

**Exposición** 16 April – 30 August 2015

Parque del Retiro. Palacio de Cristal

# Federico Guzmán

## Tuiza. The Cultures of the Bedouin Tent



Federico Guzmán, *Tuiza. The Cultures of the Bedouin Tent*, 2015, exhibition view

*Tuiza*, in the Hassaniya Arabic dialect of the African Bidan, is work that is carried out in collective solidarity. It refers to the act of gathering, participating, and constructing something with everyone's involvement. *Tuiza* is the essence of this project by Federico Guzmán, not only because of the peculiar creative process of the *melhfas* (traditional Saharan costumes) made by the women of the Saharan refugee camp of Bokhador, but also because this great tent is presented as a space of hospitality and conversation between cultures, where workshops and other kinds of collective activity will take place throughout the opening period of the exhibition.

Federico Guzmán (Seville, 1964) emerged forcefully onto the Spanish art scene in the mid-eighties. After what is regarded as a period of apprenticeship, a certain sense of rootlessness gave rise to an impulse to connect with other traditions and systems of thought. While staying in the nineties in New York and afterwards in Bogota, his interest became focused on collective projects spread across public places and involving the creative participation of those present, sharpening his awareness of the ability of art to change society, and understanding the figure of the artist and his work as inextricable from the context in which he lives. As he says himself, his artistic practice is like a laboratory for experimenting with alternative visions, democratic, altruistic and ecological, which will place economic exchange once more at the service of the planet and the men, women and living beings that inhabit it. He therefore envisages art as a tool for making visible the strained relationship between economy and ecology, where the administrative norms of "the house" chafe against the spirit or wisdom charged with the care of what occurs inside it. Without renouncing a poetic and personal language, his projects always fluctuate between the individual and the collective, often adopting participatory forms like workshops or more permanent schools or teaching activities of various kinds, frequently imbued with a ludic and even ironic component. Projects like the *museo de la calle* with the Cambalache group (1998-2001), *Copilandia* with the Gratis group (2005) and *La Canción del Tomaco* (2012) are among the most paradigmatic examples of his creative career.

Federico Guzmán has had connections with the Sahara for more than seven years, sharing experiences with its people and its native culture under the auspices of ARTifariti (the Art and Human Rights Festival of the Western Sahara) and ESA (the Saharan Arts School). For the artist, the consequence of these personal experiences is this project for the Palacio de Cristal, where an enormous Arab tent, a *khaima*, has been pitched to enter into dialogue with the space of the historic building. Its design is the result of a collaboration with the architects Charo Escobar and Maripi Rodríguez. In the traditional homes of the desert nomads, the roof of this great construction is made out of *benias*, a fine but tough acrylic textile that is always decorated with multicolored geometric motifs. In this case, however, the artist has replaced the usual *benias* on the sides with *melhfas*, the Saharan women's costumes mentioned above. The women of the refugee camp of Bokhador themselves designed and dyed the fabrics specifically for this project in a workshop organized by the artist. The final result is a great translucent painting accompanied by carpets, cushions and seats lined with brocade, all together creating a space where visitors can meet and rest, and a platform where different events can be set in motion each day.

**Museo Nacional  
Centro de Arte Reina Sofía**

**Palacio de Velázquez**  
Parque del Retiro, Madrid

**Opening Hours**

From April to September  
Every day from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.



You can check the timetable  
of activities of this project on  
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