

PEDRO G. ROMERO

Màquines de trovar

23.05.17 > 28.07.17

Opening: Tuesday May 23, 7:30 PM.

In collaboration with Rafael Agredano, Anónimo Romancero, Agustín Parejo School, Javier Baldeón, Ricardo Cadenas, Ricardo Castillo, Juan Delcampo, Pepe Espaliu, Vicki Gil, David González, Manolo Lacalle, Luisa López, Elena Mendoza, Pedro Mora, Moisés Moreno, Antonio Sosa, Ignacio Tovar, Idoia Zabaleta, Mónica Valenciano, Sonia Sánchez, El Niño de Elche, Isaías Griñolo, Israel Galván, Javiera de la Fuente, Ines Doujak, Bobote, Miquel Benlloch and Marco de Ana



*Màquines de trovar*¹ implies unique operations presented before, after and during my work with Archive F.X, and with which I continue my interest in the social production of value, *General Intellect*². The works presented in the exhibition are not collaborative pieces, nor do they combine cooperative wills, nor do they even appeal to any of us, but they are constructions of the ordinary, carried out far from any subjective formalization but, in the end, they become the subject itself. There is also the possibility to see these paintings and videos, things and words, and simply appreciate their sensitive operations. There is beauty and a bit of ingenuity in many of these pieces. And they are shown together here, so we can all find out their nature.

The creative concept of *Màquines de trovar* (*Sung poem machines*) emerges from the "Coplas mecánicas" a text that first appeared on the *Cancionero apócrifo* by Antonio Machado and Juan de Mairena³ in 1928, which functions as a presentation in society of the same Juan de Mairena, a character created by Machado under the title of *The metaphysics of Juan de Mairena*. *The Machine of sung poems* is also a political example that shuffles the differences between the community and the individual, acting as a crucial link between society and the individual. There is no split, just agency and necessary relationships. In *Màquines de trovar*, as in the DNA chain, there is no *me* without *us*.

The exhibition is divided in 4 parts:

1- Las espadas (The swords) is a new work, which has been growing since 2016 within the framework of the **Archive F.X**. In this case, it belongs to **Pure violence: αἰσθησις**, a project developed in Donostia / San Sebastián for the exhibition program of Treaty of Peace. More or less this is its taxonomy, fitting in the body of work by the author Pedro G. Romero but, in fact, it has been done without knowing the nature of what is being produced. The *ezpata-dantz* are popular dances from the Basque country and, in other parts of the world, where they are also being performed, these are called sword dances. No doubt that the political mythology that the Basque nationalists have sublimated around these community dances is important, but we are not going to stop now in these ideological marks. My guests only had to take a sword and portray themselves with it whilst dancing, with a gesture, with a bullfighting sword movement. Israel Galván was the first to point out the *swordish* nature of the selfie stick, that fencing nightmare that haunts tourists, friends reunions and family gatherings, aimed at the modern devices for capturing vision. With the selfie stick new relationships and connections emerge. The dancers don't know each other and are already part of this community of swordsmen. Nor do I want to dwell on the deep relationships between choreography and military life, nor on how violence is always a sort of choreutics. In short, violence often creates a community, it's important not to forget that, but our interest here is in that which is common; that which is entertained already in aesthetic games, in recognizing each other with the gestures of the others. Because the question that we now care about is the role of Pedro G. Romero in all this. Is he a curator, an author, a cultural entertainer? This last meaning ridiculously underscores the relevance of the question itself.

2- The paintings and photographs of **La Sección Áurea** date back to 1990 and all kinds of artists collaborated in their production: Rafael Agredano, Anonymous Romancero, Agustín Parejo School, Javier Baldeón, Ricardo Cadenas, Ricardo Casstillo, Juan Delcampo, Pepe Espaliu, Vicki Gil, David González, Manolo Lacalle, Luisa López, Elena Mendoza, Pedro Mora, Moisés Moreno, Antonio Sosa, Ignacio Tovar, among others. (We only name here those present in this exhibition). There are anonymous, collective, heteronymous artists with marked stylistic features and there's even a girl who today has become a famous composer. The nature of these works is difficult to resolve. They were given some general rules and on these given rules artists exercised their authorship. This imprint was of course dependent on the invitation but it was not exactly collaborative in nature, it was not cooperative, nor did Pedro G. Romero even know some of his guests personally. Rather, it was the conviction that all work depends both on the field in which it is exercised and on the biographical accidents of the personality. In any case there are no conclusions or major judgments on the dissolution of

¹ Juan de Mairena, interjected by Antonio Machado, wrote the text in which his disciple, the young Meneses, shows him a "poem machine" that would substitute the subject in the poetic production, in the manner of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés ...* and the Futurist, Dadaist and productivist experiments, until the return of the poetic self, until the return of the dark swallows. Mairena asks Meneses how the machine works and surprisingly he compares it to a communion of amateur singers, who, whilst drinking wine and spirits, add falsestas, cantes and fragments of letters to build the fandango.

² *General Intellect*. The subject developed by Marx, an abstract social production that becomes reality, knowledge, education, acculturation, words and things, common and necessarily subjectivated, objects and necessarily performative: objects in relation, in operation, or better, not the object but its operation. I do not want to go any further. It is an academic note in case any reader or viewer is interested in these issues.

³ Juan de Mairena was a fictitious professor of gymnastics and rhetoric created by Antonio Machado. Born in Seville in 1865. His biographer and creator, Antonio Machado, describes him as "poet, philosopher, rhetorician and inventor of a Song Machine", and presents him as a pupil of another apocryphal author. the teacher Abel Martín. also from Seville. Born in 1840 and died in Madrid in 1898.

