

Nuremberg: History Always Repeats Itself Twice.



Doors of courtroom 600 of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice.

Short summary

My work seeks to reproduce full-scale trompe l'oeil paintings of spaces and architectural elements based on reinterpretations of past events connected with stories of the present such as the end of the power of the aristocracy in Versailles in the 18th century, or the origins of Modern Museum like the Prado, Louvre or the National Gallery, among others.

My new project work currently consist of creating series that refer to the Nuremberg Palace of Justice given the historical iconic relevance and cultural significance of the building and its famous trials of 1945. The Nuremberg series will aim to reproduce a real scale painting of the main access door to the courtroom 600 of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, employing the trompe l'oeil technique with the idea of returning those judgments and their consequences in today's present.

This door, designed by Ernst Pfeiffer and casted by Christoph Lenz, has been a silent architectural witness to these renowned trials. This installation aims to provoke, on the one hand, a reflection on the symbolic restitution of legal architecture -the memory of the origins of international justice- and on the other hand also, create a space for dialogue and commemoration, mourning and hope.

This first work will be presented in Barcelona in 2024 at La Virreina Centro de La Imagen in Barcelona, coinciding with the events of MANIFESTA 15.

I am currently working with the German Embassy in Spain so that the installation can be moved and also be exhibited in Germany.



File image of the Nuremberg trials, with the gate in the background.

Memory

These work series will complete the trilogy **Places Of The Common**, which precedes **Guillotina** (2016-2019) and **Before The Law** (2019-2022).

Based on Architectural Trompe L'oeils these projects share a reflection on the symbolic coercion exerted by Art on History through decorative elements in three successive moments:

Guillotina is set at the end of the 18th century, choosing Versailles as the setting. The large-scale royal fireplaces, confront Rococo and Neoclassicism and act as lintels of the aristocratic power who was destined to disappear on the eve of the Revolution, and which gave also rise to the origin of the modern museum as we understand it today.

Reference images of the Guillotine Project:



Madame du Barry, 200 x 300cm. Oil on wood. 2017. Detail.



Detail of the trompe l'oeil painting process.



Details Versailles fireplaces (Madame du Barry) in trompe l'oeil.



Marie Antoinette Fireplace, Versailles. Detail.



The perception of relief is false as a real trompe l'oeil: they are oil paintings on a flat wooden surface.



Installation Encore a Moment Monsieur le Bourreau, Encore a Moment. 2018. F2 Gallery, Madrid.



Guillotine (National Gallery), 700 x 52 x 1cm. Oil on wood. (Detail).



Plinth National Museum of the Prado. 2019. Guillotine (Prado), Madrid.



Plinth of the Louvre Museum, room 700. Detail Guillotine (Louvre).

Before the Law takes us to the late 19th and early 20th century scene of museum architecture, in an intertextual gesture between Franz Kafka's literary narrative *Before the Law*, and the artist's autobiographical experience with death.

Reference images of the Before the Law Project:



*Before the Law There is a Gatekeeper, Oil on Canvas, 387x 303 cm.
Installation in the hall of the Thyseenn-Bornemisza National Museum, 2022. Madrid.*



National Gallery (Before the Law. Spanish room). Oil on Canvas, 303 x 585 cm. Oil on canvas. Colección Banco de Sabadell. Barcelona.



And finally, the **Nuremberg** project will take us to the mid-20th century, at the time of the famous trials. The doors of the courtroom 600, with their legal symbols embodying the 'Law', once again representing a threshold. Behind these doors lies the overcoming of a desolate western world after the hecatomb.



Archive image of the Nuremberg trials: the doors as silent architectural witnesses

Project Argumentation

NUREMBERG: History Always Repeats Itself Twice.

In a symbolic way, Hegel wrote that all the great facts and characters of universal history always appear twice, that is to say that the history of humanity is full of repeating cycles. Marx complemented his reflection by adding: "once as a tragedy and once as a farce"; although the farce may be worse than the tragedy.

This project continues the reflections initiated in the two previous chapters of my work, *Guillotina* and *Before the Law*. In those projects, highly significant spaces and ornamentations were chosen. This is also the case of the access doors to courtroom 600 of the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg and the symbols that crown it.

In Nuremberg the Allies misappropriate a previous iconography. It speaks of winners and losers, of the triumph of good over evil. This proposal raises the paradox of the reversible use of symbols, the same ones that presided over the injustice of the defeated and endorse the real justice of the victors.

The building in question, the work of the architects Paul Pfann and Hans Hugo von Hoefl, inaugurated in 1916, had preceded the rise of Nazism to power. These symbols created by Ernest Pfeiffer (designer of the threshold) have already been used by the nazis themselves, just as Richard Wagner suffered from Hitler's manipulation, and just as he will later contemplate his political rehabilitation by Patrice Chéreau and other postmodern stage directors.

The Allies opted for this palace, in view of the famous trials, for having survived the war without damage and for having a prison annex attached. But the choice of Nuremberg was symbolic since the city in the years before the end of the war was a nerve center of the Reich, and its most decisive congresses were held there.

