

CHEMA MADDOZ

(Madrid, 1958)

It is important for me to be guided by my own perception and not just passing the words to images... What interests me is the idea of discovery, of finding, of perceiving the mystery in the everyday

Chema Madoz (Madrid, 1958) is one of the greatest Spanish artists with national and international recognition in contemporary photography. He studied History of Art at Universidad Complutense of Madrid and Photography at Centro de Enseñanza de la Imagen simultaneously. His career started in the 80's when he held his first solo show at La Real Sociedad Fotográfica in Madrid (1983).

His first photographs combined theatrical setting in a surreal style with strong influence from René Magritte. From early 90's Madoz begins to put aside the idea of chance and replacing it with the recreation of mental images. He stopped using external elements as natural light, nature and people in his photographs and begins to develop the idea of what objects mean to the viewer using careful illumination and a simple studio setting. His work is always black and white.

The subjective function of the viewer and the use of an elaborate and cryptic language is the core of his photography. He finds objects to reconstruct an imaginary. *"Through Madoz, we know how many possible lives might be hidden within a match or a ladder, if it had not been their destiny to serve our need for fire or to overcome gravity,"* according to the philosopher and art historian Luis Arenas. *"For Madoz, all these worlds are, certainly improbable, but not impossible; for there they stand, demonstrating their reality to us."*

In the early 90's he began to receive recognition with awards and grants as the grant of Creación Artística of Fundación Cultural Banesto in 1993, first prizes as: Kodak Prize in 1991, PhotoEspaña, Premio Nacional de Fotografía and Higasikawa Overseas Photographer of the International Higasikawa PhotoFestival in 2000. In 1999 the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía devoted him a large and comprehensive exhibition, the first retrospective of a living spanish photographer. From that moment on he establishes himself as a reference of the Spanish photography scene. In 2019 he was awarded with the prestigious *Medalla de Oro al Mérito en las Bellas Artes* and *Premio Aula de las Metáforas*.

Since then, Madoz has exhibited in numerous galleries and institutions in Spain and abroad, such as Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Netherland Photomuseum in Rotterdam, Fondazione M. Marangoni in Florence; Museo de Bellas Artes of Caracas; Erarta Contemporary Museum in San



Chema Madoz at Galería Elvira González, Madrid
September, 2018. Portrait by Alex Mena © Galería
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Petersburgo; Fototeca Latinoamericana, FoLa in Buenos Aires; Centro Cultural Banco de Brasil e Instituto Cervantes in Rio de Janeiro; National Museum of Photography in Copenhagen; Fundación Telefónica/Ministerio de Cultura in Madrid; Centro Galego de Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Compostela, IVAM in Valencia.

Chema Madoz has also participated in numerous festivals as Fotofest International, Houston; Les Rencontres d'Arles, France in 2014 and PhotoEspaña, Madrid.

Madoz has worked in collaboration with both publishing and advertising companies. His photographs have been used on book's covers as *El Ladrón de atardeceres* de Rafael Pérez de la Estrada and *El Tentetieso* de Joan Brossa edited by Plaza & Janés. Virgin label uses his images on the Ultraviole Collection and other brands like Purificación García, Hermés and Iberia have asked him to work in different campaigns.

His work is included in many public and private collections as Museo de Arte Reina Sofía, Centro Andaluz de la Fotografía, Fundación Juan March, Fundación Telefónica, Fundación Coca-Cola, Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, IVAM in Valencia, Ministerio de Cultura, Fundación Maria Cristina Masaveu Peterson, Siero, Asturias; The Margulies Collection in Miami, Hermés Collection in París; Saastamoinen Foundation Art Collection in Helsinki; Marugame Hirai Musum in Japón, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and Museo de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires among others.



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