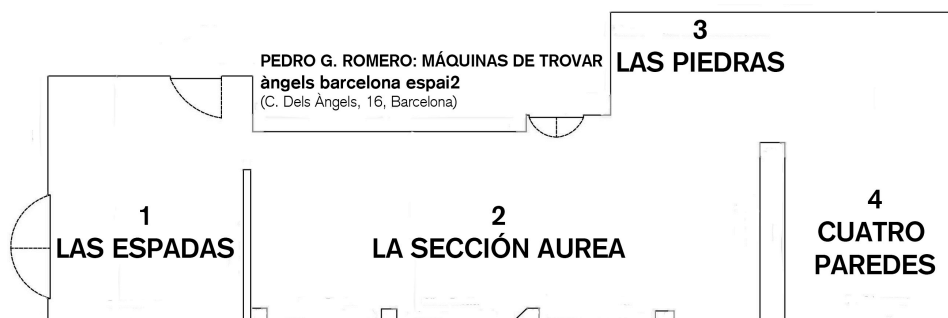
the author, his death or resurrection. The idea was to raise a question, to put quotation marks to the great stylistic gestures. The presentation of these works was always problematic, bitter debates with Hernández Pijuan or Juan Ariño marked their installation and public presentation. These works have been stored for a long time and some pieces show, in fact, the wounds of time. But it seems that some of those questions are still relevant today.

3- Cuatro paredes ("Four walls") is a work of a different nature. It was a commissioned piece by Patricia Molins and Salvador Albiñana in 1999. The main idea behind it was to create a soundtrack for the section dedicated to the period of 1968 of an exhibition on the history of the University of Valencia. So the result was the creation of these kind of sound collages and it is no coincidence that the pieces are called *Romances*. The presence of voices of authors, poets and singers is peppered with anonymous tunes, popular romances, the continued drums of bands of Moors and Christians. There are phrases of Jaime Gil de Biedma, Concha Piquer or Raimon. In the exhibition we could see the records and cassettes that were played there, from bands such as the Rolling Stones to the part of the death of the dictator Francisco Franco. And also, an extensive exploration of the *cant in u*, the flamenco romances, the kinship of melismatic singing in the Mediterranean area. It's clear that, the Gil de Biedma that we could hear also turned to the romancero, to the popular sung poems. *The death of the student*, *The death of the general*, *The death of the exiled* and *The death of the people*, each of these pieces carried these names, but the myth of the author and its return, as Agustín García Calvo said, to that that is located down below, below the people. Garcia Calvo, hated such experiments, but here they are, with the clear intention of not knowing who made them.

4 - Las piedras (The stones), from 2017, shown together in the Raval space **Tinta Invisible** (the producers of the edition) it also belongs to the same cycle of **Las espadas** of the **Archive F.X**. It's a parody – and as Giorgio Agamben says, the parody is a cannibalistic knowledge system that perfectly identifies the author with the parodied object - of *One and Three Chairs* by Joseph Kosuth, an otherwise abhorrent artist. Here the differences that we can establish between the "chairs" of Kosuth and the stones of "Romero", are differences of taxonomy, of dictionary, of an understanding of language, grammar, phonology, of apparatuses and the functioning of things, huge and abyssal differences. Differences that perhaps can help us in the task of finding out the nature of these operations in the style of Pedro G. Romero, who seems to do many things at the same time -artist, curator, critic, historian, flamenocographer, musician, poet and many more ridiculous things-. However, he thinks he doesn't know how to do anything, or that he always does the same thing, a drawing on a page or complex projects within the international art scene, the same parsimony and clumsiness of the hand, the plump fingers, pointing in the air over a blank sheet of paper.

P.G.R. May, 2017

Exhibition map:



Pedro G. Romero (b. Arcena, 1964). He lives and works in Seville, where he graduated in Fine Arts. His body of work unfolds through multiple disciplines where can see him working as curator, sculptor, painter, flamenco expert, performer, theatrical author, screenwriter, etc. As well as critic of art and literature, editor and essayist. The enquiry and investigation of images as points of resistance to time, whether historical, biological, psychological or verbal, acts as the central subject of his work. With his pieces he establishes a constant concern for the disappearance of authorship and the questioning of our beliefs through the juxtaposition of elements that apparently seem discordant but, when united, reveal a new meaning to the viewer. He had his first solo show in 1986 and, in 1988 his project *Magatzem d'idees* was exhibited at the Sala Montcada of La Caixa Foundation in Barcelona. In 1989, he presented for the first time *La sección aurea* at the Luis Cernuda Foundation in Seville. Between 1990 and 1994 he received important prizes such as The Critical Eye of RNE or the Scholarship of the Cartier Foundation in Paris, among others. His project *Archivo FX* (an open archive, created at the end of the 90s, that establishes relations between different readings of documentary sources, used as a dictionary which also functions as an artistic index), has been exhibited in institutions such as the Tàpies Foundation (Barcelona), the Center of Art Reina Sofía Museum (Madrid), the Venice Biennale, Manifesta, the Serralves Foundation (Porto), the MUSAC (Leon), the MACBA (Barcelona), Montehermoso Cultural Center (Vitoria), CAPC (Bordeaux), MUDAM (Luxembourg), the Sculpture Center (New York), the Picasso Museum (Barcelona) or the Kunstverein in Stuttgart, among others. His latest project *La farsa monea* (2017), created in collaboration with El Niño de Elche and Israel Galván for the present edition of *DOCUMENTA14*, in the Numismatic Museum of Athens, emphasizes issues such as debt, economic inequalities or the new culture of work in which the body acts as an exchange currency.

This exhibition runs at the same time of:

"Piedra" de Pedro G. Romero at Tinta Invisible Edicions (C. Lleó, 6, 08001, Barcelona) | www.gravat.com