

Nicolás Martínez Cerezo (Madrid, 1958) is a truly unique artist who has dedicated an entire lifetime to creation. After some early beginnings in the final stage of La Codorniz, he reached his peak of success in children's humor magazines in the 1980s, first in Bruguera and later, after the publisher's bankruptcy, in Ediciones B. In titles like Pulgarcito, Tío Vivo, and, above all, Zipi and Zape, he developed his characters: "Don Marino and his Submarine," "Maladona the Chinese footballer," and, of course, "La Gordi de las Galaxias" (The Fat Woman from the Galaxies). Becoming an icon and a cult figure, La Gordi was his most popular and remembered creation, an exaltation of freedom, difference, and love without barriers, standing out with its explosion of color among the pages of the weekly magazines that hosted it.

Between 1983 and 1988, Nicolás Martínez Cerezo, signing simply as 'Nicolás,' regularly delivered the stories of La Gordi de las Galaxias, supported by the women of the editorial staff of Zipi and Zape, but misunderstood by the majority, a stance that ultimately expelled the author from the magazines and from professional activity. Thus ended Nicolás's brief period of recognition, and another, more heterodox one began. Turned into a practically marginal artist, he continued writing and drawing incessantly, from the apartment in the Madrid neighborhood of El Viso where he was born and where he has lived almost all his life. Novels, encyclopedias, collections of aphorisms, tributes to his idols and references, collages, comic strips, and illustrations; except for some self-published projects, such as *Los tebeos del Bollo* (1997-2002) —alongside *Rebote*—, and occasional collaborations in fanzines like *Amaniac* or *Fanzipote*, the vast majority of Nicolás's work has never seen the light, beyond circulating among a small group of die-hard fans and friends, with whom the author has maintained intense epistolary exchanges. Only the work of *Matraca Ediciones* has begun, since 2018, to publish much of his literary work, as well as to reissue his comic strips.

This exhibition proposes the recovery of a part of Nicolás Martínez Cerezo's unknown work: a selection of his graphic humor cartoons. Mostly unpublished material, these cartoons show a more adult and reflective facet of Nicolás, which nevertheless does not renounce his stylistic and thematic keys. Impregnated with a certain tragicomic feeling of life, they are inserted in the tradition of Spanish graphic humor and explore reality from different perspectives, which have allowed them to be organized into four areas: absurd humor, black humor, critical humor, and tributes.

The inherent and anarchic nature of Martínez Cerezo's production makes it difficult to date these cartoons, although they can be classified into two distinct periods. The color images belong to his beginnings, in the 1970s, and respond to the synthetic and loose graphic style that prevailed at that time, with references such as Jaume Perich, Manuel Summers, or Miguel Gila. The black and white cartoons all fall within the 1990s, a period of artistic maturity in which Nicolás had already developed his own graphic style, deeply original, which looked at historical avant-gardes and escaped from the fashions of the moment, free from the constraints of a market to which he no longer belonged. Made out of pure pleasure and the need for expression, they represent a sample of the best work done by Nicolás Martínez Cerezo, and a gateway to his work that surprises with its lucidity and universal relevance.