



Franco goes from punching bag to fridge

A Spanish artist says his next series of sculptures will entomb dictators in refrigerators

Laurie Rojas

March 5, 2014



*The Franco Foundation is suing the Spanish artist Eugenio Merino once again for damages because it says his work *Punching Franco* is demeaning*

The Spanish artist Eugenio Merino is planning to show a series of sculptures of dictators entombed in refrigerators for his next exhibition. Merino says it will be the end of a project that started with *Generalísimo Franco*, referring to works depicting the late Spanish dictator that have enraged the Franco Foundation.

Merino is being sued by the foundation for the second time. He is back in court, this time for a work called *Punching Franco*, 2012. The sculpture, using a punching ball with Franco's head as the target, was exhibited in a group show organized last July by a group of anti-fascist artists in support of Merino's first trial.

The foundation is again suing for damages because it claims the new work attacks the honour of the Francisco Franco National Foundation and is "demeaning", the Spanish newspaper *El País* reports. It was part of the exhibition, "*Days Against Franco*", which included works by fellow Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, who owns *Punching Franco*.

The first time the foundation sued Merino for damages was for a sculpture presented at Arco Madrid in 2012 of a life-size replica of Franco in military clothing inside a Coca Cola-branded fridge, *Always Franco*, 2012.

Merino says the foundation wants to restrict freedom of expression of every artist who is willing to critique Francoism. "They do not understand art, only ideology. Without a doubt they would burn all of contemporary art", he says

The trial is ongoing. The Franco Foundation, which is suing for €12,000 in damages, was not available for comment.

The artist's next exhibition is due to be held at the Unix Gallery in New York in June.