

Sobre la pintura de Lino Lago

Por Antón Castro

The exhibition *Urgent painting*, held in the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1), was thought by their curators as a way to raise the possibilities to transform painting, constantly told to be next to disappear. They assumed every possible option, from *élargies* ones (that means its own field as installation-painting) to the renovation of previous figurative or realistic models. Everything was analyzed in this attempt to follow languages which we always should consider, as it occurred in *Cher peintre, Lieber Maler, Dear Painter* (2), the Parisian show which took up again the desire of the reviewed works, from an emotional canon, opposed to its current history, in a trip which gave the opportunity to see Picabia, Neo Rauch, Polke, new figurative painters as John Currin or Elizabeth Peyton and many others.

It seems appropriate to quote all this, because there are common mistakes while talking about the role of the realistic painting in a moment as the one we are living in, being conscious that its strength, as the work of Lino Lago clearly shows, doesn't leave any room for doubt. Especially when interpreting reality by means of the eye of the spectator, which scrutinizes the hidden concepts beyond the language that the artist, in order to show the antinomic face of representation. It is true that Lino Lago controls the passion for a reality (basically an urban one, at last in his recent works which show big perspectives of streets and buildings) that is able to evoke in the distance that unhurried and slow cycle of the Gran Vía conceived by Antonio López. But, in my opinion, that look is only the appearance of an exquisite magic aspect which splits the photorealism into two. Lino opposes his *effacé* condition, clearly abstract, to his own contradiction, a hypothesis which gets dissolved in the atmospheric gesture which steams the true landscape –according to his own words- or the nude in a hide or affirmation/denial process, when the warning becomes a shocking black and yellow square, in the middle of the public thoroughfare. This antinomic and surreptitious perspective, which introduces reality as the true beginning of his painting, gets far from the mere phenomenon of representation, in order to place itself in a more tactile vision: reality as reality, that debate which years ago was held by López and Tàpies in order to clarify whom of them was the most realistic painter.

Sometimes, Lino Lago has tried to establish a synthesis between those opposite situations, avoiding the representation of the object itself in favour of its disturbing presence as a real body, as it happens in *Parque de esculturas*, where the iron brakes the idea of a *tromp d'oeil* imagined so as to replace the apparent truth by the true-truth, giving the space a dimension pulled out from life, locating the conceptual sequence of a concrete phenomenon in a creative disparity which ends melting the synthesis of the good classical painter with the one of that whom dilutes genres. Indeed, as it occurs with some other models such as *Líneas* (where the iron bars are perceived as particular watchtower conceived to look at the square, a photographic vision which plays with the limits of a voyeur eager of the Duchamp's *Etant donées*) and, in a more radical manner, *The Last Supper* (where a real table, placed over the canvas, not only covers

the perspective of the buildings of a wide urban landscape, but in the end, it imposes itself as a deconstructive and *effacé* process, in the way of Rainer, who built and destroyed or erased reality) fragmentation allows us to observe the installation-painting as a totalizing genre and as a poetry which gives room to the field of its new role in the last years.

From his apparent classical *rictus*, Lago does not only brake the structures of the own canons of reality, but also rebuilds its textuality by deconstructing its fragments, when opposing the mirror of his own alterity –maybe the secretion of an “I” with different identities- to the refraction of an image given back as a concept which rebels against the destiny of the pictorial tradition from its own roots. In this sense, we cannot avoid thinking about the obvious value and the subtlety of a project as serious as conceptually complex. Furthermore, it is a project which tries to rescue the painting from its usual weariness, by considering it, by attempting to modify its largely viewed channels, but from the heart of the museum. That is why Lino Lago doesn’t do anything else than legitimizing the credibility of a hard, patient and radical work, both classical and innovative, far away from the scenographic ease of the object, with which nowadays we get illustrated by most of the artists who have been formed in the Faculty of Fine Arts. He gets this, and this is the most important thing, remarking a poetic and mysterious dimension, the loneliness lost in the silence of the enigmas of Chirico, who believed that (also) behind an insubstantial glance to the big or the small squares it was possible to build a warm poem in order to talk about the world.

- (1) January to March (2002). Works by 32 artists selected by 18 curators were shown.
- (2) Georges Pompidou Centre. Paris. Summer 2002. The exhibition was also shown in the Kunsthalle of Viena (September 2002 – January 2003).