



Black Box: Sergio Caballero



The Spanish artist's humorous and grotesque film combines slapdash animation and live action.

Artist and filmmaker Sergio Caballero (Spanish, born in 1966 in Barcelona; lives and works in Barcelona) makes his international museum debut at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

The exhibition *Black Box: Sergio Caballero*, consists of a single 25-minute film, *Ancha es Castilla* or *N'importe quoi* (2014). (These titles loosely translate to *Anything Goes* and *Whatever*, among other renderings, but the artist prefers not to provide translations.) Relating a darkly comic tale of a child's exorcism, the film blends homespun puppet animation and live action, its aesthetic deliberately low budget and slapdash.

Caballero's characters are agglomerations of food, hair, plant materials, cardboard, plastic, foam rubber, rubber bands, surgical tubing, fabric scraps, clothespins and googly eyes. The dialogue is largely in English, but the artist also provides English subtitles, since the voice acting intentionally verges on being incomprehensible. Caballero engages with the tradition of the grotesque, taking inspiration from the "black paintings" made by Goya in the early 19th century and adapting it to current-day models.

The filmmaker's many pop-cultural touchstones include the 1973 horror film *The Exorcist*, the Sex Pistols' 1977 punk anthem *God Save the Queen* and any number of low-budget monster thrillers. The film's soundtrack mixes classical warhorses such as Johann Sebastian Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* and Edvard Grieg's *Morning Mood* from *Peer Gynt* with dissonant synth blasts from electronic noise band EVOL, the duo of Roc Jiménez de Cisneros and Stephen Sharp, who make what they call

VISUAL ARTS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Venue

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 700 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20560

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Admission

[Free admission](#)

More information

[Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden](#)

Credits

Organized by Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Image: Still from Sergio Caballero's *Ancha es Castilla* or *N'importe quoi* (2014).



“computer music for hooligans.”

Caballero is also a composer and a founder and co-organizer of Sónar, Barcelona’s International Festival of Advanced Music and New Media Art. His earliest activities include working with the graffiti collective Los Rinos and the electronic music band Jumo during the late 1980s and early 1990s. His surreal feature films, *La Distancia* (2014) and *Finisterrae* (2010), have cult followings on the festival circuit.