



*Alejandro Garmendia:  
El Ingenio Revolucionario II*  
February 28 - May 11, 2026

## Press release

Villa Magdalena is thrilled to announce the upcoming exhibition at our Madrid space *El Ingenio Revolucionario II*, Alejandro Garmendia's second exhibition with the gallery. This show functions as a small survey in a range of media including, collage, painting, video, sound installation and, essential to this presentation, a group of sculptures that the artist made in Madrid that have not been exhibited in over 30 years. The exhibition concludes in the lower level of the gallery with the video piece, *Berlin*, a film the artist made as part of his collaboration with Lou Reed and Julian Schnabel for the musician's live concert performance filmed in 2006 at the St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn.

During his youth, Garmendia hinted that he might become an architect. One night in Madrid in the late 1980s, he and a friend stole a handful of architecture magazines from a swanky party at an architect's house. These publications of Spanish, French and German origin covered a period ranging from 1900 through the 1920s, with the earlier ones featuring Art Nouveau interiors and the later ones showing the early stages of Art Deco. These stolen historical documents became the foundation of the imaginary spaces that played such a prominent role in Garmendia's overall oeuvre. His first experiments were small-scale black-and-white photomontage works. By gluing together cut-out fragments of different interiors, he created collapsing ceilings, corridors, stairs, chandeliers, and corner angles -a world where scale and plane are mixed together until gravity ceases to exist. These small collage studies evolved into larger works in a variety of formats and mediums and other, more ambitious plans that were never realized in the artist's lifetime.

Garmendia's interest in built environments and domestic structures became manifest even earlier. In Madrid during the early 90's the artist developed a series of sculptures with found objects –mainly repurposed drawers and window frames. Exterior and interior views within a box format express Garmendia's ingenious approach to the formal aspects of urban landscape. A point of departure where a plethora of images manifest themselves in a variety of ways. These works are indebted to a range of influences: Dada artists such as Hannah Höch, George Grosz; assemblages and collage works by Kurt Schwitters, Marcel Duchamp, and Joseph Cornell's shadow boxes.

Garmendia persistently distorted any kind of logical connection with reality by documenting the nonexistent, ultimately presenting a distanced metaphysical vision of the world that evokes estrangement and disorientation. His oeuvre possesses an atmospheric character that arises from a decontextualization between object and environment, a melancholic gaze capable of noticing the ghostly appearances of familiar quotidian spaces.

*El Ingenio Revolucionario*, which roughly translates to "the revolutionary wit" is both an ironic statement and a revelation: the author thinks he has invented something that would embody a revolution of form and concept. The emblem of a new way of seeing or looking at the world, thus *El Ingenio Revolucionario*. A sarcastic look at the author, himself.

Alejandro Garmendia (b. San Sebastián, 1959-2017) lived and worked in numerous cities including Paris, San Sebastián, Madrid and New York. He studied Fine Art and graduated from the Universidad del País Vasco (UPV/EHU) in Bilbao in 1985. In 2007 he exhibited alongside Andreas Gursky, Jan Fabre, Per Barclay and Man Ray at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid in the group exhibition *Perceptions*. In 2018, a year after his death, Alejandro Garmendia was honored through the retrospective, *Alejandro Garmendia: Paisajes, enigma y melancolía* at the Sala Kubo Museum in San Sebastian, Spain. In 2024 he was included in the group show *Illusive Places: Thomas Chapman, Alejandro Garmendia, Louis Jacquot, Lucy Mullican, Milko Pavlov* at Pace Gallery (Seoul, South Korea), marking the first time Garmendia's work was exhibited in Asia. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Museo Reina Sofia (Madrid), the Museo San Telmo (San Sebastian), Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao (Bilbao) and Artium Museoa (Vitoria).