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(Cabildo Insular de Tenerife)**

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the ISOS project "Promotion of
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Convenio regulador de prácticas
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Alejandro Castañeda Expósito
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Conservation and Restoration

Karen María Vera Morín (Promoción
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Curatorial Assistant

Daniasa M. Curbelo*

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Conservation and Restoration

Karen María Vera Morín* (Promoción
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Archivist / Documentalist

Jose Manuel González Reyes*
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Irene Hernández Batista*
(Dos manos)
Eduardo Hodgson*

Graphic Design

ferranElOtro Studio*

Exhibition Design

Javier Jiménez/Marina Benítez*
(Studio animal)

Exhibition Installation and Lighting

Patricia Vara* (Dos manos)

Wall Drawing

María Fernanda Ferri
Sara García

Translation

Jacob Rhodes*

Insurance

Aon*

Transport

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Raquel Díaz Zurita, Ana Estrada
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Hernández, Elena Herrera
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**The Impossible Garden of Tefía. Prologue for a
Concentration Camp**

It ends with the beginning—with the prologue,
that which comes before, an introduction. In *The
Impossible Garden of Tefía. Prologue for a Con-
centration Camp*, the aim is not to reconstruct the
loathsome memory of a place, but to displace it,
situating it in an unstable time where past and fu-
ture overlap, as if history, far from closing, insisted
on repeating itself in other forms.

The Tefía Agricultural Penal Colony—actually
a concentration camp—was active between 1954
and 1966. People persecuted for their dissidence,
not only sexual, were imprisoned there and sub-
jected to forced labor, hunger, abuse, and system-
atic violence. The concentration camp functions
here not only as a site of memory to be read at a distance, but as
a warning reactivated in the present. Time collapses into a present
that is simultaneously past and future.

The garden—etymologically refers to a fenced space, maybe to
the walls of the concentration camp—is revealed here as a new de-
vice of control: a seemingly ordered place where decisions are made
about what grows and what must be uprooted, where nature, like
bodies, is domesticated, classified, and purged. *There was no gar-
den, no paradise*—it was impossible—and yet that fiction about the
Canary Islands persists, sustained by images that, as in Bosch's *Gar-
den of Earthly Delights*, place the native dragon tree as the Tree of
Life, an emblem of an Eden projected onto the islands. A myth that,
once appropriated, becomes a promise that conceals its reverse:
a tool of colonization, as botanical gardens served to acclimatize
plants extracted and transported from their native territories.

It is in this shift—from garden to concentration camp, from
paradise to inferno—that the work builds a science-fiction fable,
a near dystopia—perhaps too near—in which the Tefía camp reap-
pears, reactivated, as new dissident subjects occupy once more
that space under new but equally ruthless forms of management

and control, not unknown to current production
systems. Among the quarry stones, what emerges
is not so much a reconstruction as an insistence:
that of a past that lingers on, of a future that, de-
spite its apparent novelty, resembles too closely
what was assumed to have been left behind. A
door remains open tough, that of resistance. "I am
stone, I resist."

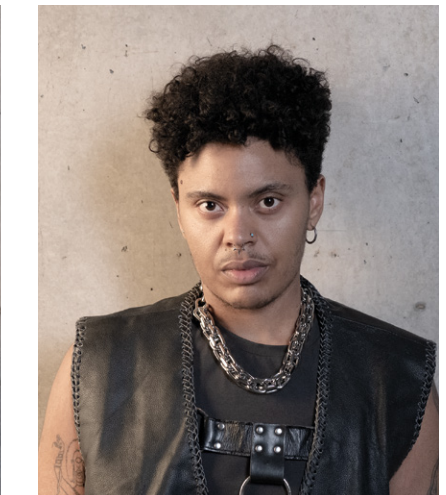
Sergio Rubira

Cabello/Carceller (Paris, 1963 / Madrid, 1964) began their collaboration in the 1990s. Their
interdisciplinary practice—encompassing video, installation, performance, photography, and
writing—explores the politics of the body, gender identity, and sexual dissidence within the context
of contemporary art. Through a critical perspective, their work challenges normative discourses
and proposes alternative forms of visibility, employing strategies that destabilize the conventions
of hegemonic visual language.

Their work has been widely exhibited in national and international institutions, including
group exhibitions at the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the 35th São Paulo Biennial, the Spanish
Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, MACBA, Centre Pompidou, Tranzit, Museo Nacional Centro
de Arte Reina Sofía, and the Brooklyn Museum, as well as solo exhibitions at MUAC, CA2M, Azkuna/
Zentroa, Museo Patio Herreriano, and IVAM. In 2024, they were finalists for the Fundación MACBA
Prize and were awarded the Gold Medal for Merit in Fine Arts. They are also engaged in teaching
and research activities linked to academic institutions (University of Castilla-La Mancha) and
independent educational spaces. This research dimension reinforces the processual and critical
nature of their work, which addresses both the art system and dominant narratives.

17 apr. — 5 jul. 2026

Footnotes
Cabello/Carceller



Footnotes. Cabello/Carceller

In *Footnotes*, Cabello/Carceller take their stance on that uncomfortable place where history, when read against the grain, begins to unravel, revealing not so much what it intended to tell but instead what had been left out —what failed to be integrated into the claimed dominant narrative. Instead, what remained between the lines, at the margins, or reduced to footnotes, persists and challenges that which sought to get imposed as the sole version. This is not about recovering forgotten figures in a gesture that would return them intact to the discourse—as if that were possible—but about exposing the very conditions of their erasure, showing the mechanisms that caused their disappearance, while simultaneously compelling us not to take for granted either the acquired knowledge or that which, through repetition, has eventually become natural.

