

A black and white photograph of riot police in helmets and shields, with a bright light flare in the center. The police are wearing helmets with visors and holding shields. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong light source creating a large, bright flare in the center of the image.

Kepa Garraza

警察
POLICE

Nuevo Monumentalismo

We just want to set the world on fire



Nuevo Monumentalismo. We just want to set the world on fire

The exhibition of the visual artist Kepa Garraza, *Nuevo Monumentalismo. We just want to set the world on fire*, is a monographic exhibition. This exhibition brings together the artist most recent projects through works that have been produced over the last two years and through which the exhibition is divided into two clearly differentiated sections.

Nuevo Monumentalismo is his most recent project. It invites the viewer to reflect on the function of the public monument within the urban environment, as well as to consider questions related to the representation of power and authority in our collective imagination. To develop it, he has devised a game of substitution that invites the viewer to rethink concepts related to the very nature of the monument, its *raison d'être* and its usefulness.

We just want to set the world on fire is a series that emerged as a consequence of the wave of protests that swept the world after the widespread lifting of restrictions following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. These protests were widespread and seemingly spontaneous. A wave of indignation and anger spread unchecked to all corners of the globe. Revolts caused by the widespread impoverishment of large sectors of the world's population and the ineffectiveness of many governments to take care their most basic needs.

In his work, Garraza shows a great interest in history and current politics, which stems, in part, from the drift the world is taking, with so many crisis fronts open. A worrying scenario that he approaches through fiction and through a parallel reality, to make a critique of the present in an indirect, profound and acute way.

With his hyperrealist style, he shows us fictional and theatrical representations with a predominance of criticism and irony. Timeless scenes, sometimes taken out of context, with which he invites us to reflect on the close relationship between art, power and propaganda. His creations are enriched by a play of subtleties and double readings. In this way, the artist invites the viewer to delve deeper into what he sees at first glance and draw his own conclusions.



Kepa Garraza talks about his recent series *Nuevo monumentalismo*

This project invites the viewer to reflect on the function of the public monument within the urban environment, as well to consider questions related to the representation of power and authority in our collective imagination. To this end, I have devised a game of substitution that invites the viewer to rethink concepts related to the very nature of the monument, its raison d'être and its usefulness.

My proposal is simple: to elaborate a series of models for imaginary sculptures that will never be made, but which are proposed as fictional alternatives to a certain typology of statues very common in the public space: the portrait of figures that symbolize the present and past power, in the form of portraits of monarchs, and a wide spectrum of military, political, social or religious leaders. This type of representation of power structures, personified in those who have exercised or executed it, is a common component of urban spaces and we can find countless examples of such monuments throughout cities around the world. While such monuments commemorating authority and power seem to be vestiges of the past, their prevalence in public space raises very interesting questions about how we perceive them and how we live with them.

Taking these questions as a starting point, I have created a group of works that recreate imaginary sculptures. These fictional sculptures show us different scenes, from hooded demonstrators carrying Molotov cocktails to others confronting the police or holding protest banners. All these sculptures have been generated by 3D digital modeling, obtaining virtual models that allow me to play with the scale, finish, texture and lighting. These fictitious sculptures are introduced in well-known public monuments, replacing the figures of leaders, generals or kings. This exercise of supplanting affects only the portrait of the figures of power, keeping unaltered the rest of the architectural structures that are part of the original monument. Some of these scenarios are easily recognizable, as in the case of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., where the famous sculpture of the seated President Lincoln has been replaced by a monumental statue of a hooded man carrying a baseball bat in a threatening attitude.

I have also created a second group of works, where these fictitious sculptures are presented on a black background and with a very contrasting lighting. These works are conceived as a kind of preparatory studies, where I test different solutions related to the finish of the works and their lighting.

My intention with this project is to present a kind of simulacra that invite the viewer to question concepts related to the role and function of the monument in the public space and to consider the close relationship between art, power and propaganda. These fictional variables are not presented as possible or desirable alternatives, but as a kind of parody of the personification of power and authority. Furthermore, they want to invite us to rethink questions related to the representation of violence and the symbolism used to represent a certain type of authority, be it political, military or religious. As they are conceived as parodies, these works present us with attributes very similar to the originals they are intended to replace, they show an antiquated aesthetic and at no time do they appear as interesting alternatives. Somehow, they are presented as scenarios of a parallel reality where the portraits of the powerful have been replaced by those of anonymous heroes. Perhaps the protagonists of a revolutionary process that, as so often throughout history, seem incapable of offering an alternative to the classic ways of exercising and representing authority and power.