In that palace, and with the brief margin of 10 years, winners and losers took advantage of identical symbols and architecture at the service of their respective justices, regardless of the ethical gulf between them.

As an artist who may not be able to risk a thesis, I can still pose a series of questions: why do the winners reuse the sets of the losers? In what way do symbols wear out or rehabilitate? What virtue does legal iconography have to withstand so much ideological instability? Does ornamental ostentation act in any way, in the opposite sense, on ideology (possessing it, let's say 'hellishly').



File image of the Nuremberg trials, with the door gate in the background.

After the occupation of the Nuremberg Palace by the Allies, and its current role in democracy, recently converted into the Museum of the Memorium Nuremberg Trials, this kind of “re-musealization” that I propose supposes a new test of the symbols.

The pictorial technique of trompe l'oeil poses a very particular transfer, in which the craft and time mediate, and where the plagiarism or simulation of noble materials by painting on a poor material (wood) incorporates the consciousness of fiction. Again, the revelation of the Real.

Richard Armstrong, speaking of Richard Artschwager, highlighted the dual condition of his works: pictorial sculptures and three-dimensional paintings in a space. According to him, these works would not be a demonstration of ideas or a pure aesthetic experience. The aesthetic trap is dismantled in Artschwager by the familiarity of the objects. By choosing, for my part, these objects as emblems of power, I want to confront the viewer with an ominous familiarity.

The objective is to make an identical pictorial copy on cut out wood, although inverted, of the same door. This duplication already speaks of its ambivalence regarding use and its political history, and it will be duplicated as a mirror, forcing its symmetry despite not facing the original. The work secretly refers to the other side of reality: the resulting image is a reflected image, displaced, out of place.



Model/image with the door inverted to the right in its current context.



Model: Upper detail of the door. Lighting mockup and lights.



Groundwork model of the main Courtroom 600 door. Almost 6 meters high, (535 cm).



Image of the door in its current context.

Technical sheet of the work:

Title:*Nuremberg: History Always Repeats Itself Twice.*

Mesures:535 x 327 x 25 cm

Technique:Oil painting on a cut-out wooden structure.

Year:2022- 2024.

Installation:

the work is divided into 4 parts to facilitate assembly and transport. It rests on the floor hanging on the wall. As a Arquiterctural Trompe L'oeil it needs a site-specific to place it properly. The installation contemplates the option of painting the walls in a neutral color, as well a dark ground floor, and requires spot lighting.

CV

He lives and works in Barcelona.

He completed his first studies at the School of Fine Arts and Crafts in Olot, Girona, (1965-1974) and at the Faculty of Fine Arts Sant Jordi in Barcelona, (1976-77).

A resident of Delfina Studios (Bermondsey), he lived and worked in London from 1995-2001.

He recently studied at the Van der Kelen-Logelain school of ancient painting in Brussels, from 2014-2015.

COLLECTIONS (Selection)

Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, MNCAR. Madrid.

Museo MACBA. Barcelona.

Colección Hermes, Paris. Francia

Colecció Fundació "La Caixa", Barcelona.

Collecció Banc Sabadell, Barcelona

Col·lecció Norman Foster. Londres. Inglaterra

Colección Soler Villa. Colección Per Amor a l'Art. Valencia.

Museo ARTIUM, Centro-Museo Vasco de Arte Contemporáneo, Vitoria-Gasteiz.

Fundación Botín, Santander.

Trust Fundation, Washington DC. USA

Colección AIP., Lisboa.

Delfina Studios, London. Inglaterra.

Colección Dkv, Madrid.

Colección HEF. Toledo.

Fundación Vila Casas, Barcelona.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 -*El Pedestal que Aguarda*, Sala de las Musas, Museo Nacional del Prado. Madrid.
-*Hay un guardian Ante la Ley*. Hall Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. Madrid.
- 2019 -*Guillotina*, TeclaSala, Centre d'Art de l'Hospitalet. Barcelona.
- 2018 -*Encore un moment, Monsieur le bourreau, encore un moment*. F2 Galería. Madrid.
- 2016 -*Il y a bien du monde aujourd'hui a Versailles*, RocioSantaCruz, Barcelona.
- 2015 -*Las Tentaciones*. Museu de Montserrat. Abadía de Montserrat. Barcelona.
- 2013 -*Hurqalya*, Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
- 2011 -*Lluís Hortalà* CDAN. Centro de Arte y Naturaleza, Fundación Beulas, Huesca.
-*Exercitatorio*, Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
-*Exercitatori*, Fundació Suñol. Barcelona.
- 2006 -*Aunque sea un instante*, Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
- 2005 -*No vision*, cerámicas, Galeria Ratton. Lisboa.
- 2004 -*Without still life*, Sala de Proyectos, Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
-*Right Place, Wrong Time*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. Lisboa. Portugal.
-*Tempestade*, Instalación/performance, Castello de San Jorge, Bienal Internacional de Luz de Lisboa. Portugal.
-*Right Place, Wrong Time*, Espai Zero1, Olot. Girona.
- 2003 -*Thin Air*, Blackspace, Galería Alejandro Sales. Barcelona.
- 2002 -*Tormenta*. Festival Internacional de Poesía de Barcelona.
performance en el Palau de la Música de Barcelona. Barcelona.
- 2001 -*Ce sont les cimes, rien que les cimes*. Galería Alejandro Sales. Barcelona.
- 2000 -*Lo que el abrazo abarca*. Galería Porta 33. Madeira. Portugal.
- 1998 -*Emma*. Galería Alejandro Sales. Barcelona.
- 1996 -*Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Antonio de Barnola. Barcelona.
- 1994 -*Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Tomás March. Valencia.
- *Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Alda Cortez. Lisboa. Portugal.
- 1993 -*Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Antonio de Barnola. Barcelona. Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
- 1991 -*Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Fúcares, Almagro.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 -*Earth: A Retroapective*. Bombas Gens. Valencia.
- 2022 -*Hiperreal. El arte del trampantojo*. Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. Madrid.
-*Una historia de arte reciente (1960-2020)*. Fundació Juan March. Palma de Mallorca.
-*Horizonte y limite*. Caixa Forum Valencia. Valencia.
-*De lugares e causas*. Museo Centro Gaiás. Santiago de Compostela.
-*Estancias*. La Lonja. Zaragoza.
- 2021 -*De lugares y cosas*. Sala Sabadell- Herrero. Oviedo. Spain
- 2020 -*Paisaje Interior*, CDAN, Centro de Arte y Naturaleza- Fundacion Beulas. Huesca, Spain

