

Cards on the Table

The memory of Nunca Más and the stacked political cards

November 11, 2022 – February 10, 2023

Museo Reina Sofía, Nouvel Building, Library and Documentation Center, Space D

Monday to Friday, 9 am to 9 pm



Platform against the Black Mockery. *Ace of Cups* from *A baralla do Prestige* [The Prestige Pack], 2003

On November 19, 2022 it will be exactly twenty years since the oil tanker *Prestige* sank off the coast of Galicia, a crisis whose mismanagement met with an overwhelming public response. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers arrived from all parts of the world to remove the spilt fuel-oil from the beaches while a wave of artists united creativity, wit and protest on behalf of an emerging global ecological awareness.

To mark the anniversary, the cultural association Unha Gran Burla Negra [A Great Black Mockery] is seeking to recall, investigate, disseminate, and reactivate the popular memory of those events through a project for a publication and an exhibition. It has therefore produced *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro* [The Bagpiping Tanker, 2022], an artistic pack of cards that satirically combines memories of the *Nunca Máis* [Never Again] movement with the popular imagery of Galicia to form a visual archive, a mnemonic device at the service of a critical commemoration of this twentieth anniversary. This pack and its original illustrations, the result of the work of draftsmen, photographers, graphic artists, and designers, forms the backbone of *Cards on the Table*, a documentary exhibition on playing cards as a form of political art, which is on show in Space D of the Library and Documentation Center.

To contextualize the project, other series of cards linked to political struggles and demands are also displayed. Some date back to 19th-century republicanism while others bring us up to the present day, with ecologist, feminist, pacifist, or anti-racist packs. The display also includes posters for the *Nunca Máis* movement and enlargements of the cards in *A baralla do Prestige* [The Prestige Pack, 2003], created by the 'Platform against the Black Mockery', a group to which *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro* also pays tribute. With all this, the exhibition aims to stimulate broader reflection on playing cards as a complex device with popular roots that blends leisure, protest, humor, and design.

On *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro*, 2022

In 2003 the Platform against the Black Mockery brought out *A baralla do Prestige* [The Prestige Pack], a pack of cards to denounce the mismanagement of the *Prestige* tragedy and the economic and political interests that led to it. This set of cards was aesthetically counterposed to another that was sadly famous: the pack which showed the forty 'most wanted' members of Saddam Hussein's government during the American invasion of Iraq.



Fernando Tomé Castedo, *A Burla Negra* [The Black Mockery], illustration for *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro*, 2022



Noemí Núñez, *Chapapote* [Oil Slick], illustration for *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro*, 2022



Alba Troitero, *O Peliqueiro* [The Peliqueiro], illustration for *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro*, 2022

A baralla do Prestige sold out in less than three months, but along the way some of its designs were turned into striking placards, like giant playing cards, which activists displayed during demonstrations against the mishandling of the catastrophe. Two decades later, *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro* recalls that action through 125 figures, some associated with the Prestige or various other contemporary economic and ecological crises, and others with popular memory, folklore and mythology, and with a situated heritage and history.

Besides this wealth of symbolism, the project is notable for the graphic and aesthetic diversity of its design, which involved a hundred artists committed to the Galician context, including emerging figures in today's comics, political graphics, or visual arts. At the same time, the rich graphic heritage of the Nunca Máis movement occupies a prominent place with some of its historic designs. From 2002 to 2004, graphic guerrillas and design collectives activated a whole imagery of intervention, often anonymously, with mechanisms of replication and appropriationism at the intersection between the analog and the digital. With irony and a festive spirit, these groups thus sought to liberate the forms of popular culture from the constraints of local custom, confronting the colonialist and tourist images of them that were fostered by the institutions.

On Unha Gran Burla Negra

Since 2017, the cultural association Unha Gran Burla Negra [A Great Black Mockery] has been helping to preserve the memory and archives linked to Nunca Máis. Its executive group is made up of researchers, historians, cultural managers, creators, and artists. The association holds dialogues with the different civic and artistic platforms that were formed after the accident of the Prestige and led the movement of protest against the mismanagement of that ecological crisis, and it also reaches out to new collectives, groups, and associations.



Wences Lamas, *Veciños en loita* [Neighbors in the Struggle], illustration for *O Ghaiteiro Petroleiro*, 2022

Organized by:

Museo Reina Sofía

In collaboration with:

Unha Gran Burla Negra



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Program:

Documentary Exhibitions,
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