



Exhibition «The Baroque (D)ef(f)ect»
09/11/2010 – 27/02/2011

The baroque myth

At this point in time, when we are marking the bicentenary of Latin American independence, the CCCB wants to take a critical look at Spanish cultural policies in Latin America. And particularly at the myth of baroque art as one of the cornerstones of the Hispanic world; one of the best-constructed and most resistant cultural myths, which, to a certain extent, is part of our collective assumptions and is even included in political rituals, such as Iberoamerican summits: exercises in ephemeral politics designed to keep alive the spectre of some kind of ideal community.

The exercise, performed by Jorge Luis Marzo and Tere Badia, seeks to explore the keys to an identity propagated from Spain towards Latin America, that found in the baroque the form of expression that gave it significance at grass-roots level. After all, the success of the baroque lies in its capacity to penetrate the different strata of the cultures of the conquered America, to create a degree of complicity around it that has made credible the idea of an art for everyone: colonisers and colonised. It could be said that the baroque was an artistic ideology of the State that had the good fortune to be recycled by the people who had been colonized and who made it their own, thereby becoming a shared aesthetic space, above and beyond dysfunctions and different viewpoints. The exhibition sets out to analyse this fascinating story, the story of how an art form that came from above became an art for everyone.

Of course, the curators' task involved dealing with an inevitable question: why have we always avoided making a critical reassessment of this issue? The baroque has enabled us to keep certain political myths alive, myths that all parties considered beneficial. It has even resulted in erroneous interpretations that have made the popular traditions of conquered countries the driving force behind this style. Culture as a territory of confusion.

The critical investigation performed by Jorge Luis Marzo and Tere Badia, based on extensive fieldwork, has enabled us to accumulate a great deal of information that is featured in this catalogue and in the accompanying documents, which form the basis of the exhibition entitled «The Baroque (D)ef(f)ect». An exhibition in which the curators have given a voice to a number of artists who have looked at the political dimension of the baroque and the cultural keys of the discourse on the Hispanic world from different points of view and with different working methods. The result isn't a treatise or a thesis, but a series of signs scattered around with the intention of opening new connections, new spaces that will help to relocate better the cultural effects and defects of the mythical baroque.

Above and beyond solemn ceremonies and commemorations, bicentenaries are a good opportunity to review the clichés that link Spain and Latin America. This is particularly the case now that relations have been normalised through mutual respect and democratic cooperation, in an interesting process of transition, begun after the dark years of the dictatorships, when the left came to the fore, as a result of the shift of the old communist left towards social democracy and the success of popular movements in their different facets. Within this framework, visiting the symbolic transmissions that keep the baroque myth alive is also a way of moving forward in its acknowledgement. By unveiling the images we have shared, we can contribute to regaining trust. «De-baroquing» the relationship between Spain and Latin America could be an excellent way of forging a better understanding.