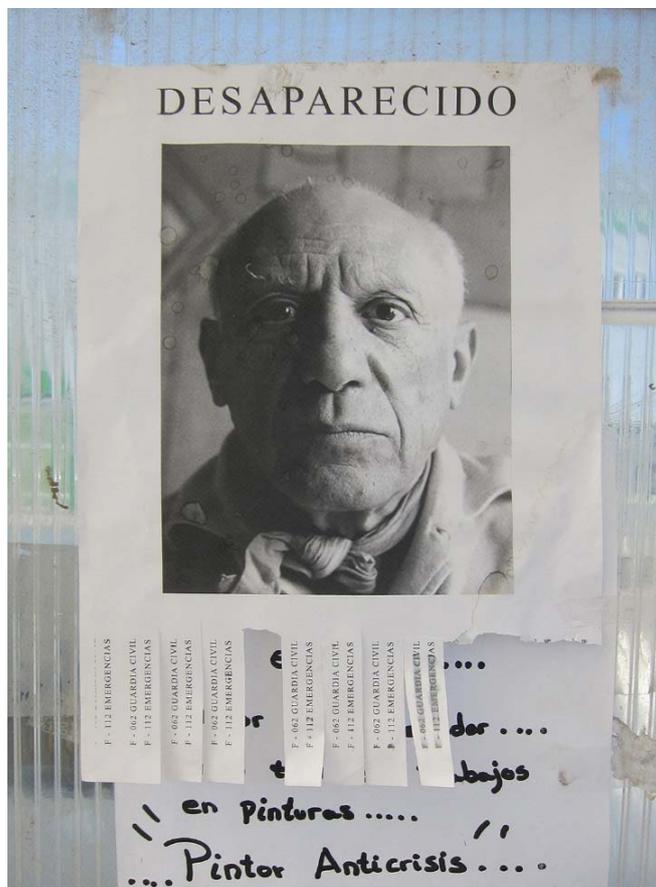


Rogelio López Cuenca. Keep Reading, Giving Rise



ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA

Desaparecido, 2014.

Fotografía, 160 x 120 cm.

Colección del artista.

- DATES:** April 3, 2019 – August 26, 2019
- PLACE:** Sabatini Building. 3rd floor.
- ORGANIZATION:** Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía
- CURATOR:** Manuel Borja-Villel
- COORDINATION:** Belén Díaz de Rábago and Nur Banzi

Keep Reading, Giving Rise, the **first major retrospective** dedicated to the work of **Rogelio López Cuenca** (Nerja, 1959), examines the consistent and different derivations and ramifications within the artist's trajectory, in a limitless space where poetry opens the way to other fields.

The poet and visual artist Rogelio López Cuenca can be placed within the tradition of institutional critique and linked to the vitalist and transgressive drive of the historical avant-gardes as well as the more heterodox drifts of Pop Art through his artistic research and creations in connection with language.

His explicitly political work addresses—without renouncing irony or a certain playfulness—issues such as the motivations and implications of modern-day migration policy, historical memory, postcolonial critique, and the instrumentalization of art and culture to further processes of urban real estate speculation. In his willingness and capacity to analyze the workings of power in contemporary society, he looks at how hegemonic narratives are constructed in the politico-economic and sociocultural spheres and explores the fissures that can be opened within them.



ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA
Poem, 1989
Óleo sobre lienzo
162 x 130 cm
Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo

Early works by the artist such as *Poesie pour le poivre* and *Brixton Hill* (both from 1986), which were presented within the context of 1980s Spanish poetry, combine techniques outside of traditional poetic forms in favor of those closer to the languages of the avant-gardes like collage, appropriationism, and détournement. Following the practices of such artists as Kurt Schwitters, Stéphane Mallarmé, Marcel Broodthaers, Joan Brossa, and Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, which traverse and inhabit the medium of poetry and other contemporary artistic mediums, Rogelio López Cuenca experiments with different forms of writing, spatiality, and sonority both on and outside the written page.

This concept of the expanded poetic field shifted the artist's work toward the visual arts, where there was a greater field for material exploration, without renouncing a linguistic dimension, which he would continue to use in his oeuvre. It was at this moment of flight or drift in his path that he

took part in collective creative experiences such as the pop group Peña Wagnerianam, the group of “proletarian machine music” UHP, and Agustín Parejo School, all of which sought the confluence of poetry and writing with the visual arts and media narratives.

