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Author Sylvie Fortin

## Madrid

### Tamar Guimarães

MUSEO NACIONAL CENTRO DE ARTE REINA SOFÍA  
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*La incorrupta* (The Uncorrupted), 2016, a video by Brazil-born, Copenhagen-based artist Tamar Guimarães, revolves around a female curator's project that explores corruption. The curator's proposed exhibition hinges on the display of a relic, the hand of Saint Teresa of Avila. The thirty-six-minute work follows actors and amateurs, many of whom work at the Reina Sofia, as they discuss her show's premise privately and in public. As expected power plays of institutional politics spiral out, the artist's narrative weaves together physical and social bodies, religion and superstition, collusion and exploitation, dictatorship and decolonization.

Absence is critical here despite the earnest richness, if not outright sensuality, of what is heard and seen. The relic is never shown and the museum's commitment to securing its loan remains dubious. This absence pressures the museum's exhibitionary role, its practice of representation. The institution's other key function, conservation, aims to maintain objects' integrity, to safeguard them from physical corruption. And in the video, conservation is also put in the service of institutional preservation—as a reason why the relic couldn't be shown. Relics, of course, are complex objects that draw much of their authority from metonymy, as delegates for wholes. Here, the missing relic merges the dictatorial legacy of Franco, who always kept the hand by his side, with Western institutions' constitutive practice of secularizing objects that hold significance in other cultures, of reducing them to aesthetic objects. As the curator reminds us, *co-* accompanies *ruption* in *corruption*: It requires complicity. In the end, Guimarães's video celebrates the hold objects have over us while updating institutional critique and its relevance.



Tamar Guimarães, *La incorrupta* (The Uncorrupted), 2016, HD video, color, sound, 36 minutes.

— Sylvie Fortin