



*The black flag at the North Pole*  
Courtesy of Santiago Sierra Studio and a/political 2016

## Black Flag

**World famous Spanish artist Santiago Sierra challenges notions of the nation state and confronts territorial conquests with the exhibition *Black Flag* that will see its world premiere at Nikolaj Kunsthal on August 20th 2016.**

On April 13 2015, a black flag was raised at latitude 90° North – better known as the North Pole. On December 14 2015, an identical flag was planted on the South Pole. The two monochrome flags, signifying the universal symbol of the Anarchist movement, have been raised on behalf of the people of the world as a counter-claim - a symbol of defiance - against the compulsion of nation states to seize land. The black flags remain in situ as a potent symbol of liberation, resistance and discontent.

Historically, the North and the South Pole and the remote surrounding areas have been the object of countless expeditions. Presumed as endeavours on behalf of humanity, more often these expeditions have instead been driven by attempts at colonisation, conquests for land, bestowing glory on the participating nations. Throughout the centuries, numerous countries have laid claim to these territories.

With *Black Flag*, Santiago Sierra critiques this desire to conquer in historical and contemporary contexts, the fleeting character of the nation state and the separation of people by impermanent boundaries. Previously, Sierra has addressed nations as problematic systems – as seen in his project for the Spanish Pavilion at the 2003 Venice Biennale. Security personnel permitted entry only to visitors who could present a Spanish passport.

Andreas Brøgger, Head of Nikolaj Kunsthal, says: *"We are proud to house the world premiere of the exhibition Black Flag. Sierra's project is at one and the same time quite simple and symbolic, but also very specific and incredibly complex. It is no easy task for an artist to plant two flags on the Poles. The exhibition is relevant to Denmark as one of the nations to have laid claim on the seabed of the Arctic Ocean – an area 20 times the size of Denmark with a geopolitical and potentially economic significance."*

Santiago Sierra's works often function as commentaries on the social and political conditions of modern society. He received international recognition for a series of controversial exhibitions in which he hired unemployed people, prostitutes, political prisoners and immigrants to perform meaningless work for minimal wages as a critique of the personal and economic exploitation of the most vulnerable in society by the capitalist system.

Santiago Sierra (b. Madrid, 1966) lives and works between Madrid and Mexico City. Solo exhibitions include KunstWerke in Berlin, MACBA in Barcelona, Deichtorhalle in Hamburg, Museo Tamayo in Mexico City and MoMA PS1 in New York. He has also participated in the Biennales of, among others, Venice and Busan and was recently featured in Manifesta 11.

***Black Flag* will have its world premiere at Nikolaj Kunsthal on August 20<sup>th</sup> 2016. *Black Flag* is a collaboration between Santiago Sierra Studio and a/political with special thanks to Lutz Henke.**

The exhibition *Black Flag* can be seen at Nikolaj Kunsthal from August 20th to November 13th 2016.

Nikolaj Kunsthal, Nikolaj Plads 10, DK-1067 Copenhagen K

Homepage: [www.nikolajkunsthal.dk](http://www.nikolajkunsthal.dk)

For further information, please contact Head of PR and Communication Charlotte König Frost, t: 2860 1322, m: [pr@nikolajkunsthal.dk](mailto:pr@nikolajkunsthal.dk)

You are also welcome to contact Andreas Brøgger at 2548 1311

Read more about the exhibition on [www.nikolajkunsthal.dk](http://www.nikolajkunsthal.dk)

On [www.nikolajkunsthal.dk/da/presse](http://www.nikolajkunsthal.dk/da/presse) you will find additional visual material