Model for statue 1 (aluminium)

2021

Compressed charcoal on paper

200 x 110 cm.





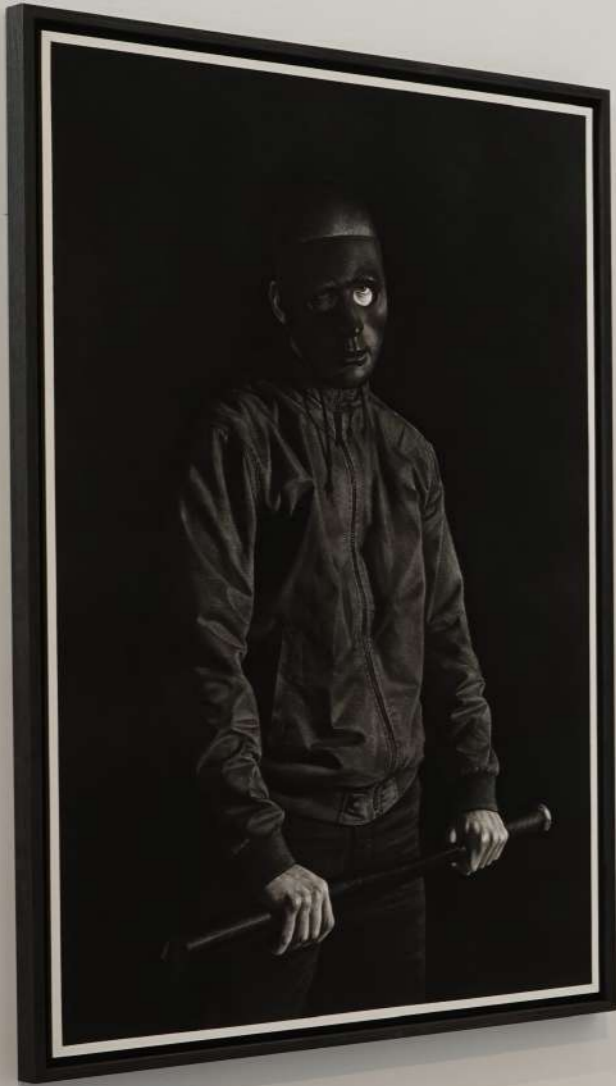
Model for statue 2

2022

Compressed charcoal on paper

100 x 70 cm.







Model for statue 2 (gold)

2022

Oil on canvas

146 x 100 cm.





Proposal for monument 2 (Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.)

2022

Oil on canvas

200 x 300 cm.



