

PRESS REVIEW

We don't need another hero EUGENIO MERINO

Dates: October 29th – December 11th, 2010

Opening: October 29th from 7h30 p.m. on



"An essential aspect of power is that it only likes to laugh at its own jokes" Peter Sloterdijk

ADN Galería presents the second solo show in Barcelona of **Eugenio Merino**, *We don't need another hero*.

Two years went by since Merino's exhibition *Global Warming* was showed at ADN Galería, and now the artist seems to put aside the representation of popular figures and superheroes, typical of his previous works, and embrace the representation of anonymous characters and objects charged with strong symbology, emphasizing even more his critical stand before subjects like war and military policy. He already dealt with war and its consequences in the video *Jailhouse Rock (in Guantanamo)* in 2008. Now, new discourses and semantic games enrich the topics treated in former works, asking for the necessary complicity of the spectators to decode the iconography present in his work. The show shifts between causticity and satire; playing with real and complex situations, turning thus the dramatic into sarcasm and vice versa.

In *We don't need another hero* we find a declination of Eugenio Merino in his assumed role of resistant cynic engaged in showing naked truths, facilitating some

relevant unmasking; in this occasion he approaches a cardinal cynicism: the one belonging to the military power and the State. Everyone from every social class reports how evil is war and, however, we passively assist to a schizoid indoctrination so that who is supposedly weak could be presented as a hero. During Modern times, both state and military power have been translating the risk, and its supposed associated heroism, from the ancient knight, converted to a war hero, to



these other that have nothing to do with war. This is exactly what's emphasized in the sculptural group *No Return Policy* in which we can see two soldiers packed in wooden boxes and sent to make war as if they were weapons distributed by express mail service: a juridical and political exploitation in the name of peace. Even though this unavoidable reality could seem pretty obvious in a first moment, as a truth we all have sustained at least once, the confrontation with such a direct and insolent production, related to the ethos of classical cynicism, makes us feel taking part to this contemporary cynicism able of justifying peace through war.

Peace Medals, some medals apparently used to commemorate war triumphs but formally configured with a piece sign, make us look at this State's cynicism that send to war the so-called "peacekeeping forces", charging this message with expressivity and forcefulness. The big irony comes when the supposed heroes, dead in a "peacekeeping mission", have to be buried in an official ceremony as heroes dead in combat. Another artwork that clearly refers to this military and central cynicism is *Damocles' Sword*. This piece offers a double semantic turn: it speaks not only about the uncertain faith pending on the powerful people holding public duty, as referred to in its classical literary meaning, but also the lack of security that all of us, Western citizens, have to endure. Of course we do have armies ready to fight against the "evil axis" but the counterpart is the constant threat of international terrorism.

About the artist's production process, it's important to point out its synthetic aspect: the crash of realities, of iconographies and different or opposite symbols which generate unpredictable lectures. The apparently simplicity of a sculpture like *Victory or Death* shows perfectly the artist's working process: a hand with two fingers making the peace sign, rolled up with barbed wire that reminds us of a trench, a concentration camp or a prison. A first approach suggests the impossibility of celebrating victory or peace when there are wires still trapping us. Then, we start perceiving that the artist's intention is to symbolize the symbiosis between the increasing weaponry and peace, as if war or the menacing power of army could really bring stability, for some at least. We are so threatened and armed to the teeth that we cannot genuinely enjoy peace. Here the artist wants once again to contribute unmasking the contemporary cynical condition.



Eugenio Merino lives and works in Madrid, where he was born in 1975. After achieving the BFA at Universidad Complutense in Madrid, he showed his works internationally and has participated in important fairs such as: Volta Basel (ADN Galería, 2010/2009), ARCO (solo Project, ADN Galería, 2010/2009), Volta New York (ADN Galería, 2009), Artefiera (ADN Galería, 2010), Art Brussels (ADN Galería, 2008). Recently, he has participated in the exhibition One Shot! Football and Contemporary Art at BPS22 in Charleroi (Belgium), at the Biennial Animamix in Taipei (Taiwan, 2010) and will take part at the International Ink Art Biennale of Shenzhen (China) in December 2010.