

Ivorypress presents

NOT VITAL  
5 SPANIARDS + NOTHING



Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom | Not Vital, 2012 | Photo © Robert Fessler, Lauterach/Austria. Courtesy Ivorypress

**Opening:** 22 November 2012 - 19:00 p.m.

**Venue:** Ivorypress C/ Comandante Zorita 48 (Madrid)

**Exhibition:** From 22 November 2012 to 19 January 2013

On 22 November 2012 Ivorypress will present *5 Spaniards & Nothing*, Swiss artist Not Vital's first solo show in Spain. The exhibition will reflect the tension between personal experiences and contemporary reality, a dichotomy that is characteristic of Not Vital's work.

The five Spaniards of the exhibition's title correspond to five works forged in silver, whose dimensions are directly related to the date of birth of five Spanish artists: Velázquez, Goya, Dalí, Buñuel and Picasso. These sculptures, which evoke small mausoleums, were produced in Niger, West Africa, hammered and welded by hand by Touaregs, a semi-nomadic Saharan tribe.

Along with these works, Not Vital will exhibit the piece *Nothing* at Ivorypress, a sculpture formed by the letters of its title, which are perched upon the tips of a branch which has been cast in bronze and coated with white patina. The result evokes the snow-covered trees in the Swiss landscape, but also harbours a profound conceptual intent. Through this piece, Not Vital challenges the temptation that often overtakes audiences of trying to understand contemporary art by looking for narratives and associations to cling onto. The artist rejects this strategy and presents 'nothingness': an invitation to look inside ourselves and observe the purity of the form.

Apart from the six pieces that give the exhibition its title—and which will be open at Ivorypress until 19 January 2013—, the show also features the work *Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom*. This is a spectacular installation consisting of 100 stainless steel lotus flowers, each one close to four meters in length, whose title refers to the slogan for a short-lived propaganda campaign Mao Zedong enforced in 1956. The installation presents its audience with a historical context and space for thinking about the world of today: 100 individual, closed lotus flowers are gathered in the exhibition space to create a huge mass, an effect that is metaphorically and politically fraught.

Among the more than thirty pieces that will comprise the exhibition, another noteworthy work is *Moon*, a unique sculpture 140 cm in diameter and made entirely of solid Carrara marble. The piece is a technical feat of carving, as well as a work of considerable conceptual weight. *Moon* is monumental in its size, and its scale forces the public to circle around it in order to observe it. In this way, the artist reverses the orbit of the Moon around the Earth, as it is the public who orbit around the satellite.

The work of Not Vital (Sent, Switzerland, 1948), is firmly rooted in the Swiss valley of Engadin but has, at the same time, a strong nomadic character. In the last few decades Not Vital has travelled the world, an experience that has made him abandon the idea of working in a fixed studio. He currently lives and works between the USA, Italy, Switzerland and Chile, but has also lived and worked periodically in Niger from 2000 to 2010, attracted by the materials he finds for his work in this African country.

Not Vital has exhibited extensively since the 1970s in galleries, museums and art centres worldwide. His recent exhibitions have taken place at Sperone Westwater, New York, USA; Schauwerk, Sindelfingen, Germany; Akira Ikeda gallery, Tokyo, Japan; or the Kunsthalle Vienna, Austria. In 2008 he participated in the exhibition *Blood on Paper: The Art of the Book*, curated by Elena Ochoa Foster and Rowan Watson at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, UK. In 2001 he participated in the 49th Venice Biennial with the installation *Plateau of Humanity*.

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