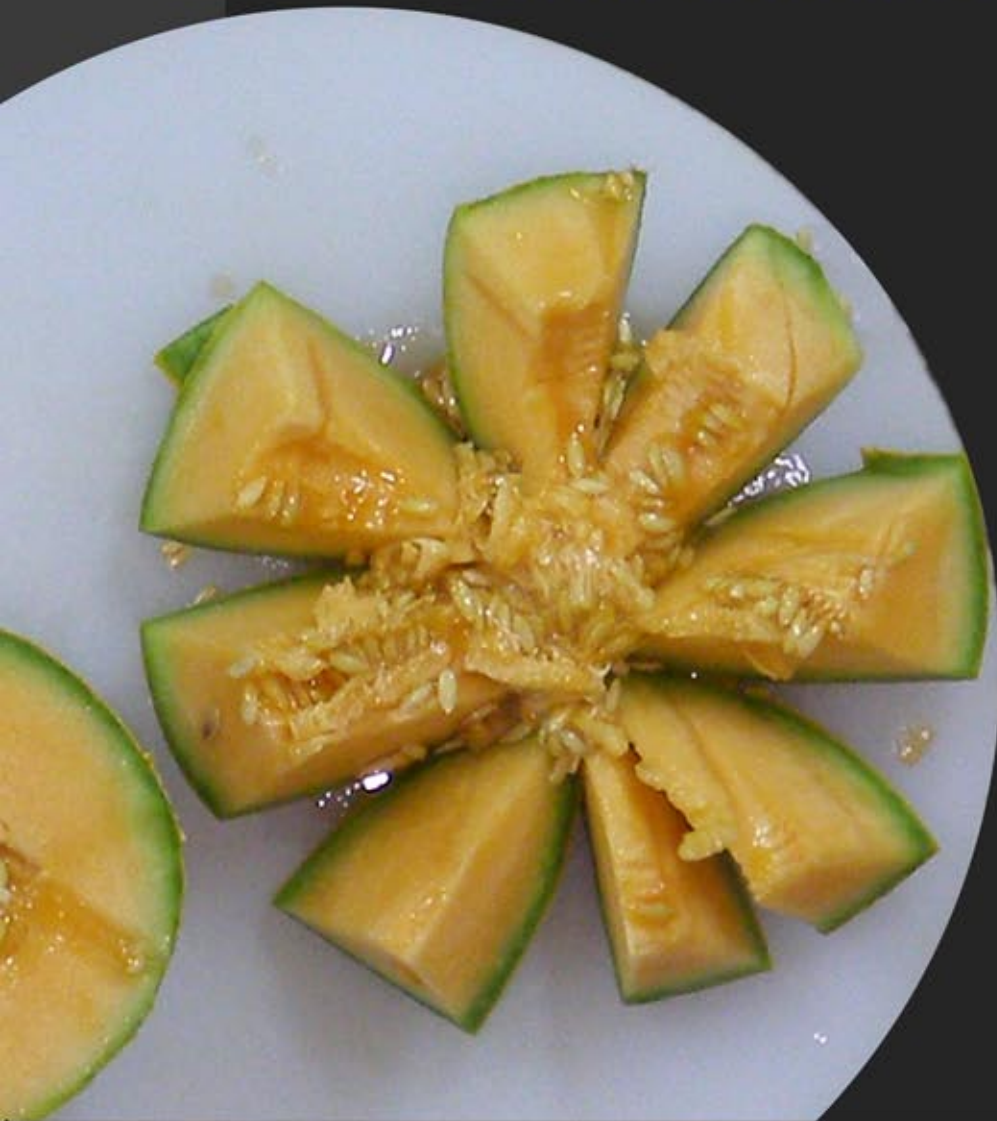


# Cutting The Melon / Cortando el Melon



produced by artist **Alan Warburton**  
in collaboration with  
**Fortalecer la Paz en Venezuela**  
and **Universidad Central  
de Venezuela.**



# What is Cortando el Melon?

Cortando el Melon was a **participative event** in which pairs of volunteers were presented with a **melon, a knife and a chopping board**. Each pair was asked to **use the melon to explain** their collective understanding of an aspect of the **political situation in Venezuela**. A total of four sessions over four hours covered topics as diverse as **land reform, party political coherence, community media and the rise of the MVR**.

As an act of closure, the facilitator invited the participants to share the melon, returning the instrument used for the explanation to its original edible, benign state.



## What is it all about?

The work responds to the personality of modern Venezuela. It **celebrates** the proliferation of dialogue and interpretation within a very **politically engaged populus**.

The project not only shows how social entities can be constructed and divided, but explores the **fruitful, unpredictable process of dialogue**.

The unconventionality of the task is aimed to encourage participants to reframe their understanding in a fresh context, communicating it both to their partner as well as the artist and facilitator. The form of the melon comes to represent the construction of a joint narrative.



## What does the work consist of?

The event is documented via **digital video** and a set of **large exhibition photographs**. The photographs are reminiscent of **constructivist compositions, still life paintings and statistical graphics, such as pie charts**. The long-winded titles of the resultant images (e.g. *Chavez's land reform policies and the failure of land distribution in Venezuela during the Punto Fijo era of 1958 to 1998*) contrast humourously with the images and encourage interpretation and detailed study.



## How will the audience respond?

The work is designed to prompt  
a range of responses.

Viewers might attempt to understand how the distribution of the melon relates to the title of the image. They might begin to relate this to their own narratives of the political situation in Venezuela. Or they may simply appreciate the images on an aesthetic, or even humorous level.

In all cases, the dialogues begun by the participants in the original event are continued when the viewers enter into their own dialogue with the work on display.

## Why a melon?

The melon is a politically 'neutral' fruit that has escaped political signification. Because of this, it acts like a blank canvas on which to 'paint' opinion. It is a commonplace object that people can relate to easily - Venezuelans are familiar with its **taste, smell, texture and colour**. The melon evokes a space of commonality that celebrates the **new sense of democracy** which Venezuela has developed over the past few years.



## About us:

### Néstor A. Alfonzo Santamaría Alan Warburton

Is a Venezuelan conflict transformation worker, with a degree on international studies from the Universidad Central de Venezuela and a masters in Conflict Resolution from Lancaster University, England.

Worked with the Carter Centre and the UNDP in the peace building and democratic governance program. Active member of the NGO Fortalecer la Paz en Venezuela and of the group "Aquí Cabemos Todos".

Is a Scottish artist educated in England at Brighton University, with a high honours degree in Critical Fine Art Practice.

Curated and exhibited in a number of exhibitions. Work has used both traditional (text and image), and non-traditional (video and installation) formats, to encouraging an active, rather than passive, experience for the viewing audience.

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