

Media Release

Aug. 24, 2015

Media only:

Kelly Carnes 202.633.2825: carnesk@si.edu

Media website: <http://www.hirshhorn.si.edu/press/>

Demons Exorcised in Hirshhorn's "Black Box: Sergio Caballero," an International Museum Debut Through Jan. 3

*Spanish Artist's Humorous and Grotesque Film Combines
Slapdash Animation and Live Action*



Artist and filmmaker Sergio Caballero (Spanish, b. 1966, Barcelona; lives and works in Barcelona) makes his international museum debut at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. The exhibition "Black Box: Sergio Caballero," which runs through Jan. 3, 2016, consists of a single 25-minute film, "Ancha es Castilla" or "N'importe quoi" (2014). (These titles loosely translate to "Anything Goes" and "Whatever," among other renderings, but the artist prefers not to provide translations.)

Smithsonian Institution Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
MRC 350 PO Box 37012 Washington DC 20013-7012
Telephone 202.633.1618 Fax 202.633.8796
Independence Avenue at Seventh Street SW, Washington DC

Relating a darkly comic tale of a child's exorcism, the film blends homespun puppet animation and live action, its aesthetic deliberately low budget and slapdash. Caballero's characters are agglomerations of food, hair, plant materials, cardboard, plastic, foam rubber, rubber bands, surgical tubing, fabric scraps, clothespins and googly eyes. The dialogue is largely in English, but the artist also provides English subtitles, since the voice acting intentionally verges on being incomprehensible.

Caballero engages with the tradition of the grotesque, taking inspiration from the "black paintings" made by Goya in the early 19th century and adapting it to current-day models. The filmmaker's many pop-cultural touchstones include the 1973 horror film *The Exorcist*, the Sex Pistols' 1977 punk anthem "God Save the Queen" and any number of low-budget monster thrillers.

The film's soundtrack mixes classical warhorses such as Johann Sebastian Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" and Edvard Grieg's "Morning Mood" from "Peer Gynt" with dissonant synth blasts from electronic noise band EVOL, the duo of Roc Jiménez de Cisneros and Stephen Sharp, who make what they call "computer music for hooligans."

Caballero is also a composer and a founder and co-organizer of Sónar, Barcelona's International Festival of Advanced Music and New Media Art. His earliest activities include working with the graffiti collective Los Rinos and the electronic music band Jumo during the late 1980s and early 1990s. His surreal feature films, *La Distancia* (2014) and *Finisterrae* (2010), have cult followings on the festival circuit.

For more information about the artist and the exhibition, visit hirshorn.si.edu/collection/sergio-caballero.

Photo: Still from Sergio Caballero's "Ancha es Castilla" or "N'importe quoi" (2014).
Courtesy of the artist