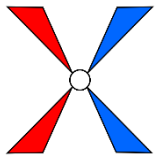


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<p><282/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>, oil and collage on canvas, 100 x 80 cms. Collection of Maurice Reims, Paris. Photograph, courtesy Galeria OMR, Mexico. Fig. 6. Alberto Gironella, Reina Negra (Black Queen), 1961, mixed media on canvas, 108 x 120 cms. Private Collection. In the following year she is reincarnated, but into wood, not flesh and blood: she becomes furniture, a cross between a throne and a commode, her mask-like head and rigid hand fixed to the chair back, her wig suggested by curly iron coat hooks and carved wooden scrolls and flourishes. In one version, the space beneath the seat contains a small, stuffed cayman and, as this is the equivalent of the space beneath her skirts, there are obvious psycho-sexual overtones. In another there is in fact no seat as such, rather like a monk's misericord, a chair that is not a chair (Fig. 7). Again her heart is represented by the mechanism from an old lift: she goes up and down as others will her. The origins of Gironella's peculiar assemblages lie in his childhood. His earliest memories are of stacks of colourful imported tins, boxes, bottles and packets of the family grocery business, and of the paraphernalia of popular Catholicism, which would have included reliquaries and tabernacles, retables combining paintings and sculpture, altars decorated with damask cloth, candles, flowers and ex votos of an often intensely personal nature. He recalls building himself private altars of chocolate wrappers and tin cans. The packaging of imported products has continued to fascinate him, for intrinsic qualities - - the names, the colours and the designs - but also no doubt because of the way products from far away have been integrated into the domestic Mexican environment. Such products are known by the general term ultramarinos, 'from across the ocean', and to emphasise that Mariana herself is also an ultramarina, she is often accompanied in Gironella's tableaux by tins of sardines. There are connections here too with Spanish Golden Age painting which, as Gironella himself has observed, often looks very smelly. The picaresque literature of the period is also very preoccupied with food and drink. But it is not just the strong smells of food, but the metaphorical smells of corruption and moral and social decay which are suggested by the inclusion of such items in his work. And where the tins of fish are juxtaposed with fragments of Mariana's body the evocation is also of death and putrefaction, perhaps also of coarse jokes about the distinctive 'fishy' smell of vaginal secretions. Gironella's choice of Velázquez's Mariana as the basis for</p> <p>so many of his works</p> <p>is worth considering in more detail. First, to develop the idea of the punning associations already referred to in relation to the term ultramarinos, there is the pleasing assonance between the name of this earthly Queen Mariana, and that of Maria, Queen of Heaven. The Virgin has always been more popular than Christ in the New World; indeed in the sixteenth century certain churchmen had argued that while the East was the domain of Christ, the newly discovered West was that of his mother. Once in America, however, Maria soon fragments into numerous different Marias, each with her own distinctive attributes. In Mexico, during the Wars of Independence the Virgin of Guadalupe protected the nationalist forces while the Spaniards placed their trust in the Virgen de los Remedios. Gironella's many</p>
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versions of **Velázquez's Mariana** similarly fragment her into different roles - queen, woman, icon, cadaver, carnival figure, victim, aggressor. There is a third sister in this euphonious family: Marina, the baptised name of Malinche, mistress of Cortèz, through whose good offices and linguistic skills Mexico was conquered both for the Virgin Maria, and for Marina's royal ancestors. Marina is the original and ultimate traitor to her people, but as mother of the first mestizo she is also the mother of modern Mexico. Mariana herself is remembered more as a name on a family tree than as a person. Wife of Philip IV, she was also his niece; she had been betrothed to his son Baltasar Carlos but on his death at seventeen the King (her uncle) married her himself, and the only surviving son of this union was the cretinous Charles II, last of the Habsburg line. She is also remembered because she was painted by Velázquez, although this is not unrelated to the family tree. Velázquez shaped the public image of this family for his own and for all subsequent generations, investing them with an extraordinary pictorial power and stability. His portraits must in turn be considered an important constituent in their power, as compensation for their more corporeal weaknesses. With hindsight it perhaps seems strange that one of the indisputably greatest figures in the whole of Western art devoted the better part of his life to self-advancement, and to painting the King, his family, and their attendant dogs, dwarves and sycophants. Certainly the irony of this, together with the fact that this inbred family of often considerable mental as well as physical fragility should have controlled the destiny of so vast an empire, is not lost on Gironella. fig. 7. Alberto Gironella, *Reina Mariana*, 1962, object. Private collection. We can read into *Las Meninas* such a view of