

The Same Voice

In a famous essay on Galileo, Panofsky wonders how come it is modernly taken for granted that the scientist's logical-mathematical approach has influenced his esthetical evaluations, while it is generally excluded that his esthetical attitude, widely documented, may have on the other side influenced his astronomical theories.

I humbly turn the question, in occasion of this latest series of works, aiming it at the work of Rafael Pareja; he has so far been considered by the critics who have accompanied his career as an explorer of interiority on various and of proven precariousness materials but he may be – according to the writer – a sounder of communicative codes by means and thank to the protective capsule of the *passepartout* restlessness of the self.

In *The Same Voice* the message becomes more compact and radical but the inquiring purpose remains unaltered and the material serves it. Something seems to have changed, but only to the naive and inexperienced eye. Pareja's images, punctually accompanied by appropriate yet apparently random titles, are visual transcodings of linguistic propositions, as are topographical maps or as are the so-called taxonomy-images, that is those representations which tend to unify a certain amount of data and knowledge by means of spatial relations, first of all Darwin's tree of life.

It is risky to say that the images are self-explanatory; any representation, for the very reason that it is a simulacrum of an object or of an abstract idea, is socially built, and so is its interpretation, no matter how varied, subjective, changeable and possibly contradictory. Vaguely informative diagrams, despite the fact that they come from ancient and traditional materials – such as the engraving, someone else's engraving saved from oblivion (*I saw someone commit suicide here*), the drawing and the acrylic painting, confirm the transversality of a prevailing and widespread discourse, whose accidental assignment of titles is an example of dazzling efficiency. Parameters of efficiency and speed, raised to founding values of the contemporary age, take contingent and equally misleading shapes. Random are the colours, – determined by palettes which are available on line – the names, the shapes of a constant intention of scientific credibility and instant access to information, called knowledge in the blessed indifference of the *magnificent and progressive fates*. What is not random, but an artist's result, remains the windingly disturbing style that has always characterized Pareja's work, which here is stripped the flesh off of, deprived of its comfortable pictorial softness of the digital era and therefore more discretely mature and synthetic.

There is no interest, either for the social critic or for the morality, in the series *If the kids are united* as well, where the curators who are widely recognized as the most influent in the environment of contemporary art could, without significant fractures, leave the stage to their colleagues – the cooks, the financial experts (that strong is the force of oblivion), or to any professional expression or category taken as an explanatory model of success. Wrapped in geometrical figures they only amplify themselves. The system is not attacked, but offered an interpretative key to, truistic, besides, but cleverly concealed in the so called real world. It is true that works such as *I live in a selfish city built by selfish people* or *Karl took me riding on his beloved horse* visually recall Guy Debord's beautiful, destructured map of Paris, *The Naked City*, but the accuse of social disparity which permeates the works of the Situationist International does not belong to Pareja. His intention is different and more profound. These small and circumscribed images mine the acceptance of semantic values on which the entire system of thought which makes us say 'wrong' or 'right' according to the received input is based.

Pareja is a linguist before being a visionary and communication is a game of composable cubes bound to the transmission of a minimal number of directives of thoughts. There is a fundamental condition, though – that the language does not describe a reality which is external to it but it represents an essential part in the creation of the very same reality; just as the sectorial language in a chemical laboratory does not simply describe the actions which take place within, but it is instrumental so that these can be realized in the first place and according to certain directives in a second place. The artist's maps follow this direction and take up an initially explanatory value but subsequently in itself, as a summarizing and simultaneous representation of a *forma mentis* which is in turn shaped by the reflection itself which the continuous use of these representations generates.

The same voice is therefore an extremely contemporary work, which is to be included in a philosophical and cognitive discourse of *discourse analysis* that has not by chance dominated the studies of the social sciences lately. Pareja has found himself and the corpus that he presents is a coherent invitation to the reading of the communicative interaction in terms of authentic, presumed, attributed, or innocently interpretable meanings.

Flying across the United States in a balloon, in one of Mark Twain's novels, Huck Finn fails to recognize the state of Pennsylvania because he expects it to be pink, the way it is on the map. *The Same Voice* is a finger pointed at the generative value of a pictorial text which, decontextualized, becomes an absolute landmark. It is the visual symbol of a story told by means of the images.

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