

**SPAN 539: 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Spanish Literature and Culture  
The Ethics and Politics of Memory and Trauma in Post-Franco Spanish  
Literature, Cinema, and Visual Culture**

**Fall 2021, Mondays from 2 pm to 4:50 pm, THH 111**

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*Villar*, Interactive Installation, by Eva Koch (2001)

This seminar focuses on the ethics and politics of trauma and memory by looking at some examples of literature, cinema, and visual culture in post-Franco Spain (though we will also cover some cultural practices produced during the late years of the Franco dictatorial regime, as well as works produced during the Spanish Civil War

and the Franco regime that have had a significant artistic, political, and social impact on the democratic period in Spain). We explore the way that these Spanish literary, film, and visual cultural practices function as a mode of witnessing the traumatic past, thus mediating between subjective and collective experiences at a national and trans-national level. The seminar asks: how do these Spanish literary, film, and visual texts reflect and respond to complex and contradictory political and social concerns with remembering the victims of the Spanish Civil War and/or Franco's state terror and those silenced, persecuted, executed, forced to migrate or to exile, anonymously buried in common graves, or rendered invisible within Spanish public history and social memory? How do these Spanish literary, cinematic, and visual texts articulate the way that state terror impinges upon concrete and intangible realities, as Suely Rolnik suggests? Is trauma a helpful theoretical concept to think about how the effects of state terror in Spain impact on the present, or to reflect on the experiences of the victims of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's state terror, or are we reducing and distilling complex, multilayered, and contentious historical, social, and cultural processes to the category of trauma? What are the affective, emotional, and critical implications in effective witnessing practices? How do Spanish literature, cinema, and visual culture represent horror and traumatic experiences without running the risk of objectifying the other and the horrific? Can historical memory be interpreted as symptomatic of the way in which the public use of Spanish history could be reduced to its commemorative dimension, or do Spanish literature, cinema, and visual culture function as thoughtful cultural practices that bring together subjective and collective memories and discourses as constitutive forces for a rethinking of the fragments of Spanish history? The seminar allows us to engage with theoretical debates on memory and trauma and on the ethics and politics of memory and amnesia in Spain.

Literary texts, films, and artists studied include (but not be limited to): Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937), Víctor Erice's *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), Carlos Saura's *Cria* (1976), Manuel Rivas' *The Carpenter's Pencil* (1998), Jaime Camino's *The Children of Russia* (2001), Eva Koch's *Villar* (2001), Dulce Chacón's *The Sleeping Voice* (2002), Pedro Almodóvar's *Bad Education* (2004), Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez's *Memory Train* (2005), or Guillermo del Toro's *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). Theorists studied will include (but not be limited to): Theodor Adorno, Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt, Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Bracha L. Ettinger, Cathy Caruth, Jacques Derrida, Sigmund Freud, Marianne Hirsch, Andreas Huyssen, Dominick LaCapra, Primo Levi, Emmanuel Lévinas, Suely Rolnik, or Susan Sontag.

