

## FM3

3 spanish artists sponsored by SRE

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tres artistas se aventuran en la profundidad y pluralidad de México, alerta... vienen de "la madre patria".

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Could there still be someone who thinks that Spain is México's motherland? Who ever believed that story and, even worse, who believes it still? Is this not an already overcome theory? There are many resentments and groundless angers in history. In México, there is a long-standing battle – stupid and unfruitful – between people from the provinces and the dwellers of the City of México (more informally, "Distrito Federal"), who quarrel over the debate whether it is better to be "defeño" or "provinciano", an absurd loss of time for idle minds. There are – still – also those Mexicans who repeatedly – since they do not normally reflect on it – affirm that Spaniards are the barbarians who destroyed pre-hispanic wealth... hmmm, some really wish to linger in the misunderstood past, indeed! One should not speculate on what México's history would have been without Spain's colonization, but what we can indeed think, discuss and debate is what Mexico proves to be these days and its relationship with today's Spain. Mexico, a culture made up of disparities, magical, avant-garde, old, new, harsh, intense; a fantastic experience to some, unbearable to others and, despite everything, unforgettable.

In these days in which the migratory flows are commonplace rather than constant, it is appropriate to remember that travelling, to a creative and fruitful mind – the artist, represents an invaluable opportunity for living experiences that will enrich both the person and his / her works. An open-minded being, who is receptive and curious, tries to digest even the most mundane things he or she encounters; that person knows how to see, how to read in everyday features and, in this respect, the artistic production becomes the natural container of all the trips, of the accumulation of all the experiences. Curiously enough, while in Mexico a high percentage of artists are constantly seeking grants, stay residences, exhibitions and all the other possibilities for temporarily staying in the "top ten" countries (mainly Canada, USA, UK, Spain, France and Germany), why should an artist wish to come to Latin-America from Spain?

¿Why come to Mexico? Perhaps some do have the curiosity to see and to directly discern the existence or the lack of influence from the Iberian country? Perhaps it is a syndrome of the colonizing countries? It is maybe the use of a common language? What will be the real impact like once one is in Mexico? Will they suffer from cultural indigestion caused by the multiple layers of information which co-exist there? Maybe this is the other revenge of Moctezuma?

Many of these questions can be answered or suggested through the experiences of Susana Guerrero, Almudena Rodríguez and Mónica Sotos, Spanish artists who chose to travel to México in order to establish a temporary stay residence for artistic research and production. In each of the cases, the visual artists were undoubtedly influenced or marked by this stay – not a short one – on Mexican ground.

It is no simple task to try to express one's own ideas on a foreign country without falling into stereotypes, and this is only possible after a careful watching of that different everyday life; it is necessary to overcome the first impressions, or the astonishment involved in knowing a new culture, to understand that "other" social tissue. FM3 exhibition encompasses a huge number of works which go beyond the common clichés which are associated with Mexico or which, on the contrary, justly reinterprets some signs of the Mexican culture.

**Almudena Rodríguez** performs her artistic proposals through bi-dimensionality, making specific use of painting and drawing. During her stay in Mexico she produced a pictorial series with large formats, works which are made up of layers and layers of information which could, at first sight, seem unconnected, but which are, on the contrary, deliberately interconnected. This characteristic of her works could be one of the consequences of her contact with the Mexican culture and with the diverse realities coexisting in it; Almudena brings together mixed references, thereby creating complex fields of relationships, narrative warps. Cartoon characters can be distinguished in Almudena's works, such as Heidi, Popeye, Spiderman, or one can find religious references such as ex-votos, small miracles, popular representations of Christ or the Virgin. But what can be perceived in most of her works the presence of the stain, a deliberate stain or an accidental stain, on the paper or on the fabric; the stain as a plastic element living there and participating.

Rather than using popular figures which are to be perceived as synonyms of the Mexican identity, or including local Mexican elements in her works, Almudena interprets heterogeneous images which are consumed in Mexicans' average everyday-life, paying attention, for example, to social conflicts such as the terrible genocide case known as "the dead women of Juárez", a theme which she has dealt with for a long time and which she includes in some of her works.

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