

## WHEN THE ARTIST RESEMBLES HIS PICTORIAL WORK

Contemporary Art History crosses many paths and among them we have found a well-travelled route brought about by the event of Carlos Maciá's exhibition in Malaga.

There is an affinity between the choices made in the life of this graffiti artist and those found in the biography of the master Pablo Picasso. At an early stage of his thrilling life Picasso travelled from the South to Galicia and with this exhibition Carlos Maciá walks the same way back, from Lugo to Malaga carrying his canvasses full of a resoundingly Picassian joie de vivre. Such stated parallelism between Picasso and Maciá could easily be interpreted as an intellectual whim of the author of these lines, but there are outstanding underlying affinities between the Galician and the legend from Malaga.

When we look at the work of the Andalusian master, we always perceive an identity between the very image of the artist himself and his creations. Throughout his different periods, Picasso, the man, physically resembles his canvasses and sculptures. Whenever blue and pink dominated his work he was emaciated. When he was developing cubism his features were sharply drawn by the sun in Nice. When he was producing work in a neoclassical style he bought a castle. And when he was influenced by the poetry of Góngora, he would wear blue striped T-shirts and hats reminiscent of old Spanish knights. All these identities are but a reflection of the truth in which the universe Picasso is based: a personal world full of content and form. It is the same with Carlos Maciá; his universe is made up of rounded and chaotic shapes, of calligraphic strokes curled up as if they were a plate of spaghetti he is eating or a neo-punk floral design he is looking at. As if he were inventing a new musical language, his works have got the stolen shape of the weightless journey made by musical notes suspended in the air. His canvasses resemble his own dreadlocks and look like the way he talks, a speech riddled with juxtapositions, silences and inconsistencies. His strokes are steady but scattered just like the way he drives. The use of fluorescent colours comes from his observing the surrounding pop culture, and his large format works in two colours (blue and white, black and white, yellow and white) come from his perception of high culture... there is nothing more sophisticated than a drawing of a Japanese tokonoma or Michelangelo's anatomical sketches.

With regard to the topic of the universe of the artist, when the image of the creator belongs to his pictorial world, everything becomes univocal. In the end we do not know if Picasso wore striped T-shirts or depicted striped characters; in the end we do not know if Maciá paints ringlets like those of his hair or if his own hair is the product of having seen Cy Twombly's work. What cannot be denied is that such universes give art the ability to redeem everything. When I first met this artist I told him his work reminded me of Yves Klein's and his actions when painting. Nowadays, Carlos is bringing to life the key idea of the importance of the process and that is why he has been interested in painting the walls of old buildings only to have them erased later or on old factories that will soon be demolished. The gesture of the action works as a musical metaphor in Maciá's paintings.

If we remember Mozart's Concerto for Oboe, the notes of the solo instrument weightlessly linger over the rest of the orchestra. The phrases envelop the audience and they abandon themselves for a length of time that is equally ephemeral and unforgettable. Music exists, first and foremost, at the time of its interpretation and that runs parallel to the ephemeral medium used by Carlos Maciá in his paintings whose existence is guaranteed as long as the medium is not spoilt. Though it is true that in both cases it is possible to keep a recording of the performance. My second brush with Carlos Maciá was the result of a pleasant coincidence. The museum MARCO, in Vigo, was making preparations for an exhibition on generation "Urbanita" and I walked in. The museum entrance suggested it was closed for repairs or maybe it suggested the remains of a transmodern building as it was crammed with scaffolding and protective plastics. I saw among the mess a person I thought was a construction worker so I walked up to him and asked him about Carlos Maciá. Once again, the Laocoon in the works of this painter dictated that the person I approached was the painter himself in an identity game set in a space in ruins, under construction. Such taste for the "vanitas" theme or the fleeting nature of time, the ephemeral or the ruins is also a characteristic in the universe Maciá. On the same occasion I asked him about the title of the work he was doing on the ceiling and as he turned to me he muttered, you bastard. It has been a year now since that anecdote and the titles of Carlos Maciá's exhibition are inspired in the fleeting nature of time. In the wording there is a mix of high and low culture, since within the title there is a baroque vanitas, a carpe diem expression and a reference to the star system, to Madonna's latest album, time goes by so slowly. Everything in the title is stuffed with elements taken from the days of the abstract expressionist movement. There is also a pop nuance. On another title of this double exhibition he quotes that catchy phrase printed on the instructions of every orange juice bottle one can buy in any American store, shake well before using.

Carlos and his wife Ana spent last year living in New York and there many of their fantasies about the dazzling world of the icons of abstract art were fulfilled. He has been able to incorporate to his work his once vague ideas about the city, light, speed and art after observing Cy Twombly's work in MOMA or imagining the murals Rothko never installed on the Four Seasons restaurant at the Seagram building in NY. The reticular city layout, drawn in Mondrian's grids influences heavily Maciá's lines which seem to be dance steps. The whole light of Las Vegas is contained in the vibrant photographs he took on a couple of trips there. There is passion for speed as it is noticed in the rapid application of brush strokes and in the fact that colours change to monochrome painting due to speed. Thereby, the works belonging to the current universe Maciá, although painted in two colours, become monochrome when seen at full speed. Carlos Maciá's art makes us walk remote paths that lead to the belief of a purely intellectual idea of beauty; it is a convincing way, like that of Saint Paul from the horse to the floor before conversion. Following the stunning proposals of this artist guarantees the unveiling of a new world.

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