

PRESS RELEASE:

GALERÍA JM

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Fuera de serie: (newbody & Agnus Dei)

José Carlos Casado Mancha

José Carlos Casado, always interested in technology applied to visual arts, sciences and humanism, has been investigating the “new virtual identity”, developing a creative work based in the questioning of the artificial reproduction and the cloning of humans.

“*fuera de serie*”¹ is the title of Casado’s new exhibition presented at Galería JM using different forms (video, photography, sculpture) and which the artist divides into two series: “*newbody*” and “*Agnus Dei*”. The first one corresponds to the continuity of his last work. The space of his representations seems to be populated by strange and sensual beings that experiment mutated relationships following the rhythm of a ritual dance, which suggests reproduction in series in regards of the dismantling of the individual identity. The cloned bodies of these artworks multiply their number but remain identical, turned into a new collective body enveloping the spectator with uncountable questions about the ways technology is affecting the human culture.

In his new series *Agnus Dei*², José Carlos Casado connects with *newbody*, this time also worrying about contemporary global conflicts and its perverse way to “take control”. He reflects on the American empire’s claim of control and economic as well as military domination, with the resulting appropriation of resources and preservation of the global supremacy over that other part of the world – the oriental – that threatens to develop its big potential on all fronts. Using a critical and ironic tone, the artist allegorizes the redemption showing the sacrifice of the mythic superhero comes down: *Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. “*Agnus Dei*”, based in a painting by *Caravaggio* with the same title, composed by the picture of a lamb prepared for the sacrifice. This original series represents the American hero mortified, presented as ridiculous redeemer, sent to fulfill absurd missions in landscapes and sceneries of Asia, whose threat to turn into the next superpower is imminent. A sarcastic political comment directed at the future from the closest present and presented on the blurred border between the fictitious and the real, which characterizes the complex work of Casado.

¹ From Spanish: *Out of stock*, but also *something too extraordinary to be true*.

² From Latin: *Lamb of God*

José Carlos Casado Mancha (Málaga, 1971), educated as an artist in Spain (B.A. in Fine Arts from Madrid, UCM), the UK and the USA (MFA, School of Visual Arts, NY), received important scholarships, to name a few, the *New York Foundation for the Arts* (NYFA) and the *Picasso Foundation*, whose project could be seen in the Museo Municipal de Málaga in autumn 2002. His work was been internationally shown, in different cities of Asia, America and Europe; especially outstanding was his participation in the *Sundance Film Festival* (Utah, USA) and the IX Digital Salon in New York, both in 2001, and the *Seoul Biennale* in 2004. He currently lives in New York, where he shows at *Postmasters Gallery*. He is currently exhibiting in the show “*Can We Fall In Love With a Machine*” at *Wood Street Galleries*, Pittsburgh, USA.

ESSAY:

DO THE CLONES DREAM OF DIGITAL SUPERHEROES?

JUAN FRANCISCO FERRÉ

*In that moment, he knew its purpose, knew the reason for suffering,
fear, sex, and death. It was all intended to keep human slaves imprisoned
in physical bodies while a monstrous matador waved his cloth in the sky,
sword ready for the kill.*

William Burroughs

THE CLONES “In the post-modernity, the body is the battlefield of excellence”, seem to declare these swarms of clones which dance connected in a choreography whose meaning escapes us every time that, imperceptibly, the device they are depending on in their electronic survival forces them to start over the staging of a postponed end. “Yes, but, which body?”, they ask us in their suggestive, ambiguous language “the artificial or the natural?”. Around their multiple centers, there aren't noticeable differences in this indefinite repetition of suggestive gestures, rhythmic steps and entangled pirouettes. The new, animated bodies celebrate in this virtual dance their simulated morphology without wondering about the organic model they are descending from. Products of the highest technology of indifference, these algorithmic organisms have abolished the memory of their individual origin, as well as the cognitive distinction between reality and unreality, natural and artificial life. Despite all this, the sexual power of their physical presence and the graphic seduction of their graceful movements still remind us of the antique attraction of the flesh and its possible resurrection in a technological environment with completely renewed organs, in connection with the most defiant and radical drifts of the contemporary world. The human becoming a *machine* and the machine becoming *human*. Nonetheless, these digitalized replicas do not necessarily talk to us about the future, nor, of course, *from* the future. They are rather situated in a parallel dimension, speculative picture of an inexistent present, a crystal clear chronology constructed by cybernetic medias. This group of media-pretences generates, with the unchangeable rhythm of its circular evolution, a new, dislocated time. A post-human temporality where life and

death, old-fashioned categories, have been substituted by a mimetic form of reproduction, expanded to the infinite. In these times of omnipresence of the pretence and the multiplication of pictures without any resemblance, the eternal life of the glorious body, touched up by the publicity, the cosmetic surgery, the latest special effects and the genetic engineering, has turned into an accessible instantaneous immortality. The revolutionary beauty of the virtual life is to be found exactly in realizing its condition of pure desire without any need. This is one of the most sublime and persistent aspiration of human beings.

THE SUPERHEROES. Before the clones, an urban legend says, there were the superheroes. They all agreed their surname outgrew them, being as big as the controversial world they were executing their operations in. Rather superseded, these so-called heroes without superpowers, this team of ragged antiheroes. Nearly nobody remembers the disastrous missions in whom they were obliged to serve a spectral power, which was lacking recognizable features but not the authority to give despotic orders. Whereas everyone remembers with nostalgia the times when one still believed firmly in the efficiency of these uniformed zombies against the bad, or when their infallible sense of justice was postulated. They were sent to any country, preferably to the Far East, but every time they seemed more disorientated. They realized their interventions mechanically or unadventurous, without understanding the reason of the battle and the damages caused among the population. As if the absence of shared ideals laded more heavily over their weak bodies than the weight accumulated along years and defeats. Exhausted and demoralized, these soldiers of the empire used to appear suddenly where they were less expected, especially in peaceful Asiatic landscapes and other tourist sceneries, multiplying immediately the number of their forces as a kind of individual camouflage and tactical occupation of the territory. How ridiculous must have felt the members of this unit of failed redeemers, every time they arrived on the enemies' territory, dressed up in these parodied costumes, farcical memory of a glorious past! Exhausted warriors of a technological time, carrying out spiritless the strategies designed by a planetary net of cybernetic intelligences controlling the operation of the global system without understanding the meaning of any human action not countable in efficiency and benefits. Maybe that's why some historians still speculate about the possibility that these degraded guards of the planet weren't real beings, but three-dimensional pretences, an equipment of ubiquitous holograms preceding of a military experiment which was cancelled because of its obvious uselessness . During their last years, nobody took them too seriously, not even themselves. Their disappearance was a relief for everybody.

Opening hours: Monday to Saturday morning: 11:00 to 13:30 hrs. Monday to Friday evening: 18:00 to 21:00 hrs.

For more information, please contact the gallery

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