



**Media only:** Glenn Dixon (202) 633-2807; [dixond@si.edu](mailto:dixond@si.edu)  
Chris Wailoo (202) 633-2833; [wailooc@si.edu](mailto:wailooc@si.edu)

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**Hirshhorn Presents “Black Box: Santiago Sierra and Jorge Galindo”**  
*Video of Unofficial Motorcade Expands Artists’ Controversial Collaboration*

In August 2012, Santiago Sierra (Spanish, b. Madrid, 1966; lives and works in Madrid) and Jorge Galindo (Spanish, b. Madrid, 1965; lives and works in London) organized an unusual motorcade along one of the most prestigious thoroughfares in the Spanish capital. Seven black Mercedes-Benz sedans made their way down the Gran Vía, each car incongruously topped with an upended monumental portrait of King Juan Carlos I or one of the six prime ministers of the Spanish democracy. Running Feb. 14 through May 18 at the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, “Black Box: Santiago Sierra and Jorge Galindo” presents “Los Encargados [Those in Charge]” (2012), the six-minute single-channel video the artists made of this event.

Sierra is best known for provocative sociopolitical artworks that challenge conventional perceptions, advocate for the disenfranchised and protest the exploitation of workers. Galindo’s practice is centered on painting. His most recent work includes two- and three-dimensional cardboard structures and found-object combines assembled from metal scraps and auto-body parts, which are then used as the supports for gestural abstractions.

Galindo and Sierra began collaborating as art students at the University of Madrid. Rebellious against the conventional nature of their training and the limited opportunities to show politically progressive work in established venues, the two turned to street art: graffiti and murals.

In some ways, “Los Encargados” marks a return to the tactics of the artists’ student days. Because the application for official permission to conduct the performance was rejected, the shoot, involving almost a dozen cameras, was carried out guerrilla-style. The motorcycle that can at times be seen accompanying the procession is in fact that of a journalist covering the event. When police

attempted to shut down the production, the journalist's presence was used to assert the legitimacy of the artists' action.

The pointed gesture of the upside-down portraits had its genesis in the artists' disillusionment with government programs and policies and their indignation over the suffering caused by the economic downturn, as well as their disappointment with what has and has not happened during 40 years under democratic regimes. Also, the project coincided with a public controversy: The government commissioned a costly portrait of the prime minister, considered by many to be an extravagance in light of Spain's financial crisis. The concept and style of the portraits in the video allude to the history of the Gran Vía. During the artists' youth, the road had been home to many cinemas and was lined with hand-painted billboards of movie stars. Galindo and Sierra located the last craftsmen to have worked on these advertisements and commissioned them to realize their designs for the portraits used in the performance.

The soaring soundtrack that accompanies the video is "Warszawianka." Used as an anthem by Polish workers in 1905, the song has been adopted by populist movements worldwide. Heard frequently in Spain during their Civil War (1936–39), it is also recognizable as the score for footage of the October Revolution in the opening credits of the 1997 movie "The Jackal." Composed by Waclaw Świącicki, the song is heard here in a 1993 performance by the Alexandrov Ensemble.

Although Sierra and Galindo's performance evokes the spirit of the protest works by their compatriot Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) and plays out in the streets of their hometown, its implications are global. The artists' combination of "found" audio and fabricated visual elements asks viewers to pay heed to the actions of the governing elite and to give thought to "those in charge."

### **About Black Box**

Since 2005, Black Box has featured work by emerging and established artists and artist collectives, including Francis Alÿs, Ori Gersht, Phoebe Greenberg, Jesper Just, Ali Kazma, Kimsooja, Takeshi Murata, Rivane Neuenschwander, Hans Op de Beeck, Semiconductor, Superflex and Guido van der Werve, among others. The artists represent a broad range of nations and approaches to new media. Black Box is organized by curator Kelly Gordon.

### **Related Programs**

The Hirshhorn offers a range of interactive educational experiences designed to engage people of all interest levels in contemporary art; consult [hirshhorn.si.edu](http://hirshhorn.si.edu) for a complete schedule. Also available on the website is the museum's archive of podcasts, which makes gallery walk-throughs and interviews with artists accessible internationally.

## **About the Hirshhorn**

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian's museum of international modern and contemporary art, has nearly 12,000 paintings, sculptures, photographs, mixed-media installations, works on paper and new media works in its collection. The Hirshhorn presents diverse exhibitions and offers an array of public programs that explore modern and contemporary art. Located at Independence Avenue and Seventh Street S.W., the museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (closed Dec. 25). Admission to the galleries and special programs is free. For more information about exhibitions and events, visit [hirshhorn.si.edu](http://hirshhorn.si.edu). Follow the Hirshhorn on Facebook at [facebook.com/hirshhorn](https://facebook.com/hirshhorn), on Twitter at [twitter.com/hirshhorn](https://twitter.com/hirshhorn) and on Tumblr at [hirshhorn.tumblr.com](http://hirshhorn.tumblr.com). Or sign up for the museum's eBlasts at [hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/social-media](http://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/social-media). To request accessibility services, contact Kristy Maruca at [marucak@si.edu](mailto:marucak@si.edu) or (202) 633-2796, preferably two weeks in advance.

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