Model for statue 2

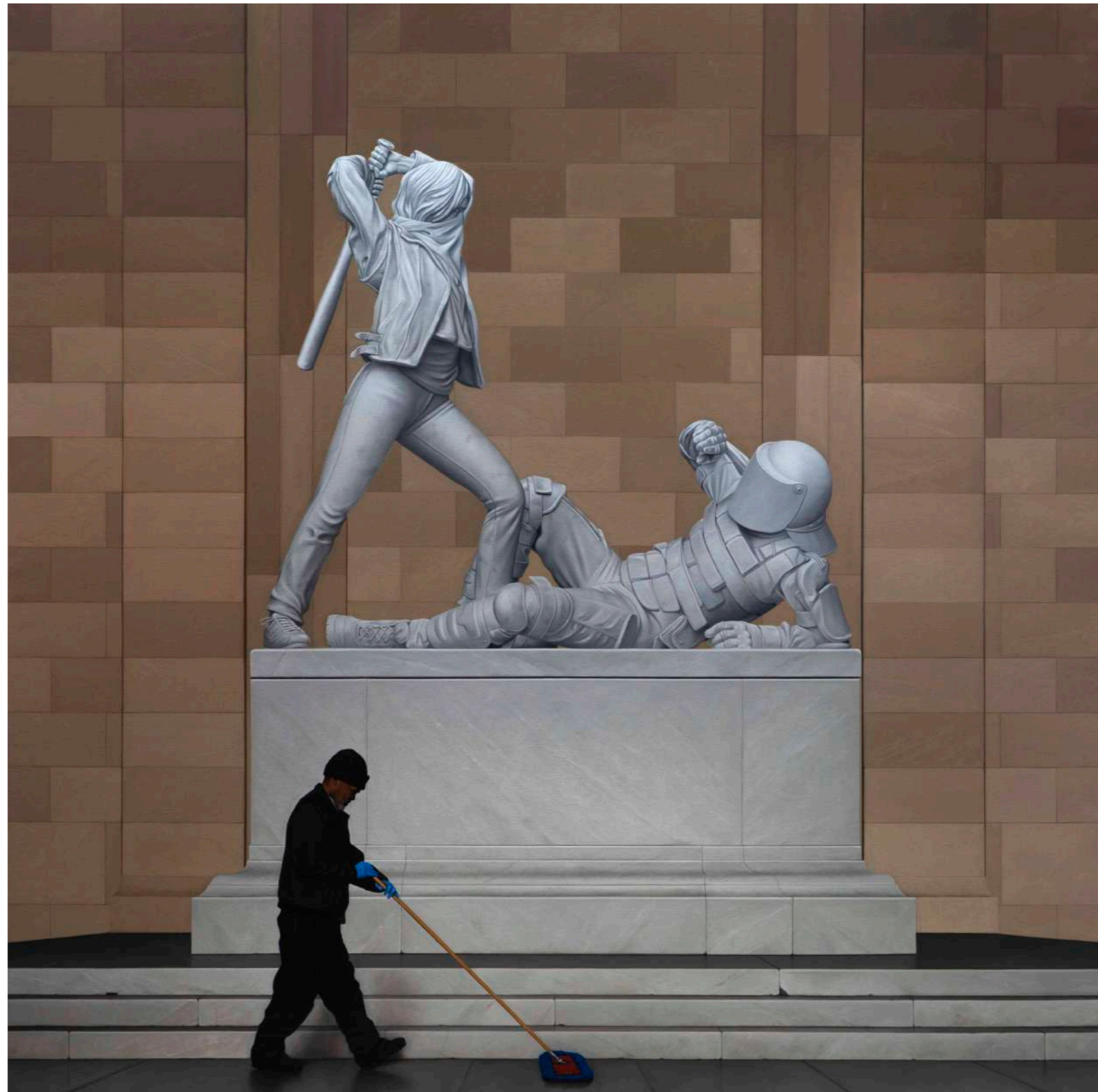
2022

Stainless steel

60 x 25 x 25 cm







Proposal for monument 3 (Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.)

2022

Oil on canvas

200 x 200 cm.





**Model for statue 3
(silver)**

2022

Compressed charcoal on
paper

195 x 200 cm.

Kepa Garraza talks about his recent series *We just want to set the world on fire*

This series follows the wave of protests that swept the world after the widespread lifting of restrictions following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. These protests emerged in a widespread and seemingly spontaneous manner coinciding with the onset of the summer months of 2020. From Minneapolis to Johannesburg, via Santiago de Chile to Paris, a wave of indignation and anger has spread unchecked to all corners of the globe. The reasons are easy to understand: the widespread impoverishment of large sectors of the world's population and the ineffectiveness of many governments in meeting their most basic needs have led to multiple outbursts of violence and indignation across the globe.

Taking this new wave of social conflict as a reference, I have proposed a series of works that try to show the turbulent and uncertainty of these times and offer the viewer a visual testimony of the various protests, riots and revolts that have spread around the world. The starting point for these works has been a selection of images taken from the websites of various news agencies, which offer a graphic and explicit account of the period of extreme social unrest in which we are living. These images show very common scenarios in most of these protests: burning vehicles, police charges, hooded demonstrators, scenes of urban battle, etc.. All of them have served me as references to make a group of drawings in white and black that function as a sort of non-chronological and non-localized account of these conflicts. In these drawings I have eliminated most of the elements that refer to a specific context, so these works function as dislocated representations, scenes that could occur in any corner of the planet.