Céspedes, Erauso, or Agustina González, —some of the projects' main figures—, thus appear as what Carla Lonzi called "unexpected subjects": as lives that, even in their own time, overflowed any attempt at classification—multiple, unstable, contradictory identities that could not be defined without violence and that, precisely for that reason, proved problematic for a binary thinking that needs to name, label, and classify. It is in that unpredictability—in that resistance to being captured within a category—that the possibility opens up for thinking them today as part of a possible trans genealogy: one that goes beyond, that is in constant flow, in transit, and that is not articulated as continuity or origin, but as a series of displacements, interruptions, and echoes activated from the present.

In this sense, the new work *The Impossible Garden of Tefía. Prologue for a Concentration Camp*, about the disgraceful penal colony established in Fuerteventura during the dictatorship, introduces a necessary diversion, as it shifts that genealogy toward a recent past while announcing a terrifying future in which mechanisms of

control are not exceptional but part of a persistent logic. The same logic operates in *Where Everyone Is Guilty, No One Is (After Hannah Arendt)*, which seeks to correct, discipline, and break those lives that fall outside imposed norms.

These works do not seek to complete a history, because there are multiple histories. Nor do they merely occupy its margins; they expand them. They act like footnotes that, once read, urge to go back to the assumed fundamental text forcing a rereading, provoking distrust, rendering it suspicious, introducing a twist that alters its meaning, and reveals a memory unable to attain definition.

A Voice for Erauso. Epilogue for a Trans Time

The exhibition begins at the end—with the epilogue, that which is added after the denouement, usually written in another time, thus disrupting the narrative order and questioning its logic. In *A Voice for Erauso. Epilogue for a Trans Time*, Cabello/Carceller start from a figure that is, in itself, a problem for history: Catalina de Erauso also went by Pedro de Orive, Francisco de Loyola, Alonso Díaz Ramírez de Guzmán, or Antonio de Erauso—names and identities assumed throughout a life that historical narrative sought to simplify, fixate, and reduce to a single, highly interested one: that of the "Lieutenant Nun." Erauso is also an uncomfortable figure not only because of that multiplicity, which makes classification impossible, but also because of what their biography entails—their involvement in processes of colonization—which complicates their seamless inclusion in any genealogy and perhaps prevents them to be considered an exemplary, illustrious figure in a gallery of portraits.

Drawing from a portrait by the Baroque painter Juan van der Hamen, which serves as both point of departure and friction, the work turns into a mirror in which different contemporary figures

engage, address that image, project themselves onto it, and find their own image in it, producing a narrative that can't be but unstable. Erauso ceases to be a ghostly image to become a space of enunciation where different times, bodies, and languages intersect. It is in that intersection—in the impossibility of fixating a single identity—that the work finds its meaning: not in explaining Erauso, but in making evident that they could never be fully explained.

A/O (Céspedes Case)

In *A/O (Céspedes Case)*, Cabello/Carceller approach a figure whose complexity cannot be understood outside the material and symbolic conditions that made it possible: Céspedes, originally enslaved and moving across genders, occupations, and social classes was eventually apprehended by a disciplinary legal, civil, and religious apparatus that not only judged them but that, in naming, describing, and classifying them, pinned them down within a forced regime of intelligibility.

This is not, therefore, about reconstructing a "true" identity hidden behind archival documents, nor about restoring a biography in terms of continuity and inserting it into a dictionary or chronicle. Instead, the focus is on the operations that constituted Céspedes as a "case," that is, as an object of control. What is at stake is not so much the ambiguity of Céspedes' identity as the way in which that ambiguity is read, translated, and forced to conform to norms by a gaze that inevitably exercises violence in the very act of judging. Gender, race, and condition of enslavement do not appear as superimposed layers but as an inseparable entanglement—intersectional and indivisible. The archive ceases to be a pledge of reliability and reveals itself as a construct, forcing us to *read* Céspedes but also the violent structures that sought to limit their identity.

Social Madness. Musical Against an Execution

In *Social Madness. Musical Against an Execution*, the starting point is Agustina González López, 'La Zapatera'—writer, thinker, and political figure executed in 1936—who was silenced and erased from the narrative, when her life had already been read as deviation, anomaly, something to be rectified or eliminated. The work adopts the form of a degenerate musical that betrays not only the theatrical genre but also the categories that sustain it, articulated through previous texts, archival fragments, and actions interpreted on stage by bodies that, like González López, escape categorization.

Once again, the aim is not to reconstruct the biography of a figure whose name appeared in a footnote—perhaps in a biography of García Lorca,

another dissident—but to insist on the inversion González López herself proposed: that madness does not lie in the one who is marked with it, but in the society that labels them.

Dancing Gender Trouble

In *Dancing Gender Trouble*, theory turns towards the body—not for the body to act as illustration, but as a means to trigger its own crisis. The project is structured as a collective process in which, through reading and discussing the work of philosopher Judith Butler, participants select fragments that are later translated into movement, turning writing into the score of an action.

The methodology does not seek a "correct" interpretation; the text is not univocal. Instead, the subjects who read it find their own meanings, and the text is activated through its encounter with different bodies and identities. It is in this movement —between reading, discussion, and action—that theory ceases to be a closed system and becomes a practice: something that gets attempted, moved around, and, in that very gesture, exceeds its own limits and borders.