

## **Mansion of Knowledge**

This installation focuses on the dual nature of education, whether we understand the latter as acquisition of information and skills, or as the process through which we become civilized.

The palace of la Mosquera has always been closely linked to culture and the learning process; also, throughout the greater part of its history (first, in the eighteenth century, as a place of enlightened exile for Prince Luis, later as a seminary and boarding school), to confinement of one sort or another.

The book of Genesis, and later Freud, point to the pain that knowledge and the socialization of the individual bring with them. Knowledge and self-consciousness seem inevitably to involve some degree of exile, from oneself, in the very first place. Any learning process tends to lead to an initial loss of skilfulness, a state of limitation and inability; our hands no longer belong to us, for a time at least. The existence of rules (the torso stands on a pile of law books belonging to the palace) is always, at some level, felt to be a cruel business. This particular mansion, or dwelling place, runs parallel to the bathrooms; learning the rules of hygiene is a fundamental rite of passage into civilized life (with its softness and towels, its harsh abrasiveness as of steel wool). Skill and luck can bring about a certain reconciliation of the hot, fluid, formless side (red) with the cold side that gives form (blue), and this seems to take place somewhere outside our field of vision.

Susan Nash