

Press release

walk in progress performance by Eugenio Espinoza

Performance: Saturday 7 October 2017 from 11am to 2pm

Space: Le Scalze – Chiesa di San Giuseppe a Pontecorvo, Salita Pontecorvo, 65 - Napoli

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Galleria Umberto Di Marino is pleased to present, on Saturday October 7, 2017, a performance by Eugenio Espinoza at the church of San Giuseppe delle Scalze in Pontecorvo.

The event is part of the programme of the gallery which, over the last two years, has started collaborations with other organisations and institutions at both a regional and national level, experimenting with alternative readings of exhibitions held in its own gallery or setting up initiatives designed to explore individual research projects. Site-specific works and performances are designed as occasions in which the public can become immersed in the artistic process and the artists themselves can engage in direct dialogue with the extraordinarily rich historical and social fabric of the city of Naples.

As a foretaste of the artist's first solo show in Italy, entitled *Unlocking something* (which will open in the gallery in via Alabardieri on Thursday 12 October), the church of San Giuseppe delle Scalze will provide the exceptional setting for *Walk in progress*, a new performance created specially for the premises. Beginning with an initial reading of the architecture of the nave, the artist goes back to the invention of the grid which Brunelleschi used for his experiments with perspective during the Renaissance and identifies it as the primary structure of action used by mankind on nature. The constant search for balance between order and chaos, geometry and the organic whole, in the history of the conquest of living space, has always involved the rational schema of orthogonal lines. All cities originated, first horizontally and then vertically, with a system of perpendicular lines which have become a paradigm for regulating the conflictual and unpredictable nature of public space.

On this occasion, however, the black and white of the grid waits to be desecrated by visitors who are invited to break the rules and contaminate it with colours, smells and life. Unlike the historic installation *Impenetrable* (a work of 1972 in which the entrance to a room of the University of Caracas was blocked off from passers-by by the installation), the public is now encouraged to walk on the gigantic canvas, soiling it, ripping it, and regaining the freedom to interpret the space through a complete natural gesture.

Eugenio Espinoza's aim is to distance himself from participatory or playful art. Instead, he wishes to focus on the concepts of affirmation, definition, activation of processes, going beyond his initial denouncement of the exclusivity of the art system in order to restate, with greater conviction, the need to abolish the paradigm because "*art cannot exist without freedom*".

As a key figure in the Venezuelan art scene for the development of the international debate and the critique of Modernism, Eugenio Espinoza has continued to modify a *corpus* of works created during the 1970s up to the present day: it is the development of a perspective that is consistent with his own research, marked by a vigilant and critical look at the art system.

Eugenio Espinoza was born in 1950, in San Juan de los Morros, Venezuela. From 1966 to 1974, he studied at the Escuela de Artes Plasticas Cristobal Rojas and the Instituto de Diseno Newmann-Ince in Caracas. From 1977 to 1981, he lived in New York where he studied at Pratt Institute, New York University and the School of Visual Arts. In 1972 exhibited at the Museo de Bellas Artes and "Impenetrable" at Ateneo de Caracas. His later conceptual works include found objects and photography. In 1985, he represented Venezuela at the Bienal de Sao Paulo. His work is in the permanent collections of Tate Modern, London, U.K.; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the Fine Arts Museum of Houston, TX; the Perez Art Museum Miami, FL; Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA; Galeria de Arte Nacional, Caracas; Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas; and Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo in Sao Paulo; Museo de Arte Moderna, in Rio de Janeiro; Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Bogota; Fundacion Gego, Caracas; The Cisneros Collection, New York; the Cisneros-Fontanel's Art Foundation, Miami, FL; and several other prestigious private and corporate collections. In 2017 is the winner of the J.S.Guggenheim Memorial Foundation award.