



*Speech on the occasion of a lunch with Santiago Sierra and his entourage at the Reykjavik Art Museum on 20th of January, 2012. The speech was never delivered due to Mr. Sierras' nonattendance.*

Santiago Sierra, Nicholas Logsdail, Hafþór Yngvason, artists, radicals.

We are gathered here today to celebrate the introduction of the great Spanish artist Santiago Sierra to the people of the nation. I think I speak for everyone, Mr. Sierra when I tell you that your exhibition and the provocative happenings you have honored us with, are important step towards the freedom of the Icelandic people; part of our prolonged recovery. Some conservatives have criticized that public money is used to promote Anarchism but I spoke to our accountant and he assured me that only one third of the museum's budget was used for this project. Maybe we weren't before, but we are ready for you now. The question is: are you ready for us [laugh]?

Exactly three years ago I had an exhibition in the Reykjavik Art Museum. It is work that I am sure our Spanish friend would appreciate. He would probably say that it was "his cup of tea" but I say it's "right up his alley". By an uncanny coincidence the sculpture he has made, with a little help from Mother Nature, on Austurvöllur Square has almost the exact same shape as the sculpture I made, with a little help from Mother Nature and her most humble of servants, the children! I also tried to give the monument to the city of Reykjavik; to the People, but they just spat on it! I just hope you will get different treatment [look at Sierra empathetically]. But I am not here to brag about my achievements, especially since compared to Sierra's they are minor, even plain silly. But they are

important to me personally [modest smile]. But I have a deep urge to talk about those eventful days outside parliament [emotional]. I have fond memories of the Cacerolazo [smile]. I even met my woman there!

I was installing my exhibition and thank God the installation process was not overly ambitious so me and the janitors and the caretakers of the museum could actively participate in the protests during loooong coffee brakes (don't tell Hafþór!) [laugh].

I was filled with pride when I observed my fellow artists in the fog of war, banging away at their cooking utensils and throwing eggs at Parliament. I have so many memories [smile]. Outside Parliament, I saw a French teacher who has lived in Iceland for decades and has been one of us for a long time, standing on Austurvöllur Square crying like a baby. He was not begging for sympathy like some mothers, his were tears of joy. Many of his former students cried with him, and together they formed a choir of tears, which was silenced only by the noise of explosions, savage drumbeating, flashes of fire and the rattle of pans. For me the whole ordeal was important because it became apparent that the force of our nation stems not least from a difference of opinions, the disputes over which can resemble a force of nature. I am proud to say that as a result of the Cacerolazo I have a permanent hearing impairment, a so called Tinnitus; I minor sacrifice. I would do it again!





Brenna

Yesterday at the fantastic opening I met the crying French teacher again. He was very touched by the work, but also provoked. He didn't like the black men penetrating the white women, because even if we laugh at the work here in Iceland, in Europe this is a reality!

I personally love NO the Global Tour! But one cannot but wonder: Why all this negativity? WHY? When I went to sleep last night I was pondering that haunting question. I couldn't sleep. I am sure I am not the only one, (It's a strong show, it's a strong show). WHY!

I actually think it's a very positive exhibition, and I think the NO the Global Tour is a very encouraging work and that's why it is so fantastic and important for Iceland right now. It helps us deal with the past so we can think forward. Maybe you think I am being overly "philosophical" or "abstract" but listen to this: No doesn't always mean No. In fact I think no means yes. I am grateful for the fact that you didn't take the big NO NO in front of Harpa, our new-built Concert and Conference Centre. It was very thoughtful and unselfish of you. It shows me that you actually care. I think our friend and colleague Olafur Eliasson [look at Sierra] and Tanya Bonakdar will also appreciate it [look at Nicholas Logsdail].

I made a little version of your work. I hope you don't find it arrogant of me. I think mine is a little more straight to the point than yours. Perhaps people of your stature produce so much work in so little time that you don't always have time to think things over... just kidding.

But anyway, here it is: A Big Yes, in front of Harpa, the Palace of the People.

To emphasize the fun aspect of the work I put a black man on the picture. And it is not just any black man. It's the KING. It's Rodney King:

"I just want to say, you know, can we... can we all get along? Can we... can we get along?"

Sigurvegarrar stóruleiks yfirgefa leikvöllinn öðruvísi á sig komnir en þegar þeir stigu inn á hann og það sama á við um tapliðið. Annaðhvort bugaðir með skottið á milli lappanna eða bíræfnir í sigurvímu. Andlegt og menningarlegt ástand lands og þjóðar er í mikilli ládeyðu. Hið svo kallaða hrun var enda ekki eingöngu efnahagslegt heldur ekki síður og jafnvel miklu frekar menningarlegt og andlegt. Menningin virðist hafa verið svo að segja þurrkuð út og kannski ekki að ástæðulausu. Það er hlutverk listamanna að trekkja hana upp á nýjan leik með öllum tiltækum ráðum. Áður en hið fanatíska uppbyggingarstarf getur hafist þarf að koma öllu ónothæfu ofan í holu minninganna. Þetta verk þarf að vinna af miklum krafti. Verkið Brenna er dregið af lágmyndum íþróttahúsa og verður sett upp á vegg menningarmiðstöðvar, listhúss eða bókasafns. Það sýnir þrjú frískleg ungmenni í einskonar dansi og undir þeim loga eldar. Harðdrægu ungmennin eru á bókabrennu og láta eldinn ekki duga til að koma óæskilegum sigrum mannsandans fyrir kattarnef heldur traðka þau einnig á þeim í hita leiksins.

