

JOTA CASTRO

memento mori

Exhibition space: Umberto Di Marino Gallery

Via Alabardieri 1, 80121, Naples, Italy

Opening: Thursday 24th February 2011 – 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Duration: 24th February – 24th April 2011

Orario: Monday – Saturday 3:00 p.m. / 8:00 p.m. – by appointment in the morning

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The [Umberto Di Marino Gallery](#) is pleased to present the new solo show by [Jota Castro](#) entitled *memento mori* on Thursday 24 February 2011.

This exhibition marks a return to the theme that was ironically interrupted with the previous exhibition of 2006, and which ended with a risky leap into the unknown, a metaphor for the suicidal approach of Europe which fails to tackle its real problems openly. The works on display launch a new warning.

The artist is sensitive to the socio-economic dynamics of the Old Continent (Europe). He analyses the failings of the system and the distortions in perception that derive from it in order to show their limitations and to reveal how these structural questions threaten the very existence of European identity as well as the European economy.

Panem et Circenses is a work that consists of small marble tables on which the artist has sculpted images that he believes are the main problems, the emergencies that weigh on the political and economic policies. They are supported by a tape measure which, by contrast, symbolises the rationality on which the initial conditions of the community were based.

The illusions are shattered in *Quasso Cruris*: a marble football is a metaphor for the passion for football, especially in Italy, which has become the most democratic means of escape from social frustrations.

This reflection is summarised and elevated to *NFFNSNC* (*non fui, fui, non sum, non curo* – ‘I was not, I was, I am not, I do not care’), the inscription found on ancient Roman tombs and engraved on the base of a sculpture in the form of a pallet, representing the self-celebratory temptation into which Europe often falls, becoming inflexible and thereby incapable of being relevant to the contemporary world. The pallet itself, used to move loads in ports, refers to an economic system which is also under strain in Naples due to competition from the Chinese.

In the same way, the bag of rubbish in marble, *Cornu Copiae*, becomes the latest result of consumerism pushed to extremes for which no one takes responsibility, while the series *Ignobilis* presents cold tombstones which are engraved with the outlines of countries considered to be at risk due to their own internal and historical contradictions, but which have also been visited by the artist, in a melancholic tribute to his own wandering life.

Lastly, the barriers – especially mental barriers – return in the barbed wire of *Euphorbia Milii*, which crosses the whole space of the gallery, pointing its finger at those social conditions such as the obsession with safety, family and religion that hinder real development in Europe.

In the works of [Jota Castro](#), the hardness of the marble represents the prolonged problems experienced by the ‘Old Continent’, and the nobility of the material is intended as a reminder of the force of its own past and a culture which has become a banner but not a means of achieving democratic emancipation.

[Jota Castro](#) (Lima - Perù, 1965) lives and works in Bruxelles (Belgium).

Selected solo and group shows:

- 2010 *Trasparenze*, curated by Laura Cherubini, MACRO, Rome, MADRE, Naples, Italy, 17th Biennale of Sidney, Australia.
- 2009 *Low cost tour*, Gonzalez y Gonzalez Gallery, Santiago, Chile
- 2009 *The Fear Society. Pabellón de la Urgencia*, Murcia. 53rd International Art Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia, Italy
- Jota Castro*, Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, Germany
- Low Cost*, Galeria Oliva Arauna, Madrid Spain
- 2008 U-Turn, Quadrennial for Contemporary Art, Nicolaj CCAC, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- 2007 *Emergency Biennale in Chechnya world tour/ stop 9: 10TH ISTANBUL BIENNIAL*, Kadıköy Halk Eğitim Merkezi / Kadıköy Public Education Centre Bahariye Caddesi 39, Kadıköy, curated by Evelyne Jouanno, and Ceren Erdem
- We are your future. Art of Russia, Latin America and China*, 2nd Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia, curated by Marat Guelman, Juan Puentes and Ethan Cohen
- 2006 *Ars06*, Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland
- 2005 *3rd Tirana Biennale*, Albania Prague Biennale2, Prague, Czech Republic
- Introduction to Jota Castro*, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
- Exposition Universelle 1*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2004 4th Kwangju Biennale, Korea BIENNALE PRIZE
- 2003 *Motherfuckers never die*, Galleria Minini, Brescia, Italy
- Z.O.U.*, 50th Venice Biennial, Italy, Survival Guide for Demonstrators