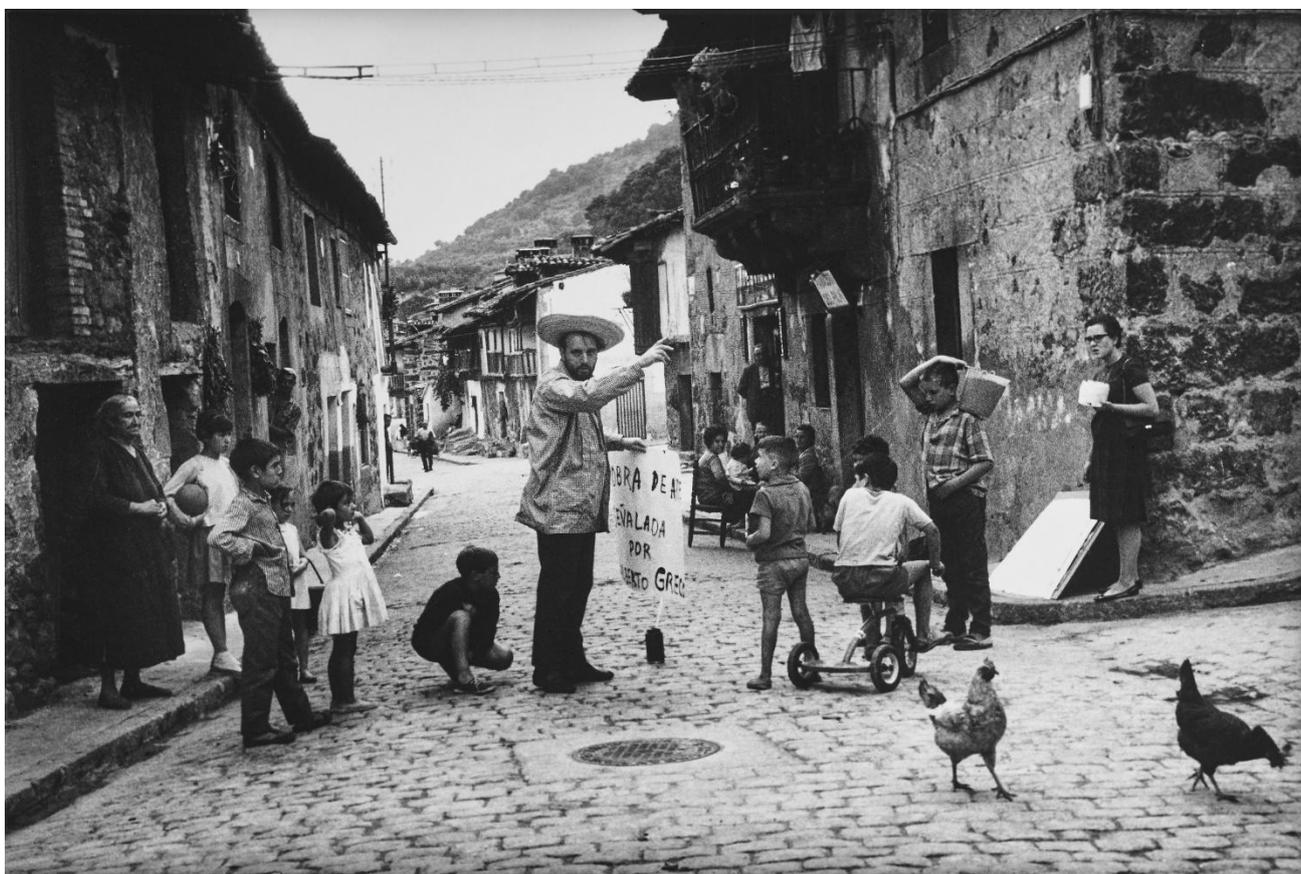


On view from 11 February to 8 June 2026

THE REINA SOFÍA PRESENTS ALBERTO GRECO. VIVA EL ARTE VIVO, A RETROSPECTIVE ON ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE FIGURES IN THE INTERNATIONAL AVANT-GARDE



Photograph by Montserrat Santamaría. A vivo-dito act by Alberto Greco in Piedralaves, 1963.
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- The Argentinian artist, who always operated on the margins of established norms, founded *arte vivo* in 1962 as a declaration that the artist must not show with a painting but rather “instruct to see with the finger” that which happened in the street.
- The exhibition displays over 200 works and documents that bear witness to his literary and visual art work and his actions in public space.

Museo Reina Sofía director, **Manuel Segade**, presented the exhibition **Alberto Greco. Viva el arte vivo** on Tuesday alongside **Marta Rivera de la Cruz**, a representative from Madrid City Council's Area of Culture, Tourism and Sport and a collaborator on the show, and **Fernando Davis**, its curator.

This retrospective on the artistic and literary output of Alberto Greco (Buenos Aires, 1931 – Barcelona, 1965) is on view from **11 February to 8 June 2026** on Floor 0 of the Museo Reina Sofía's **Sabatini Building**. By way of more than **200 works and documents** extending across eight rooms, a chronological and conceptual survey is set forth which situates the artist in connection with the avant-garde art of his time, and with the present.

