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En otro tiempo ibas muy elegante

Bottrop, Brandl, Crespo, Estruch, Förg, Knoebel, Rehberger, Sena, Tharrats, Zipp, Zöllner
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En otro tiempo ibas muy elegante is an exhibition of old and new works by Gonçalo Sena, Thomas Zipp, Günther Förg, Jan Zöllner, Laia Estruch, Herbert Brandl, June Crespo, Peppi Bottrop, Tobias Rehberger, Rosa Tharrats and Imi Knoebel.

Exploring questions of memory, the body and colour, parallels are drawn in which time – the *other* time, that of a much larger notion of history – is the byword.

In a kind of *Pathosformel* of emotional connotations and subjective analogies, the exhibition layout follows putative tonal and thematic contiguities. An imaginary in which the domestic is combined with the spiritual, the primitive with the magical, materiality with abstraction, the manual with the optic, faces, bodies (whether visible or concealed), legs and shoes are relayed through shapes and colours (including their emotional associations) in a series of inter-linked sequences.

In relation to the notion of scale, the body and the domestic, Gonçalo Sena's work proposes a screen of concrete, a point of access to reality mediated by an interposition on the gaze. The various parts of his sculpture provoke an action between seeing and not seeing, with certain openings towards that which is behind, yet with an opaque screen preventing us from complete apprehension of what lies beyond. Behind Sena's piece is a set of fourteen engravings by Thomas Zipp entitled *Black Dada* and which bring together various versions and collages around portraits of Otto Hahn. A diverse range of reused images, including masks from ethnographic museums, details from the cover of Pink Floyd's LP *Relics* (1971), and a somewhat diffuse portrait of African dictator Jean-Bédé Bokassa, are incorporated into a portrait of Hahn, creating a network of associations and meanings in relation to Dada, Max Ernst and the image of the apple as origin and forbidden fruit.

Positioned in relation to Zipp's faces is the sculpture of a mask by Günther Förg. While references to the avant-garde, to African art, to the authenticity of the mask and to the deformed face as a metaphor of a collapsed modernity place this work in relation to Giacometti or Fautrier, important references for Förg, the deep gaze, carnal materiality and totemic presence of the isolated mask, when related to the intervention on faces by Zipp, gives rise to a certain notion of stupor which, while possibly recovering hopeful myths from before the second world war, certainly invokes the horror and destruction that followed.

We might also place Jan Zöllner's painting within this same dual notion. Exhibited for the first time in Spain, the thematic naivety, sense of humour and schematic line of his paintings are accompanied by a gloomy and disturbing landscape that ranges from "nocturnal" surfaces to motifs recurring in his work such as pants with out-turned pockets, alluding both to popular imagery, and to more dreamlike, surrealist or Freudian/sexual elements.

The out-turned pockets and curved lines also establish a new relationship with the work of Laia Estruch, specifically with the sculpture *Crol (barana II)*, a handrail activated by Estruch's own body during her exhibition at the Miró Foundation in Barcelona and shown for the first time at our gallery. In addition to this action in which body and voice resist in a sinuous and narrow space between wall and sculpture, the work, as a reinterpretation of the designs of handrails and stairs in swimming pools, here evokes a journey with the hand, the body and the eye along the lines of the works of Zöllner and Bottrop. The intense red of Estruch's sculpture also contrasts with the green of Herbert Brandl's work, which is part of a previous series of paintings created specifically for the Austrian Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale.

This latter work invokes a veiled presence in which seeing and not seeing, so central to the nature of painting itself, follow the viewer's retinal adjustment to the true nature of the painting, creating an intangible horizon across the room with Zöllner's abandoned legs and the informality of Förg's mask.

Also activated in this hypothetical space of thematic and evocative conjugation between the materiality of Sena's concrete works and Förg's bronze mask is June Crespo's sculpture, an almost elementary offering which anticipates an important aspect of her recent production. The gesture, object, scale and process of the mould for a pair of high-heeled shoes encased in each other has been fundamental in her current work and is again in this piece, which has a certain primitive air, in which the materiality is not disguised with any transcendental idea, but rather offers a kind of starting point. Also exploring this idea of material and manual work is Peppi Bottrop's painting, which offers an example of his link with the tradition of coal mining, with the use of certain materials establishing an obvious relationship with this world, but also the distortion or saturation of scale, in this case pictorial, in search of the limits of depiction.

On the other hand, and again with an emphasis on the domestic, a painted shelf by Tobias Rehberger from 2001 is placed next to a vase, representing the common territory of architecture and design, not as an intersection but as a place of its own. His proposal offers an “equation between place and the notion of subject”, giving a “new twist to the concept of environment”. Based once again on associations of colour and form, the symmetry of Rehberger’s piece is contrasted with an indecipherable organic quality in Rosa Tharrats’ *Las bodas del tiempo*, exhibited here for the first time, and which alludes to this other notion of original time at the heart of the exhibition. Formed by a curved copper tube that in its contortion recalls the work of Estruch or Bottrop, the sculpture is completed with two stones, rosemary incense and candles that, in a reference to the world of magic, represents both cosmic and earthly time.

The exhibition is rounded off with two works from Imi Knoebel’s series *Tafel Bilder*. If Knoebel’s work delves into spiritual exercises of colour and form from an ascetic and magical perspective, the interaction between one thing and another – between the work’s blues and greens and the tones of the painted stones of Tharrats’ sculpture – suggest different readings.

En otro tiempo ibas muy elegante offers a perspective of both clear images and vague apparitions; dragged surfaces that create simultaneities between each other; solid bodies and insubstantial atmospheres that provoke chance encounters which, when materialised, indefinitely alter the potential relations and interactions between the works.