

Merca

Enrique Fogwill

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Visual Arts

Painting, the most literary of the arts, paints its own convulsions. These convulsions are not always in keeping with the Hegelian declaration of the death of art; indeed, they are often manifestations of the contempt for or ignorance of their own historical fate. Mondongo broke onto the visual arts scene and neutralized the notion of the author; it made fun of the idea of representation. From the time of its first show, the artist became a group, the image a pixel system, and the message the prime material of expression: fake pearls to compose the virtual image of a wealthy collector, bits of meat to make the image of an artist, thousands of pencils outlining the profile of a supposed writer, and colored mirrors to depict the Bourbon royal family.

Perplexed, the art public saw galleries and collectors compulsively buying up the *porni* series (2003) that used cookies and crackers to pixel virtual images, objects compulsively consumed by visual pornography addicts: the hoarded objects of domestic couch potatoes as prime material for the representation of the saccharine lust and trivia of the captives of the XXX images on cable tv and the internet.

Plasticine

Literature, the most musical of the arts, might be painting's reference or message, but never its material. The material used in the series *Caperucita* (Little Red Riding Hood) - a piece made in 2004 that was also the willing object of a voracious market- was plasticine. Through the use of primary colors and naïve textures, and the image of the story trivialized by the brothers Grimm's prior theatrical representation of it, *Caperucita* recovers the basic terror of the Perrault tale. It sets off an explosive intersection of the male-female, animal-human and child-adult binaries in a kind of oriental garden which is, in turn, a mythical representation of the bridge between human space and natural forest. The serial nature and semi-industrial generation of this set of literary images become explicit in the piece from the year 2005 where an army of cloned little red riding hoods musically marches to its downfall in the pleasures of the forest.

- Like an army of artists willing to delve into the crushing pleasures of the market?

-Perhaps.

But these pieces attest to the pleasure of the act of composing using a material virtually kneaded by the hardworking fingers of men and women. These fingers slowly pressed each pixel in the long chain of images in a sort of ecstasy of the drive to work.

Wax

There was a day when music, the most political of the arts, left the sphere of ritual to become a part of everyday life and encompass everything. A thread runs through the history of music; in every step forward and back, nostalgia for music's origins can be felt in this thread. The series of wax paintings follows the plasticine polychromes. Evoking art from the ancient Mediterranean, in this wax series it is necessary to smelt, solder and wait for the image to be revealed; it is an exercise from which there is no return, as well as a challenge to the conventions of representation. Who would have expected such somberness to emerge in celebratory contemporary painting? Seascapes and portraits in pure black and white (2005) are always about to melt as if proposing a show of interrupted dissolution, and the eternal return of what is always begun again. We are ourselves, the sea, the bodies, our children.

Gold

Once amber – *electron*, for the Greeks- replaced beads and the spoken word in acts of exchange. From there to plastic electronic currency, the history of money speaks of the evolution of a belief in veracity. Polymerized resin- amber- guaranteed a quick verification of validity because it carried static just by being rubbed. Precious metals, due to their resistance to corrosives, required more complex proof, thus making way for the numismatic arts of gopher, relief and complex designs that guaranteed integrity and could stand the test of the filings of minor looters. Paper money took this art to new heights, and today the *peso* and the dollar are an amalgam of the various historical phases that brought about money. They muster seriousness, authority, the state, and perfection, as well as the fossil remains of various phases of graphic and decorative arts. They muster the remains of arts and artifices- also fossils in the electronic age- developed to curtail fraud. The technical history of money is also the history of techniques to insinuate, inspire trust, and avoid fraud. This serves to deconstruct Mondongo's new series of dollars (2005), turning around – as money turns around the work-value imaginary– relations of representation by rendering three dimensional the very flat and coveted paper. Thousands of nails and tens of thousands of obsessively knotted intersections are a tribute to work and human patience which foster a new contemplative attitude. In chorus, a people and an imperial state shout out **"In God we Trust"** with a currency deconstructed by three young Argentines.