The survey takes in the period stretching from 1949 to 1965, from his beginnings in literature and painting to his subsequent **arte vivo (live art)** actions, a self-conception he would later call *vivo-dito* (live finger). With these concepts, Greco maintained that the artist must no longer show with a painting, but rather “instruct to see with the finger” that which happened in the street. Comprehended within this chapter are his actions in public space, for instance those he carried out in Piedralaves (Ávila) and Lavapiés (Madrid), and his *objets vivants*, live interventions with real models. Also on display are his drawings, writings, collages and “self-propaganda”, and his final work, the novel *Besos brujos* (Bewitching Kisses).

During the presentation, **Manuel Segade** stressed that “Alberto Greco, as well as being a key figure in the shift from modern to contemporary art, profoundly shaped, during his time in Spain, the generation of artists that came after Informalism”.

Marta Rivera de la Cruz, for her part, highlighted how “the collaboration of Madrid City Council in this Alberto Greco show reflects our commitment to major cultural institutions and to projects that widen the gaze on contemporary art, in this case experimental avant-garde art, bringing it closer to citizens through rigour and excellence”.

According to the show's curator, Fernando Davis, recovering Alberto Greco means to become submerged in the “**twisted or contrarian pathway**” of an artist that transformed the “fugitive mobility of life” in the primordial material of his art. The central figure in a disruptive trajectory, Greco challenged institutions and aesthetic convention by way of a queer “drift”.

An exhibition route through eight rooms

Room 1 of the exhibition spans the late 1940s to 1961, serving as a form of prologue. We encounter some of his early poems and stories, for instance *Criatura humana* (Human Creature, 1949), *Fiesta* (Party, 1950) and *Ni tonto ni holgazán* (Neither Stupid Nor Lazy, 1956), which articulate his minority sensibilities and aesthetic tastes linked to the puerile, the fantastical and the kitsch. This period also includes his first trip to Paris (1954–1956).

On his return to Buenos Aires (1959, Room 2), he embraces a “terrible, shocking and aggressive” Informalism, in which the painting is an organic entity with materials he takes to extremes.

The period between 1961 and 1963 (Room 3) marks a radical turning point in the artist's trajectory. From 1961 are the posters he pastes around the streets of Buenos Aires, bearing the messages “**HOW GREAT YOU ARE!!**” and “**The most significant informalist painter in the Americas**”, anticipating Pop and art for the masses. During his second trip to Paris in 1962, Greco proclaims the founding of *arte vivo*, and it is during this trip that he carries out his first street “exhibition”, where he draws a chalk circle around the Portuguese artist Alberto Heredia, before declaring the action a work of art. In the same year, in Genoa, he writes the *Manifiesto Dito dell'Arte Vivo* (the Dito Arte-Vivo Manifesto), but in 1963 is forced to leave Italy following the performance of the experimental play *Cristo 63. Omaggio a James Joyce* (Christ 63. Homage to James Joyce, 1963).

From Italy he arrives in Spain (Rooms 4, 5 and 6), taking up his main residence in Madrid, as well as Piedralaves, a town in Ávila, which he re-names “**Grequissimo Piedralaves**”, the **international capital of “Grecoism”**, declaring the entire town and its inhabitants to be works of *arte vivo*. On its streets he unfurls *The Great Arte Vivo-Dito Manifesto-Roll*, a continuous sheet of paper, almost 300 metres in length, two fragments of which are displayed in the show.

In Madrid he would improvise one of his best-known actions, a collective journey in the Madrid Metro between the Sol and Lavapiés stations, culminating in the burning of a huge canvas painted collectively. It was in the Spanish capital, at the Galería Juana Mordó, that he presents his first *objets vivants*, as well as opening his **Galería Privada**, a workshop, art gallery and meeting point for avant-garde artists. In Madrid he would collaborate with artists from the city's scene, for instance Manolo Millares and Antonio Saura.

Room 7 surveys the fast-paced final stretch of Alberto Greco's life between 1964 and 1965, a period marked by stints in Buenos Aires, New York, Madrid, Ibiza and Barcelona. In 1964 Greco makes a series of collages he calls “**self-propaganda**”, interventions on magazine advertisements, situated between fetish and parody. In 1965 in Ibiza, he starts the novel *Besos brujos* (Bewitching Kisses), a title he takes from José Agustín Ferreyra's 1937 film. The book is adapted by Greco, focusing on his turbulent relationship with Chilean writer Claudio Badal, and is a work of *arte vivo* in its own right, encompassing drawings, food stains, pop song lyrics and romantic ballads.

The final room displays *Todo de todo* (All and Everything), a collage which is presented as a self-referential accumulation which demands “art for everyone”.

Inaugural Conversation and public activities

On Tuesday, 10 February at 7pm an Inaugural Conversation was held between Fernando Davis, the show's curator, and Amanda de la Garza, the Museo Reina Sofía's deputy artistic director. Across April 2026 the Museo will hold readings of Greco's texts and, in May, a panel made up of contemporary artists influenced by Greco's work. Further, a [Spotify playlist](#) has been put together with tracks the artist either mentions or partially transcribes in his works.

Catalogue

The Museo has published a catalogue featuring images of the works on view and a selection of Alberto Greco's texts, many previously unpublished, including the entire text of *Fiesta* (Party, 1950) and *Manifiesto Dito dell'Arte Vivo* (Dito Arte-vivo Manifesto, 1962). It also includes essays written by curator Fernando Davis and María Amalia García and Sandra Santana.

Madrid, 10 February 2026

Press material



In collaboration with:



For further information

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