Along with these works, I have developed another series of drawings where scenes very similar to the previous ones are represented. The difference between both groups of works lies in the fact that this second group of drawings is composed of fictitious recreations that I myself have made. Some of them, of a very different nature from the first ones, have an evident air of artifice and of staging, composition and illumination that prove that they are indeed recreations. Others, on the other hand, have a more ambiguous nature and can be taken for real images taken from the mass media. The drawings that make up this second group of works show the viewer a kind of falsified, ambiguous and undelimited reality with which I intend to force the viewer to question the nature of all the images that make up the project.

In essence, this project attempts to reflect on two fundamental questions. The first one has to do with how this growing social conflict is represented within our cultural sphere and how the narrative of this perpetual conflict evidences a global society in constant crisis. A world that since the beginning of the century seems incapable of facing the profound political, social, ecological and consumption changes that broad sectors of the population are demanding. The second of the essential questions in this project has to do with this idea of the construction of the story and how the new media have helped to create new structures that encourage the propagation of false news and the increasingly partial, biased and emotional chronicle of reality. While the re-lato has always depended on the intentions of the one who was telling it, never has the chronicle of the social seemed to us so fractioned and ungraspable. The drawings that make up this project are intended to reflect this virtual reality where we inhabit much of our time and where it is increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from fiction.



Riot Police

2021

Compressed charcoal on paper

112 x 200 cm.



