

Fernando García
José del Río and Los Endrinales
June – July, 2013
Galería Heinrich Ehrhardt

If life gives you lemons, make lemonade. This seems to be the pretext that Fernando García has applied to his recent work. He recently moved his studio from José del Río Street in the Madrid neighborhood of Urgel to a new house in the country, located in the Los Endrinales area of the town Miraflores de la Sierra. Not being from a small town and never having had any roots in the countryside, this move has been a significant event for him. Consequently his decisions, materials and content have been determined by his surroundings at every moment. A detailed look at local culture and tradition are the result of this reflection. Our worthy heritage, as portrayed through its customs, makes up the artist's first solo show at the Heinrich Ehrhardt Gallery.

According to García, the rudimentarily elaborated works, conscientiously produced with sticks, knives, stones and rope as a means of connecting them to the land, make up "a classic exhibition of sculptures and drawings." The handcrafted shelves made of logs, branches and hanging stones arise from an extensive range of practical and functional resources. Just like the golden drawings made of geometric compositions and slits, the olive picker or the bottle and can sculptures, they represent engrossing activities, the ecstasy of manual tasks or methodical techniques. The works hint at a trip to the countryside, popular wisdom or reflections about time.

What drives Fernando Garcia to hang rope baskets with stones and lemons in them is the need to find balance for his shelves. This search for steadiness and weight compensation is reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's ingenious invention of stones tied to sticks in order to support the awning that he built himself in the late fifties for the terrace of his house in Cadaqués. The clever and witty resource of simply wanting to sustain a structure in a "do it yourself" fashion (the shelves in García's case and the awning in Duchamp's) emerges from a yearning for functionality. Simultaneously, the deeper one delves into the exhibition the more one discovers a fertile visual game where rhythm, different shapes and colors of hanging rocks and movement hypnotize the observer. While searching the traditional Byzantine-icon-like drawings on the wall, one encounters fantastic dried lemons, shells and pistachios that produce a splendid visual experience.

A form of celebration is created by regional dances and costumes such as the *chotis*, *San Isidro*, or the Anguiano stilt dancers; still lifes like that of Sánchez Cotán and all that is traditional and typical. Spanish customs such as appetizers, olives, *botijo* jugs, lemons or canned delicacies and Spanish cultural references such as Manolo Caracol, the *Cantar de Mio Cid*, Rafael Alberti, Ortiz Echagüe or the Vallecas School are a symbol of life and its joys. Fernando Garcia has prepared a great feast for us with the best of each region.