

PRESS RELEASE

*The Houses Are Blind, but the Trees Can See,*

by Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz

The Cervantes Institute in New York. Opening April 8 at 7:00 pm

On view April 9 to May 21, 2022

The Cervantes Institute is pleased to announce an exhibition by the collaborative duo Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz titled *The Houses Are Blind, but the Trees Can See*, which will be on view in the art gallery and courtyard. There will be an opening reception on April 8 from 7 to 8:45 pm, and the show will continue through May 21. The Cervantes Institute is located at 211 E. 49th St. in N.Y.C.

Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz form a collaborative multimedia art team and have been professional and personal partners since 1993. They are best known for their sculptures and photographs of snow globes and larger underwater sets contrasting pristine settings with foreboding or grisly scenes. They have exhibited widely in museums and art galleries throughout the U.S.A. and Europe.

The exhibition at the Cervantes Institute will include the ongoing photo series “Blind House” as well as two new sculptures, a subtle but transformative intervention in the Institute's courtyard, and a spectacular augmented reality sculpture.

In Thorsten Sadowsky's foreword to the catalog of their 2019-20 exhibition at the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, he quotes the Austrian writer Alfred Polgar's bon mot: “The situation is desperate, but not serious.” Dr. Sadowsky continues: “The artist duo Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz could certainly be grouped with such a community of cheery melancholics who do not despair in the face of the absurdity of human actions but respond with wit, humor, and irony to the impositions of modern life.”

Central to this latest exhibition is the series “Blind House,” first seen at the University of Michigan's Institute for the Humanities Gallery. “Each of these 17 photographs of houses within commuting

distance of New York City has been digitally altered to mask the windows seamlessly. These windowless houses come across as lacking souls- not just blind, as the title suggests, but eyeless.” (Sharp, 2019)

The Blind House series began in 2013 and was conceived as a metaphor for the radical opacity necessary to survive in the age of spyware, identity theft, brain hacking, and corporate and state surveillance. Now though, with two years of pandemic quarantining under our belts, this series reads less as a metaphor and more as a series of real options from a catalog of pandemic bunkers.

Most of the works in the exhibition pick up on the theme of quarantine isolation: the looniness that comes with cabin fever and the unexpected new relationships made in the absence of human contact. “The trees behind our Pennsylvania home became a renewed source of fascination. They had always been more like beautiful set pieces or mile markers that defined the perimeters of our daily walks. But with isolation, we became ever more aware of their sentience and interdependence.” With that in mind, we hope that visitors passing through the courtyard on the way to or from the exhibition space will pay special attention to the trees.

We recommend that visitors download the **Adobe Aero App** on their smartphones before they visit the exhibition to experience the sizeable, augmented reality sculpture *The Bird House*, 2022

Sharp, Sarah Rose. *Strangely Unsettling Photographs of Windowless Houses*, Hyperallergic.com, April 2019

Sadowsky, Thorsten. *Foreword. A Mind of Winter. Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz*, exhibition catalogue, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg. pgs. 9-11, 2020



*Blind House 11, Milford, PA, 2015* by Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz, one of the photographs from the Blind House series in the exhibition.



*The Woods Watch, 2021*  
by Walter Martin & Paloma Muñoz. A similar piece can be found in the Cervantes Institute's courtyard.





*The Bird House*, 2022  
by Walter Martin &  
Paloma Muñoz. An  
augmented reality (AR)  
piece at the Cervantes  
Institute's courtyard.