- 2019 -*Simbiosis*, Capilla del Hospital Real de Granada.
 -*Studiolo XXI desenho e afinidades*, Fundação Eugénio de Almeida, Evora. Portugal
- 2018 -*S/T*, Palau de Casavells Art, Girona.
 -*Estancias, una selección de obras de la Colección Banco Sabadell*, Sala de exposiciones Sabadell/Herrero, Oviedo.
 -*Caminar sobre el gel. Èpica i disfuncionalitat en la pràctica artística*, *Bolit*, Centre d'Art Contemporani, Girona.
- 2017 -*Index natura*, CDAN. Centro de Arte y Naturaleza - Fundación Beulas. Huesca.
 -*Obras de la Colección Fundación Caja Mediterráneo*. Centre del Carme. València.
 - *Caminar sobre el gel. Èpica i disfuncionalitat en la pràctica artística*. Arts Santa Monica,. Barcelona.
- 2016 -*Yes I can!* Centre d'art contemporain Walter Benjamin, Perpignan. Francia.
- 2015 -*VII Bienal de Jafre*, Girona. Spain.
- 2014 -*Protocolo abierto*, La Scala Showroom. Sant Mar Vell, Girona.
- 2013 -*Moving*. Curated by Norman Foster. Carré d'art - Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes. Nîmes. Francia.
- 2011 -*Colección CAM de Arte Contemporáneo*. Sala Municipal de Exposiciones de la Lonja del Pescado. Alicante.
- 2008 -*No más héroes. La Colección VIII*, ARTIUM. Vitoria.
- 2005 -*En las plácidas noches del estío manchego*, Galería Fúcares, Almagro.
- 2003 -*Home Run*, Galería Alejandro Sales. Barcelona.
- 2002 -*Col·leció Fundació "la Caixa"*. Granollers. Barcelona
- 1999 -*Dobles Vides*, Museu d'Historia de la Ciutat. Barcelona.
 -*Zauber Hat*, Public Space. Dresden. Alemania.
- 1998 -*Lluís Hortalà*, Galería Alejandro Sales. Barcelona.
 -*Escultura al Jardí*. Sabadell.
- 1997 -*Artist's House, Delfina Studio*. Londres. UK
 -*New Art from Barcelona*, APT Gallery Space, Londres. UK
 -*Itinerarios. 1996-97 IV Convocatoria Becas de Artes Plásticas*. Fundación Botín, Santander.
- 1996 -*Interieur*, Galerie Menotti. Baden. Alemania.
 -*Affinità*, Castello di Rivara. Torino. Italia.
- 1995 -*La gazza ladra*, Galería Javier Ochoa. Zaragoza.
- 1994 -*Arte Español de los 80 y 90*. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.
 -*Diez en Tres*, Palacio Gravina, Alicante.
 -*Colectiva*, Galería Xavier Fiol, Palma de Mallorca.
 -*Paradoja y Metáfora en las Fronteras de la Escultura*, Colegio de Arquitectos de Málaga, Málaga.
- 1993 -*Becas Banesto'92, ARCO'93"*. Madrid.
 -*Meeting Points*, Galería Fúcares Almagro.
 -*Meeting Points*, Galería Alda Cortez, Lisboa. Portugal.
- 1992 -*Confrontaciones*, Palacio de Velázquez, Madrid. Galería Fúcares, Madrid.
 -*1902/1991*, Lemberk Foundation, Lemberk, Czech Republic.
- 1991 -*Opac*, Caixa de Pensions, Carrer Montcada, Barcelona.

GRANTS

- 1996 -IV Convocatoria Becas de Artes Plásticas, Fundación Emilio Botín, Santander.
- 1992 -Beca BANESTO, Madrid.
- 1985 -Beca Generalitat de Catalunya, Barcelona.