

Antonio Ballester Moreno

Planetas

September 19 - November 9, 2019

'Earth, my likeness,
Though you look so impassive, ample and spheric there,
I now suspect that is not all [...]'¹.

'Planetas' [Planets] is the third solo exhibition of Spanish artist Antonio Ballester Moreno at the gallery. The works of the exhibition are a continuation of his latest projects at La Casa Encendida (Madrid, 2017) and the São Paulo Biennial (São Paulo, 2018), in which the artist explored the narrative possibilities of landscape as a genre.

The narrative is formalised in an exercise of purity and simplicity, through a recognisable iconography, which uses basic representations of planets that float in pictorial space, generating, in some way, an irregular and captivating rhyme. The gallery is covered in panels, which accommodate these planets and constitute a parallel universe, in an attempt to point to the mystic space between the work and the spectator, which is the key to everything.

These planets, represented by simple coloured circles, inhabit the exhibition space, floating in a kind of spatial dance. It is a direct representation, which alludes to our collective and easily decipherable imagination. The main instrument is colour, 'the place where our brain and the universe meet', according to Klee². Colour constructs the main characters of this exhibition, creates identities on its own and fills the original void. They are basic, primary colours, which reinforce the idea of authenticity avoiding thus tricks or visual effects. The colours are set against white and black backgrounds, - day and night -, the life cycle, the light and shadows that have been so important throughout the history of painting and act as a metaphor on the relevance of the genre itself.

Nevertheless, it is also important to draw attention to the assertion of the manual production process, but with a clear and preconceived awareness of its objectives, which serve us here as a conceptual support. The production of the paintings is not entrusted to the mediation of any industrial or technological process. It all begins with small handmade collages of cardboard, which the artist produces in his studio, and from which he selects compositions that he subsequently paints on Hessian fabric, allowing the material to express itself, hinting its sculptural dimension. This process responds to the creative need of the artist, conceding a leading role to what Benjamin³ defines as cult value in the work of art. The artist relates with his work and the outcome contains the joy of the time used in its production.

The extract of Whitman's poem arouses the suspicion of the Exterior, the unimaginable, the unknown. The planets act as mirrors of the Earth, reflections of luminous waves that offer the illusion of another possible life. Just like painting.

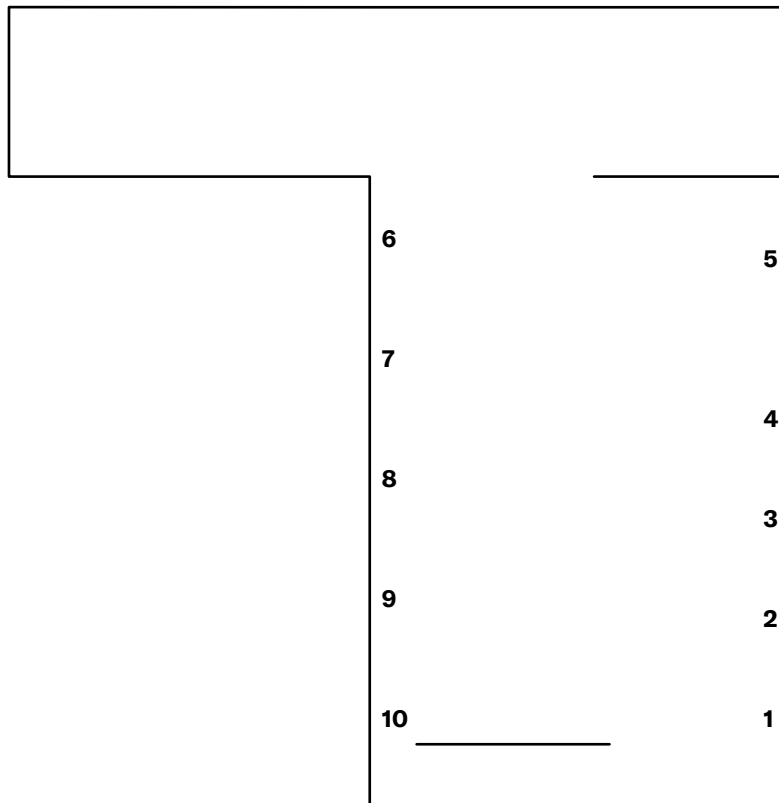
Madrid, September 2019

Jorge Pallarés

¹Walt Whitman (1855): Earth, My Likeness. Leaves of Grass

²Will Grohmann (1954): Paul Klee.

³Walter Benjamin (1935): The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.



1. Planetas - Día (Azules, gris, negro y rojo), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

2. Planetas - Día (Azul), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

3. Planetas - Noche (Azules), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

4. Planetas Día (Amarillo, Centro), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

5. Planetas Noche (Blanco), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

6. Planetas - Noche (Rojos, azul y gris), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

7. Planetas - Día (Negro), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

8. Planetas Noche, 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

9. Planetas - Día (Verdes), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm

10. Planetas Noche (Blanco, Centro), 2019
acrylic on jute
200 × 145 cm