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Why José Nieto?

English

We all know the great protagonists of *Las Meninas*: the infanta, the ladies-in-waiting, Velázquez himself, and the reflection of the king and queen at the back. But at the far end of the painting, almost out of place, there is a man at an open door. That man is José Nieto, keeper of the royal apartments. He is not a noble, not an artist, not a child. And yet it is he who occupies the vanishing point, the centre of the perspective, the exit and entry of the light.

When I began to study *Las Meninas* with the idea of making a contemporary work inspired by the painting, everyone's attention went to the infanta or to Velázquez. I became obsessed with the figure nobody knows. What is he doing there? Is he coming in? Leaving? Or simply watching? We do not know. And that not-knowing is what captivated me most. José Nieto represents the moment before action, the instant of pure awareness — of simply being. He is the one who holds the space without claiming it.

When the hearts of the principal figures are plotted on the painting, they have been seen to form the structure of a constellation — and curiously it is Nieto's heart that balances the shape. He is the hidden emotional centre of the picture. That symbolic detail confirmed my decision to place him at the core of the project.

Corpus Terra does not seek to recreate the painting, but to open a new reading from absence — from the figure no one looks at, yet who holds the whole composition. It also speaks of the artist, who like Nieto so often stands at the threshold, between presence and fading, between the gesture and disappearance. Without Nieto's passage, the painting has no way out. Without the artist's passage, there is no work.