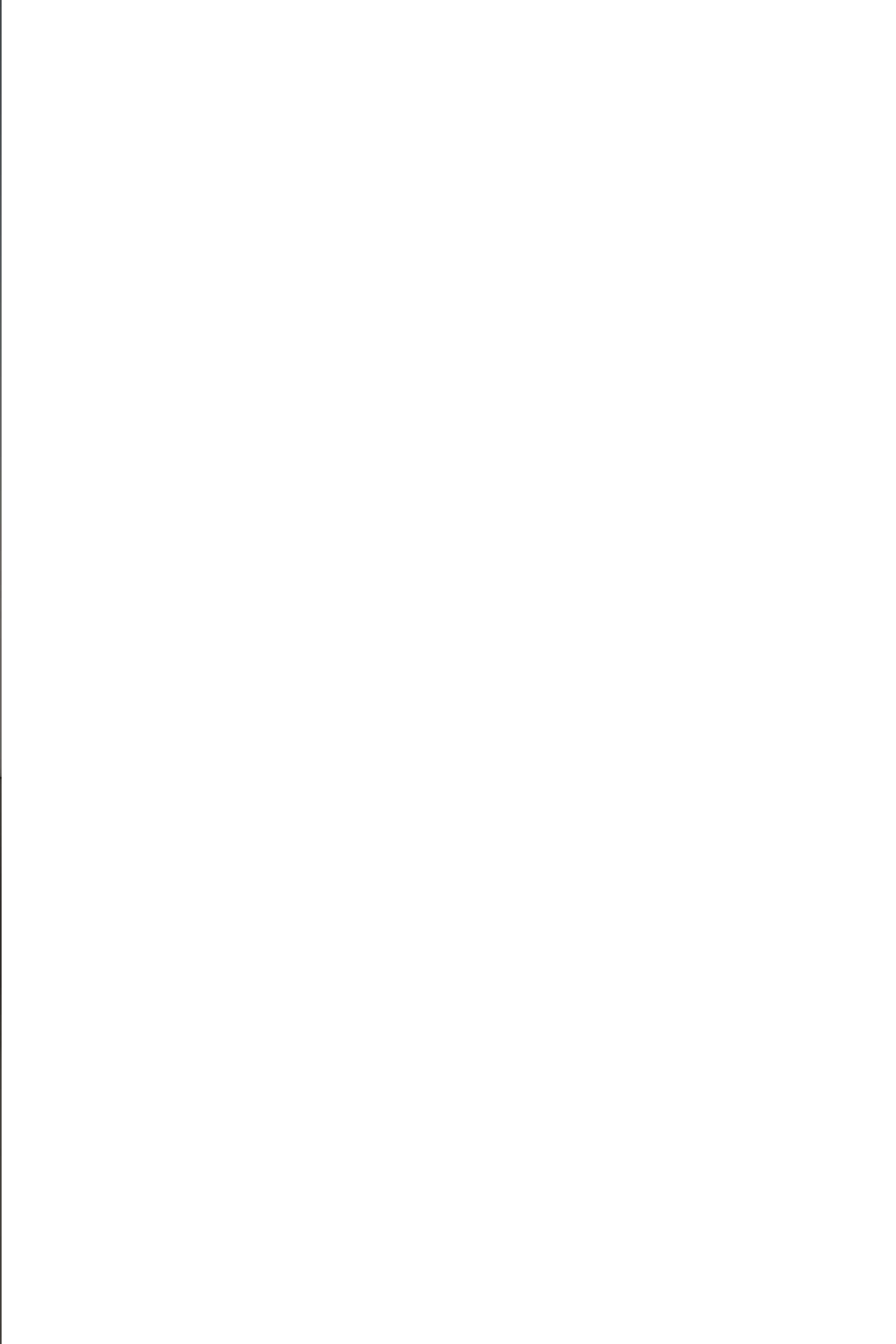


Riot Police 2

2021

Compressed charcoal on paper

128 x 200 cm.





DIY Weapon

2021

Compressed charcoal on paper

70 x 100 cm.





Fire 3

2022

Compressed charcoal on paper

150 x 225 cm.





Protester 2

2022

Compressed charcoal on paper

120 x 100 cm.



Study for Protester 5

2022

Compressed charcoal on paper

150 x 100 cm.

