

THE LOOK THAT WATCHES AND IS WATCHED

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It is not in vain that the plastic arts are to be counted among the visual arts, because the eyesight is the main way of access the human being has at its disposal. It is no wonder that the eye can hold, in its own right, a place of honour as far as representation is concerned. If the whole human body holds it, both on its own and as part of a group, it is nothing out or the ordinary for the eyes to be hailed as le it motif, as happened with the face -an anatomic part able to give rise to an specific pictorial gener.

If, on the other hand, from the approach that considers the work of art as opera aper ta, capable of propitiating several interpretations from the audience, we centre on the reader's look itself (albeit in its phantasmal implicitness, but not missing), we point out yet another necessary parameter to advantageously understand the works that Juan Carlos Martínez Nadal offers to us. That is, the different looks that, brought to his peculiar plastic universe according to different positions, framing and ocular sections, turn into an iconic motif that, while carrying out its "function", -symbolically figurative, for certain- take on in its inductive visual lines the possible scrutinising glimpses (observation, stares) of those facing them.

About the pictures by this painter from Alicante one must underline, as far as its pictorial rendering is concerned, on the one hand, the enclosed photographic registers in its field of plastic participation; and on the other hand, the carefully exercised spatial structuring. The latter incorporates both the orthogonal network of geometric perpendicularity -of abstractionist purity- and the planimetry of the filmic framing, and the knowledgeable ways of avant guard collage and photo editing. All of it does not reveal any opportunistic mêlée at all -after watching the result obtained by our artist, on the contrary we have before us a young author who has a satisfactory knowledge of the past -the sterling artistic and immediate one- to project himself towards promising works; beyond the joyful cheerfulness of the opportunist scribble an of the so many times so-called pseudo-post modernist bad paintings. Nadal knows what he wants and experiments on the best way to achieve his goal. Apart from seeing his pictures, I had the chance to exchange views with him, and I verified that, yes, he, knew what he wanted and that such a yearning did not remain a mere intention but was realised in his works.

That being so, in some of them: a slanted look was projected from the spatial fragment that, framing it, linked up a continuous series of them, materialised in silver and iron bromide on rusty iron sheet. Just to mention a few: a silent transparency of the surface of the image could be seen through the varnish -arranged in long format- that, showing a part of the configuration blurredly, persuaded one to o hidden and dynamic, both at the time, observation. No there was no lack of other more complex works where a fragmentary/made up puzzle wise face, feigning to be making way for itself between the metallic sheets that pretended to close like sluices over the powerful base shot of the image, allowed us to verify, yet again, the knowledgeable ways when it comes to composing the form and organising the self-delimited space.

We also find in this exhibition quotations from the history of the plastic arts, where the eye-look or the watched watcher -Goya, Ingress, Agnolo di Cosimo or Brozino, "La Gioconda"...- played a significant role in the formal semantic interplay between those fragments of human corporeal iconography.

And if the recuperation sui generis was there, what can we say of the ocular co-presence of the photographic medium. Its arrival means -apart from its documentary function, a kind of ancilla picturae that strived, in its early stages, to have its artistic début. Something we know to have been achieved by dint of effort end, obviously, in its own right, asserting its uncostetable autonomy. However, and given the fact that thist late in the century the disciplinary limits in things artistic are not hard-and-fast fluctuate in extremely varied and osmotic reciprocity, it seems that no one is to be puzzled -how naïve one would have to be- that a creator adopts, makes use of, includes, combines... in its linguistic expression resources and diction of a photographic nature, as well as resources and techniques taken from the sculptor. To sum up, Nadal's pictures succeed in their attempt to suggest, evoke and provoke other games, from his poetic side and thanks to the suitable combinations of materials an finishes (paper, fabric, sheets, even, corrugated, rusty), shades

(ochres, greys, blacks, whites); both of a perceptive nature and of a psychological basis, let alone the always problematic and exciting relationship between abstraction and figuration in the intricate game of hiding and revealing.

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