

*Bread [El pan]*

After a long period, David Escalona (Malaga, 1981) returns to sculpture, working in alabaster, resin, porcelain and glass, as the cardinal language of this exhibition, the first part of a complex project materialized in different media, wherein he revisits his childhood at the moment of the early loss of innocence when he had a traumatic accident at his parents' bakery. The reencounter with his family environment awakens the need to communicate with his past and, at the same time, communicate it to others. It is a process of taking one's most intimate issues into the public realm, so they may transcend in a universal category. The fragments of works by Fernando Pessoa and Chantal Maillard that he chose for his website explain this leap into the void. Faced with the inability to reveal his inner world, Pessoa confesses that he lies: "...what I ultimately have to do is convert my feelings into a typical human feeling, even though that means perverting the very nature of what I felt..." When personal non-transferable experience is rendered into a common code, made into an archetype, it loses part of its essence and becomes something else, although it may still be related to its former self.

David Escalona backtracks in search of his "lost steps", the origin of his own nature, bearing the significant life experience of studying medicine, where he shapes his own artistic language, replete with references to the organic, sculpted with his studies of fine arts and enriched by archaeological, anthropological, historical and artistic exploration of his roots. According to Walter Benjamin, who created a species of linguistic theology: "...man knows the world through the name just as God creates the world", and in Vicente Jarque's opinion, human speech is this originator. Likewise, there exists a theory of possession through naming. Just as the discovery of language for naming things and apprehending them revealed the wounds and their painful nature to him, hastening the maturity of his view of life, following the discovery of an artistic communicative strategy and conscious distortion in the absolute sincerity of the message, he comes to terms with the road taken.

During this journey, then, another loss of innocence takes place; in exchange, the artist learns to "slide".

- "By remaining on the surface not knowing how to slide, some people become aware that something of theirs...sickens. In an effort to get well, they begin to seek the old roads into the profound, but they realize with horror that they are no longer useful...a new form of honesty must be learned...become conscious of the void, of the blank page, of the possibility of being: of becoming. From there on, they can begin to speak." (Chantal Maillard)-

He has recovered from both fractures and drawn a positive reading from them, confronting them and reconciling them, as he confronts and reconciles naivety and perversion, beauty and monstrosity, attraction and repulsion, violence and serenity, fragility and strength, delicacy and crudeness, pain and pleasure, dream and nightmare...resulting in a labyrinth of mirrors.

In the installation, sculptures and video compose scenes linked to the bakery, the landscape of his childhood, where the boy begins to experiment with materials and with life, in its playful as well as its tragic aspects. The concepts coexist with rites and symbols of mythic resonance, along with autobiographic and cultural evocations. Each piece conveys a complex network of meanings, what Umberto Eco considers open art; however, the artist's intention is to communicate a specific message that is plural yet difficult to leave to the speculation of the beholder, so he goes to great lengths to ensure its suggestive capacity.

Metamorphosis is another one of the main themes of the exhibition. His hand that metamorphoses after the accident and successive operations familiarize the artist with this phenomenon. On the one hand Ovidio and the physical transformations of the Olympic divinities, and on the other hand Kafka and Gregorio Samsa. Apart from amphibians, insects are the only animals for which this process is innate. This

justifies the presence of the nuptial stop by moths in a video and the silkworm larvae in a box, in remembrance of those he kept secretly under the hospital bed during the first operations, helping him to understand the process of change in his hand once the bandage was removed. A hand we find ambushed in the metallic mesh of one of the windows, holding onto a thread from whose end hangs a dental piece similar to those which are grouped on one side of the window, a metaphorical image of the trap-accident, an initiation that prematurely sparked the entrance into adulthood. The road of life learning is alluded to in the alabaster shelf-rungs placed on the baker's aprons, which afford a mystical aura.

The loss of teeth in the Freudian interpretation of dreams has sexual connotations, indicating the proximity of adolescence, preamble to adulthood. But there is also a relationship with brutality, more still in these pieces, which are different from the human ones. There is the extreme case of Egaeus de Berenice, the character who Edgar Allan Poe has extract all the teeth of his dying beloved, the only vestige of a beauty ravaged by illness. It also exemplifies the nightmares that haunted David Escalona's childhood nights. It is during sleep that the threshold of reality is crossed, enabling one to change it and avoid it, but also to start down the path of terror. The vertical bed is not for sleeping, nor is to be the setting of love rituals. This is corroborated by the dough-skin that is resting on the crosspiece, bristling with sharp elements that symbolize pain.

As it ferments the bread dough mutates into the baker's table. In the installation it is also an operating table and a boat. Dough mutated into slit open animals around which some phantom-like aprons congregate. A meeting of surgeons: the composition seems to refer to Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*; alternatively, to the Carthusians from Zurbarán's refectory, although they might also be the Apostles gathering around Agnus Dei, a visual metaphor of sacrifice and death. In the mortuary boat Caronte rows, and the traveller is Ra, who dies and is reborn each day, that is, he is regenerated.

The animal aspect also appears linked to the sound of the kneader-destroyer and the Palaeolithic weapon. Terrible bestiality, as beauty sometimes is, and the friendly cohort bestiality of the boy's playmate. The pet dog licks his wounds while satiating his thirst, a marvellous mutualistic relationship.

The title of the exhibition is comprehensive of its wealth of significances and signifiers. A staple, elemental and essential food, cause of many revolutions; Christianity's Bread of Life; Pan, the Greek all, the semi-god of shepherds and flocks who appeared during naps with a cathartic effect and who, infuriated when woken up, caused the stampedes of animals terrified of his reactions-panic. A correlation of meanings in a sort of mantra with circular reading, like the poem by Chantal Maillard "In the beginning there was hunger..", which illustrates the exhibition.

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