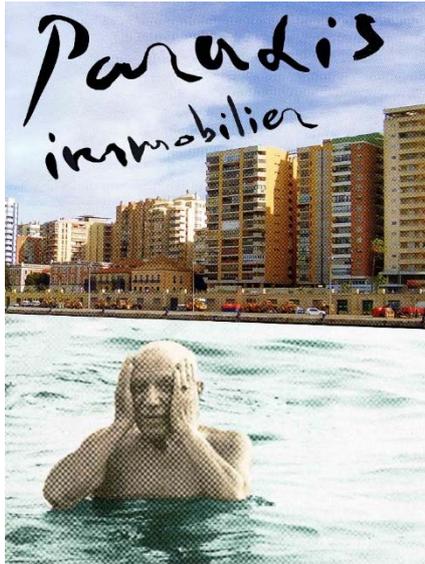
Seeking to create artistic-narrative dispositifs to help subvert official historical narratives, including those of art and the academy, Rogelio López Cuenca modifies and ironically recontextualizes objects and surfaces connected with mass communication, advertising, and propaganda, making its way onto the page, into public space, or in museums: billboards, posters, souvenirs, traffic lights,



ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA
Bandera de Europa, 1992
Óleo sobre lienzo
130 x 162 cm
Colección “la Caixa”. Arte Contemporáneo

flags, maps, etc. In *Bandera de Europa* (1992), for instance, twelve logotypes from large corporations replace the stars of EU member states. Applying humor and irony to the language of the advertising slogan, he questions, in works such as *Do Not Cross Art Scene* (1991), the art system and the continuing centrality of values such as originality and genius despite the revision of these concepts since the emergence of the avant-garde.

Málaga and Picasso



ROGELIO LÓPEZ CUENCA
Paradis immobilier, 2011
Óleo sobre fotografía
160 x 120 cm
Cortesía del artista y de la Galería Juana de Aizpuru

Many of his projects account for how art and culture play a crucial role in converting cities into “city-brands.” The urban landscape is being transformed into a battlefield where different cities compete for tourism and investment. The effects of this are well known: touristification, museumification, gentrification, and speculation, the destruction of aging infrastructure, and the expulsion of residents. A paradigmatic example of this is the “Picassification” of Málaga, a process the artist has been examining for over a decade and that has materialized in works such as *Paradiesstadt* and *Paradis immobilier* (both from 2011).

The creation of the “Málaga brand” was based upon the appropriation of the figure of Picasso to serve as an economic engine at all levels of the city, as a leitmotif for restaurants, bars, souvenir shops, real estate agents, etc. Dramatically, Picasso went through a process of Malagueñization, converting him into a typical Andalusian contrasting sharply with the image

of him as the cosmopolitan Republican artist par excellence.

In *Casi de todo Picasso* (2011), López Cuenca presented what he called a visual essay, an archive of texts, photographs, newspaper articles, and audiovisual material featuring Picasso—some of them genuine, others produced by the artist himself—that bears witness to the pervasiveness of the body of images connected with the malagueño artist.

City, history and memory

López Cuenca again taps into the potential of the archive in *Málaga 1937* (2007), his project for the recovery of historical memory, which tells of the exodus and murder of thousands of people who fled Málaga for Almería along the N-340 highway in the early morning hours of February 7–8, 1937. The overwhelming volume of oral narratives, photographs, newspaper articles in different languages, poems, films, and radio messages is directly proportional to the silence constructed around the event.

The historical effects of colonialism and its perpetuation in the present day through the figure of the tourist are the basis of the project specifically developed for this exhibition, *Las islas* (2018). The use of different supports and techniques foregrounds the complexity of the different interpretative layers of a work that visualizes the imposition of the colonial patriarchal state, the consequences of which can be felt even today.

López Cuenca carries out a critical rereading of texts and historical prints related to the discovery of America in order to reveal the colonial gaze as a dispositif for controlling and projecting subjectivities through the stereotypical portrayals of nature constructed in Europe since the fifteenth century, and its continuation in the sexual and racial fantasies of the twenty-first century.

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue dedicated to the figure of Rogelio López Cuenca. The book includes, in addition to the images of the works that make up the exhibition, a journey through the fundamental aspects of his creative imaginary through the texts of María Salgado, Sergio Raimondi, Marco Baravalle, Kike España, Gerald Rauning and Sayak Valencia.

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PRESS OFFICE

MUSEO REINA SOFÍA

prensa1@museoreinasofia.es

prensa3@museoreinasofia.es

(+34) 91 774 10 05 / 06

www.museoreinasofia.es/prensa

