

Txomin Badiola (Bilbao, 1957) sees artwork as the expression of conflicts between discourses, forms, meanings, signs and references. With a permanently critical attitude towards both the possibility of making art and the ways in which art is presented and legitimized, Badiola mixes the history of art with his own intimate biography, personal experience with anthropological reflection, and a sense of the past with the need for the past to be redefined in the present.

In his sculptures, installations, photographs and videos construction is inseparable from deconstruction, whether at a formal level — through the constant reinvention of the possibilities of both space and the object — or at an ideological level, inasmuch as citations, references or historical relations are always affected by the contexts in which they are used, thus altering their possible meanings. He invokes the history of art with references ranging from Caravaggio to Malevich, and makes allusions to art from the second half of the 20th Century such as Oteiza or North American minimal or conceptual art, as well as the iconoclastic cinematography of Godard, Pasolini and Fassbinder, the literary work of Jean Genet, Lacanian psychoanalysis, the critical work of Barthes, Foucault and Frederic Jameson, or the pop-rock culture of groups like the Pet Shop Boys and the Barbarians.

Txomin Badiola is one of the principal players in the group that, since the mid-1980s, has been referred to as “New Basque Sculpture”. While none of the artists associated with this tendency have identified themselves with the designation, a collective process of debate and diffusion of ideas does exist, and has influenced the artistic practices of a whole group of Basque artists of this generation, among whom Txomin Badiola is a key figure, along with others such as Ángel Bados, Pello Irazu, Juan Luis Moraza and María Luisa Fernández.

In approaching the work of Txomin Badiola, one element to take into account is that the spaces of his works are frequently both interior and exterior ones. Upon entering them, the spectator may feel simultaneously outside and inside. To some extent this relates to Oteiza’s notion of “negative space”, but unlike the sculptor from Guipuzcoa, Badiola does not think in terms of subtraction; his project has more to do with addition. In contrast to what we might call a position of modernist orthodoxy, such as that of Oteiza, based upon the premise that “less is more”, Badiola’s position is a postmodern one: accumulative. Nevertheless, the result in both cases is similar: with his accumulation of signs and references what the artist seeks is a void or a flight from expression (“more is less”), in order to avoid that everything close in on any single thing, thus maintaining a dynamic tension in the space. Txomin Badiola shoulders the “bastard” condition of investigating the paradoxes and contradictions of a burgeoning modernity, against the dominant ideological context, a version of postmodernity that tends to exterminate it. “Bad interpretation” and “bad forms” become

the operative principles of a strategy of resistance and subversion, through which Badiola reexamines, in both his work and his writing, the relationship between the local and the global, between form and concept, between art and life.

*Another Family Plot* is an anthological exhibit, conceived specifically for the space of the Palacio de Velázquez, and in its preparation it makes manifest the binomial between construction and critical deconstruction that characterizes all Badiola's work. The artist has responded to the Reina Sofía Museum's invitation with an exhibit that is the result of a curatorial process that is both collective and singular. The selection of works presented is fruit of a process of discussion with a group of artists which has accompanied Badiola's work throughout his career — Ana Laura Aláez, Ángel Bados, Jon Mikel Euba, Pello Irazu, Asier Mendizabal, Itziar Okariz and Sergio Priego — as well as a group of younger creators — Lorea Alfaro, Zigor Barayazarra, Leo Burge and Jon Otamendi — who by taking on certain technical tasks, and in exchange with the former group of artists, have helped him to maintain a decentered position.

The exhibit is ultimately structured in eight major areas or sections: Desiring, bastard and unsatisfied forms; Surviving among the signs. Being a sign; An image self. Ineluctable alterity. All is vanity; Public necessities/ Private passions; The group, the gang and the commando; Avatars of form; Spaces, bodies and languages; and last, a thematic thread that runs through all the others, The phrase-image-thing. These sections summarize the principle constants throughout Badiola's artistic practice. The exhibit does not entirely renounce a certain linearity: it has sought to acknowledge the accumulation of issues addressed his work as well as the evolution of his ways of approaching them, but the relationship established between these areas is not a chronological one: works of different periods are presented simultaneously, generating structural meta-commentaries and brusque leaps in time, flashbacks and flash forwards that evoke forgotten origins or point to paths not explored.

The polysemy of the family plot that gives the exhibit its title is revealed in the curatorial project's autonomy with respect to the museum institution. Through a dialogical exercise of construction, dissolution and reconstruction of the subject of the author, *Another Family Plot* is also an exhibit in which, just as Jean-Luc Godard tells himself about himself in film and in writing, Txomin Badiola is told to us by Txomin Badiola.

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