



MUSEU  
D'ART CONTEMPORANI  
DE BARCELONA

Württem  
bergischer  
Kunst  
verein  
Stuttgart

## THE BEAST AND THE SOVEREIGN

► **The exhibition is an exploration of how contemporary artistic practices question and undo the Western and metaphysical definition of political sovereignty.**

► ***The Beast and the Sovereign* brings together the work of some of the most relevant international artists of the last 15 years.**

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**Title:** *The Beast and the Sovereign* **Opening:** Wednesday 18 March 2015, at 7.30 pm **Dates:** from 19 March to 30 August 2015 **Organisation and co-production:** Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV) Stuttgart **Curators:** Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler, Paul B. Preciado and Valentín Roma

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**Organised and co-produced by the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) and the Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV) Stuttgart, this exhibition is an exploration of how contemporary artistic practices question and undo the Western and metaphysical definition of political sovereignty. *The Beast and the Sovereign* brings together the work of some of the most relevant artists from the international scene of the last 15 years who use drawing, painting, installation, artistic research, photography, video and performance to call into question the hitherto accepted seats of sovereignty: the sacred, the nation-state, modern institutions, masculinity, the human and individual autonomy. Reclaiming experiences arising from the politicisation of functional difference, of autism, of animality, of transvestism, of civic cooperation, of the critique of colonial imaginaries and of the construction of dissident subjectivities, these works raise other possible ways of understanding freedom and emancipation as mechanisms for the redistribution of sovereignty.**

The exhibition takes its name from the last seminar conducted by Jacques Derrida in 2002–3, in which the French philosopher analysed the limits of political sovereignty in the Western tradition. For Derrida, the beast and the sovereign embody the two allegorical figures in politics that have historically existed outside of the law: the beast that is supposedly ignorant of the law and the sovereign whose power is defined precisely by the capacity to suspend the law. This ontotheological division gives rise to a series of binary oppositions of gender, class, species, sexuality, race and disability that structure relations of dominance. On the one hand, the beast regarded as animality, nature, femininity, the South, the slave, the colonial site, illness, the

non-white subject, the abnormal. On the other, the sovereign representing the human or even the superhuman, God, the State, masculinity, the North, health, the white and sexually 'normal' subject. Is sovereignty possible beyond power? Can sovereignty occur by questioning these relations of dominance?

*The Beast and the Sovereign* brings together the work of thirty contemporary artists and is structured around four core concepts that also organise different critical and experimental practices: 1) desacralisation, in the sense of the 'inappropriate' use of the sacred; 2) the invention of alternative economies that run counter to the sovereignty of financial capital and the sacrifice and debt economy; 3) the 'improper' uses of the body and a critique of the sovereign definition of heterosexual masculinity and of hierarchies of species, gender and sexuality; 4) the questioning of modern institutions – from the nation-state to the museum, the library and the prison – as places that organise and legitimise objects and discourses, and the invention of new dissident institutionalisms in response to these.

*Works by Efrén Álvarez, Ángela Bonadías and Juan José Olavarría, Peggy Buth, Martin Dammann, Ines Doujak and John Barker, Juan Downey, Edgar Endress, Oier Etxeberria, León Ferrari, Eiko Grimberg, Masist Gül (presented by Banu Cennetoğlu and Philippine Hoegen), Ghasem Hajizadeh, Jan Peter Hammer, Geumhyung Jeong, Glenda León, Julia Montilla, Rabih Mroué, Ocaña, Genesis Breyer P-Orridge, Prabhakar Pachpute, Mary Reid Kelley, Jorge Ribalta, Hans Scheirl, Wu Tsang, Stefanos Tsivopoulos, Viktor Vorobyev & Yelena Vorobyeva, and Sergio Zevallos.*

## Funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation



► PHOTOS [www.macba.cat/press/bestiaisobira4643](http://www.macba.cat/press/bestiaisobira4643)

## Activities

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### *The Beast and the Sovereign*

- ADMISSION TICKET VALID FOR ONE MONTH
- MORE INFORMATION: [www.macba.cat](http://www.macba.cat) and @MACBA\_Barcelona

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- MACBA: Plaça dels Àngels, 1, 08001 Barcelona, [www.macba.cat](http://www.macba.cat)
- OPENING HOURS: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 am to 7.30 pm; Saturdays 10 am to 9 pm; Sundays and Public Holidays, 10 am to 3 pm; Tuesdays except Public Holidays, closed.