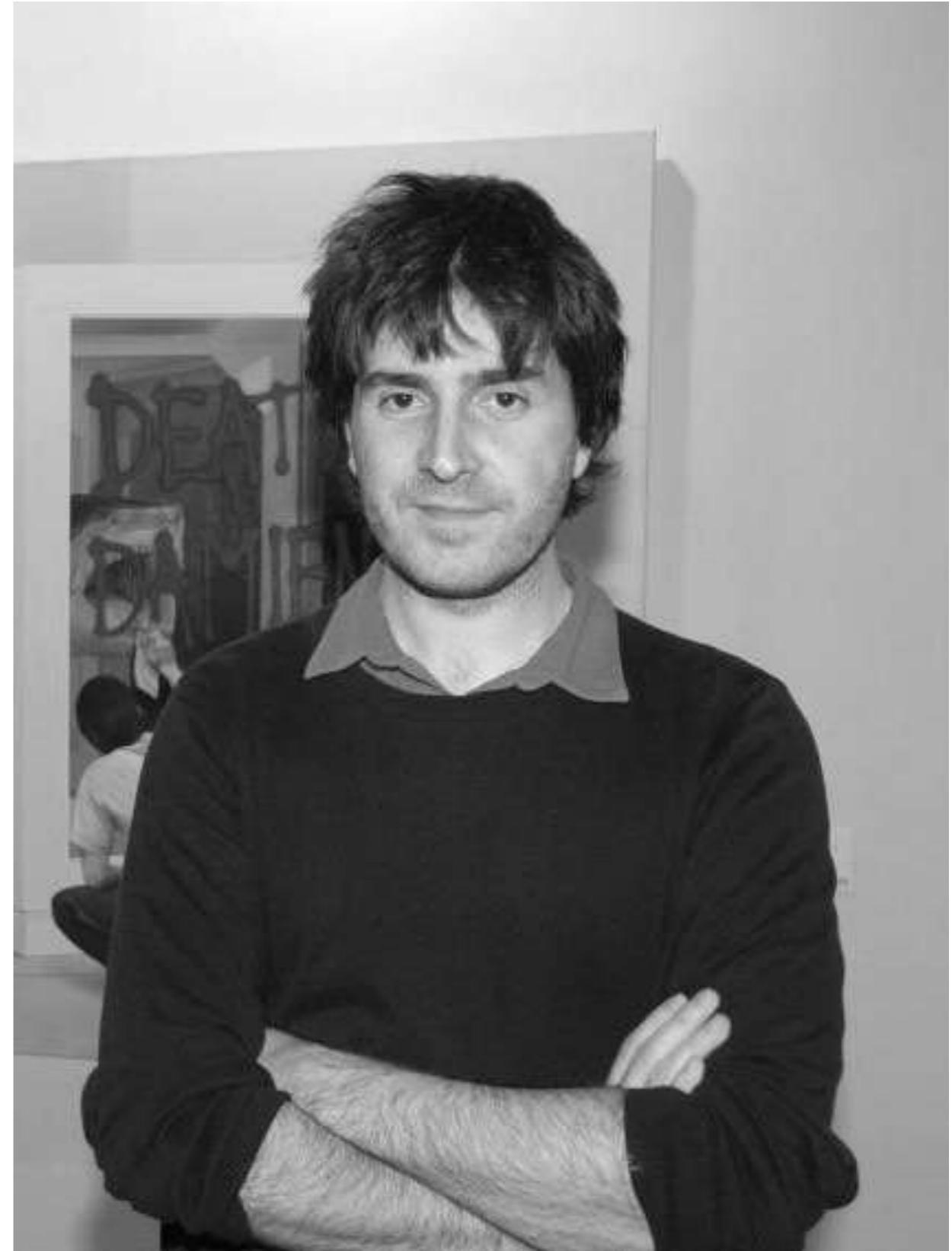
Biography of Kepa Garraza

Berango, Vizcaya, (Spain), 1979

Trained in Fine Arts at the University of the Basque Country, Bradford Art College in England and the University of Barcelona, Kepa Garraza began his exhibition career in 2004, after which he received various study grants and awards. He has shown his work in art centres such as the Patio Herreriano Museum in Valladolid, the CA2M in Madrid, the Artium in Vitoria, the DA2 in Salamanca, the San Telmo Museum in San Sebastian and the BilbaoArte Foundation in Bilbao, as well as art spaces in other countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Peru, Chile and Germany. He has won numerous awards and his work is now part of the holdings of important public and private collections such as Los Bragales, Circa XX, Ibercaja, Iberdrola-UEX, INJUVE, the Community of Madrid, the Artium and Patio Herreriano museums and foundations such as BilbaoArte, Focus-Abengoa, Guasch Coranty and María Cristina Masaveu Peterson.

Kepa Garraza's work reflects on the nature of the images we consume on a daily basis, inviting the viewer to question issues related to identity and the manipulation of information. His work questions official discourses, and questions the processes of institutional legitimization. Deeply interested in the processes of construction of the historical narrative, Garraza invites the viewer to question the information obtained from the official media. His ironic and acidic gaze offers alternatives to the reality we know and proposes a healthy exercise: to always doubt the official version.

The works from his Power series have been created as a reflection on the representation of power in occidental culture from classical Greece to the present day. These artworks use sculpture to produce portraits on paper of historical figures directly related to political or military power.



Photograph by David Palma

Solo Exhibitions (recent)

- 2022
"Nuevos Monumentalismos. We just want to set the world on fire", Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
- 2020
"Propaganda", Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
London Art Fair, Business Design Centre, Londres.
- 2019
"Before/After" (junto con Miguel Aguirre). Galería ATM, Gijón.
- 2018
Apocalypse. Galería T20, Murcia, España.
POWER. Sobering Galerie, París, Francia.
- 2017
OLTRE OGNI RAGIONEVOLE DUBBIO. Academia de España en Roma, Italia.
POWER. Sala Robayera, Cudón, Cantabria, España.
POWER. Galería Víctor Lope, Barcelona, España.
POWER. Combustión Espontánea Art Gallery, Madrid, España.
- 2016
RIOT. Castor Gallery, New York, USA.
Una excusa (Junto a Ángel Garraza). Espacio Marzana, Bilbao, España.
- 2015
This is the end of the world as you know it. Fundación BilbaoArte, Bilbao, España.
This is the end of the world as you know it. Ses Cases Noves, Santanyí, Mallorca, España.
Arte Santander 2015. Solo project Galería ATM, Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos, Santander, España.
This is the end of the world as you know it. Galería ATM, Gijón, España.
Osama. Combustión Espontánea Art Gallery, Madrid, España.
Estampa 2015. Solo project Galería ATM, Matadero, Madrid, España.
- 2014
This is the end of the world as you know it. Galería Víctor Lope, Barcelona, España.
- 2013
Osama, Louis 21, Palma de Mallorca, España.
This is the end of the world as you know it, MA Studio, Beijing, China.
- 2012
Kepa Garraza. Stand EL MUNDO, ARCO 2012, IFEMA, Madrid, España.
Kepa Garraza. Galería Isabel Hurley, Málaga, España.
Kepa Garraza. Galería Nuble, Santander, España.
Kepa Garraza. La Lisa, Albacete, España.
Kepa Garraza, Windsor Kulturgintza, Bilbao, España.
- 2011
Shining Star. Torrene Aretoa, Algorta.
Poéticas de Destrucción (Junto a Marina Núñez). Factoría Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, España.
B.I.D.A. (Brigadas Internacionales para la Destrucción del Arte), Louis 21, Palma de Mallorca, España.
- 2010
B.I.D.A. (Brigadas Internacionales para la Destrucción del Arte), Windsor Kulturgintza, Bilbao, España.
- 2009
Y los llamamos Ángeles Caídos. Galería Juan Manuel Lumbreras, Bilbao, España.
Porque seremos cientos por cada uno de los vuestros, Torre de Ariz, Basauri, España.
B.I.D.A. (Brigadas Internacionales para la Destrucción del Arte), Galería Salvador Díaz, Madrid, España.

