

NOTA DE PRENSA

Diciembre 2007



Photograph:

Fragment of *Los Tres Reyes*, 2007. By Martín & Sicilia for Can Marqués Contemporáneo. Courtesy of the artists.

LOS TRES REYES

A project by Martín & Sicilia for Can Marqués

Can Marqués, is proud to present a site specific installation by two rising stars of Spain's emerging art circuit.

Every year, Can Marqués commissions a young artist to produce a contemporary interpretation of the traditional nativity scene. This year, Martín & Sicilia, an artistic couple who are widely considered to be among the most promising rising stars in Spain, have been selected.

For their project, Martín & Sicilia have focused on one of the many narratives contained in the nativity scene, the story of the Three Kings, albeit with their characteristically cheeky humour and attention to social issues.

Visiting nativity scenes displayed in homes and churches is a tradition celebrated during the Christmas season in many catholic countries.

Belenes para el siglo 21 is a yearly initiative through which Can Marqués celebrates contemporary interpretations of historic traditions by collaborating with young international artists.

TITLE OF THE EXHIBITION: Belenes para el siglo 21 (Nativity scenes for the 21st Century)

ARTISTS: Martín & Sicilia

CURATOR: Nieves Barber

PRESS CONFERENCE*: Thursday 13th December 2007, at 11.00 hrs

PRIVATE VIEW: Thursday 13th December 2007, at 13.00 hrs

VENUE: Can Marqués, C/ Zanglada, 2.A, E – 07001, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

MORE INFORMATION: www.canmarquescontemporaneo.net

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OPENING HOURS: Monday to Friday 10.00 to 15.00 hrs

* The curator and the artists will be present

LOS TRES REYES

(The Three Kings) A Project by Martín & Sicilia for Can Marqués

About *Los Tres Reyes*

Each year, Can Marqués commissions a prominent artist from the international emerging art circuit, to produce a contemporary interpretation of the traditional nativity scene. This year, the invited artists are Martín & Sicilia, an artistic duo who are widely considered to be among the most promising rising stars in Spain.

Los Tres Reyes (literally, The Three Kings, or The Three Wise Men), refers to the Spanish tradition of the Three Kings who bear presents, much like Santa Clause does in the North of Europe. The piece is very characteristic of the work which has earned these artists an international reputation; a strong dose of apparently harmless humour disarms the viewer, whilst confronting him / her with an uncomfortable truth.

In an art fair held recently, they exhibited their iconic life sized cut-outs depicting a group of tourists wondering about the isles. On another occasion, the installation of tourists wearing flip flops and bracing binoculars, was taken out of the exhibition space, and displayed outside the fair, in the grounds of the arrivals terminal at the airport most of the visitors arrived at.

For the installation at Can Marqués, Martín & Sicilia have decided to focus on one of the many narratives contained in the nativity scene, namely the story of the Three Kings. The characters we see are the two artists and a third person. They appear dressed as soldiers, wearing fake beards, and carrying cardboard boxes. The scene is a defiant reference to the title of the project "Belenes para el Siglo 21", through which the artists draw attention to the state of affairs in modern day Bethlehem, a city which has become the focus of the most significant international conflicts of the 21st Century. The traditional representation of Jesus in his crib is missing, a clear allusion to the thousands of babies born in refugee camps and run-down homes, many of them orphaned. The three kings proposed by Martín & Sicilia look the viewer straight in the eye, with a melancholic, worn out look which transmits little optimism.

Can Marqués will be unveiling The Three Kings for the first time, on Thursday, 13th of September, in an exhibition opening which brings together the contemporary nativity scenes commissioned in previous editions of this yearly event. Projects on show include *La Familia Feliz* by Joana Vasconcelos and *El Anhelito* by Dionisio González.

About Martín & Sicilia

José Martín and Javier Sicilia were born in Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, in 1974 and 1971. They have been working together as an artistic team since 1995. Today, they divide their time between Madrid, Tenerife and Berlin.



In the last edition of ARCO (2007), they were awarded the Brugal prize for best emerging artists. In 2006, they participated in the Dakar Bienal and the La Habana Biennial, following their success in 2003.

Martin & Sicilia have shown extensively in international solo and group shows.

About Can Marqués

Can Marqués is a stately home, situated in the old town within Palma de Mallorca's city walls. The house was acquired by its current owner, Nieves Barber in 1998, and transformed into a museum. With a history which spans over seven centuries, the house is today one of the best preserved museums, and the best example of the secretive lives of the Mallorcan Bourgeoisie in the early 20th Century.

Every year, Can Marqués hosts three major projects where some of the most talented young artists emerging onto the international scene are commissioned to create site-specific works through which they weave their practice with the house's unique history.

The projects are: *Belenes para el Siglo 21* (Nativity scenes for the 21st Century), *Corpus Efímero* (Ephemeral Corpus), and *Ausencia de Presente* (Absence of the Present).

Projects related to contemporary arts, fall under the title of Can Marqués Contemporáneo. For more information, please refer to the website: www.canmarquescontemporaneo.net

About the project "Belenes para el siglo 21",

The Nativity Scene, often referred to as *Belen*, *Nacimiento* or *Pesebre*, are two or three dimensional scenes depicting the moment in which the newly born Jesus of Nazareth lies in a manger, and receives visits from a host of characters including the Three Wise Men (*Los Reyes Magos*) in Bethlehem.

At Christmas time, these scenes are created and displayed in catholic homes, and churches. Can Marqués celebrates this tradition every year, by commissioning an artist to create a contemporary interpretation of the Nativity Scene.

Belenes para el siglo 21 is a yearly event, which began in 1998.