12 2021

Casa Invisible defies eviction with the announcement of an international conference with the Museo Reina Sofia

Regina Sotorrío

Translated by Kelly Mulvaney

The center makes a show of force against the City of Malaga with an event that will be attended by Reina Sofia director Manuel Borja-Villel, the former director of the Centre Pompidou Paris, artists including Rogelio López Cuenca, and European policymakers.

The Casa Invisible has gone all in against the City of Malaga regarding the latter's threat of eviction. In the middle of an open conflict, with the clock ticking against them, the citizens' center announced that it will hold an international conference together with the Reina Sofia Museum, to be attended by major figures from the European cultural world. Conference invitees include the Reina Sofia's director, Manuel Borja-Villel; the former director of the Centre Pompidou Paris, Bernard Blistène; the artists Rogelio

López Cuenca and Elo Vega; and the councilperson for Culture of the City of Vienna, Veronica Kaup-Hasler. The conference will take place over three days in February, from the 25th to the 27th, but the plan had to be announced already in a show of force by Casa Invisible against the taking effect of an order to vacate the building for renovation.

“We reaffirm that Casa Invisible is staying and is taking care of itself,” assured Florencio Cabello, Professor of Communication at the University of Malaga (UMA) and spokesperson for the center. He insisted that until now no notice of eviction had been received (which would start the clock for the fifteen days for ‘de-occupation’), even though the City has said it was sent. Conflicting statements further increase the tension between the City Hall and Casa Invisible, which finds itself in a fragile “impasse” but is “more active and alive than ever.”

The test, they emphasize, will be the international conference on the future of cultural policy in Europe, titled “Multiplicity” and organized together with the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, which has for years now been the center’s grand ally in resistance. “This is why the City’s eviction attempt is effectively an attempt to kick the Museo Reina Sofia out of Malaga,” condemned Kike España, part of the team from Casa Invisible.

In the face of “homogeneity” in the mode of cultural creation — which the City is being accused of — with the singular goal of bringing more visitors to the city rather than living in it,” Casa Invisible is committed to the “multiplicity” that it represents. Its caretakers are defending Casa Invisible as “an example of a special kind of institutionality, neither public nor private, but common,” with cultural practices closely tied to social life. And in this sense

“disobedience and indiscipline” are being recognized, “along with all kinds of experimentation that exist in artistic, cultural and scientific production.”

With the Multiplicity conference, Casa Invisible is counting on ‘friends’ in its camp. “On part of the Reina Sofia, we appreciate and place value on our collaboration with Casa Invisible,” affirmed Sara Buraya Boned from the Department of Public Activities of the contemporary art museum in Madrid, who also coordinates the programs Museo en Red and L’Internationale. Casa Invisible, Buraya Boned added, fits the “plural and diverse” cultural model that the museum supports, confirming the museum’s commitment to the Malaga ‘casa’. Today and in the future: the museum is counting on Casa Invisible for its plans to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of death of Picasso in 2023.

Before that, they are joining forces to “think about cultural policy at the European level” at this international conference. The museum’s director, Manuel Borja-Villel, will return in February to Casa Invisible to participate in a panel with Bernard Blistène, who until two months ago was director of the Centre Pompidou Paris, and Monika Mokre, president of the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, in the first of the conference’s three morning sessions. The last time Borja-Villel visited was in 2018, when the threat of eviction also hovered over the building. “And days later the mayor took a step back,” recalls Cabello, who trusts that the cultural weight of the names of participants in the seminar will again achieve the same effect.

University

The second morning session is dedicated to the University, with participation by Tecla Lumbreras, Vice Rector of Culture of the University of Malaga; Eva Morales, Professor in the School of Architecture at UMA, José V. Iranzo Benito, Professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts, and Florencio Cabello. The morning sessions will close with a discussion on cultural policy with the artists Elo Vega and Rogelio López Cuenca, the councilperson for Culture of the City of Vienna, and – awaiting final confirmation – the mayor of Zagreb, Tomislav Tomasevic.

The afternoon sessions will take place at Casa Azul in the Malaga neighborhood Lagunillas, where invitees include the philosopher and cultural critic Boris Buden; Nanna Heidenreich, Professor of Transcultural Studies at the Vienna University of Applied Arts; Brigitta Kuster, Professor of Cultural Studies at Humboldt University Berlin; Isabell Lorey, Professor of queer studies in the arts and sciences at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne; Stefan Nowotny, Professor of Visual Culture at the University of London; Gerald Raunig, Professor of Aesthetics at the Zurich University of Arts, and Ruth Sonderegger, Professor of Philosophy and Aesthetic Theory at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

This conference will kick off celebrations planned for Casa Invisible's fifteenth anniversary in 2022, with the Invisible convinced that it will continue to serve as a "cultural oasis" in the Malaga city center. "In the face of baseless and undocumented veil of smoke that leaves us in a kind of defenselessness, we will continue working as we best can: taking care of the space as a place for reflection and cultural production," declared Florencio Cabello. The spokesperson called for the City to show the report warning of the building's situation and to justify the urgency of eviction ("we reaffirm that there is no applied measure of precaution in the conviction that the structural integrity is not in question"), while

also reaching out: the communication channels for negotiation “are open.”

https://www.diariosur.es/culturas/invisible-desafia-desalojo-congreso-reina-sofia-20211209143118-nt.html