Group Exhibitions (recent)

- 2022
ART ON PAPER Brussels, Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
ARCO 2022. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
- 2021
"COMUNIDAD", Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
- 2020
ARCO 2020. Galería Álvaro Alcázar. Madrid, España.
- 2019
"UNO + 1 + ...". Bizkaia Aretoa, Bilbao, España.
NEW FAUSTIAN WORLD, Augeo art Sapce, Rimini, Italia.
REALISMS. Galería Víctor Lope, Barcelona, España.
ZONAMACO 19. Galería ATM, Centro Citibanamex, Ciudad de México, México.
ARCO 2019. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, IFEMA, Madrid, España.
Art Madrid. Galería Víctor Lope, CentroCentro Cibeles, Madrid, España.
NEW FAUSTIAN WORLD, Beatrice Burati Anderson Art Space & Gallery, Venecia, Italia.
Nero. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
- 2018
ARCO 2018. Galería T20, IFEMA, Madrid, España.
DRAWING ROOM. ATM Galería, Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, España.
Pulsión Tectónica. Cruce, Madrid, España.
Art Karlsruhe. Galería Víctor Lope, Messe Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Alemania.
No todo es color. Museo de Pasión, Valladolid, España.
Una Tregua. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
Soñar, morir y despertar. El estado intermedio en la Nueva Colección Pilar Citoler, Palacio de la Audiencia, Soria, España.
Nepotismo Ilustrado. Centro Cultural, La Carolina, España.
ART//edina. Piedra, fuego, cuna. Alcázar de los Condestables, Medina de Pomar, España.
ART ON PAPER. ATM Galería, BOZAR, Bruselas, Bélgica.
Dialogue de l'Ombre Double. Centro de Arte Alcobendas, Alcobendas, España.
Estampa 2018. ATM Galería, IFEMA, Madrid, España.
Después del 68. Arte y prácticas artísticas en el País Vasco 1968-2018. Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao, Bilbao, España, España.
Los Premios Nacionales de Pintura Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos. Museo de la Ciudad, Valencia, España. Museo de la Ciudad, Valencia, España.
ST.ART. Sobering Galerie, Parc Expo, Strasbourg, Alemania.
Una colectiva. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
- 2017
Casal Solleric, Palma de Mallorca, España.
REALISMOS. Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid, España.
X Certamen Nacional de Pintura de La Rioja. Claustro del Parlamento, Logroño, España.
DRAWING ROOM. Galería ATM, Madrid, España.
NO hay color. Casas del Águila y la Parra y Torre don Borja, Santillana del Mar, España.
ADVENTUS. Galería ATM, Gijón
La ausencia del color. Valey Centro Cultural, Castrillón.
FOREVER YOUNG. Casa das Artes, Vigo, España.
Con cabeza. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.
Estampa 2017. Galería T20, Galería ATM y Galería Combustión Espontánea, Matadero, Madrid, España. SWAB. Galería Víctor Lope, Fira de Barcelona, Barcelona, España.
XIII Certamen Unicaja de Artes Plásticas. Museo Unicaja Joaquín Peinado, Ronda, España.
YIA Art Fair. Galería Víctor Lope, Le Carreau Du Temple, París, Francia.
Kunst Zürich. Galería Víctor Lope, ABB Hall 550, Zürich, Alemania.
Picasso, la estela infinita. Galería de Arte del Palacio Municipal, Puebla, España.
Soldaditos de papel. Galería Álvaro Alcázar, Madrid, España.



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