

WORDS FOR MONICA ALONSO.

I confess that I am still writing impressed by the visual development of the museographic project proposed by Mónica Alonso and Maria do Céu Baptista for *La palabra de la pintura*, an exhibition that analyzes the relationship between painting and the written word, through very significant examples of the art of the century. XX. They had to give an exhibition form to an excellent set of art books, folders, drawings, graphic work and objects in which painters such as Sonia Delaunay, Kandinsky, Olga Razanova, Max Ernst, Picasso, Matisse, Miró, Rauschenberg and Saura honored or collaborated. with writers like Dante, Balzac, Breton or Blaise Cendrars. As I followed the development of the proposal and I know the confidence that Mónica Alonso has in her work, I was not surprised that she accepted the offer to transform three regular, cold and bright rooms, three white cubes into spaces of tension and containment, also complying with strict regulations. external factors such as the necessary decrease in light and faithful respect for what is exposed. He analyzed the collected works, paying attention not so much to formal or aesthetic issues as to a kind of mental sensations, he painted each room in a different color and made a series of showcases whose curved references allow him not to enter into dispute with the clean architectural space, although this characteristic formal is so nuanced that it is not perceived as an obstacle when viewing the works. It even covers the changes in scale between them and the space, reinforcing the visual presence of fragile supports such as paper, collages or drawings.

If I start the text by recalling that intervention, it is because of what the project carried out implies, because of its audacity with the dimension of what is exposed, and how it shows that it understands other people's problems through its own optics. A detail that will not surprise anyone who really knows the work of Mónica Alonso. It is enough to review his work since he exhibited at the Sala Montcada in Barcelona, in 1997 (the first really important event in his career), to perceive that perhaps his determination is nothing more than the insistence on showing a personal way of looking. From a theory of colors (is it too daring to describe it as one's own?) from a theory of sensitivity (again another famous book title) from a decided position of risk and implication; always moving in bordering areas between the pictorial, the sculptural, the architectural, but also the psychological or the philosophical. Contaminated land, for lived.

His concern for how to see, analyze, inhabit and explain the world seems central, and it is easy to perceive by those who face his work as a whole, from its beginnings. In fact, when Mónica Alonso ordered her first self-conscious retrospective (held at the CGAC in Santiago de Compostel, at the beginning of 2002) she turned the engravings *Cuartos de Loucura*, from 1993, into a surprising, (happy) declaration of plastic principles, comparable to the reasoning that accompanies it: "Concentrated nature gets inside a room. The daisies are nature and madness, the daisies are the

step from the natural to the artificial, once this step is taken everything will be artificial. The room is huge, distorted, it's a dream image. There is no window, there is no exterior, it is all over the walls. The door is at the end of the room and gives a reference to the dimensions of the room. The exit is far away, the bed misplaced. The viewer's point of view is what marks the visualization of the whole. Engraving was the medium that allowed me to achieve the image of dreams. Once this image was captured, I already had total control over the built space.”

The catalog of this exhibition includes a small but precise text by Ilya Kabakov, one of the artists for whom Mónica Alonso does not hide her admiration. The photograph of an invitation to an exhibition in his gallery in Santiago, SCQ, is very explicit in this regard: a fragment of his work table, with folders, sketchbooks, notes and a few books, with a special role for a thick monograph on Kabakov. An eloquent quote from that text: “Alonso's finding lies in the location of his models, since he finds a place for them inside spatially abstract structures whose size far exceeds that of the models themselves. Hence these tiny rooms are submerged in a network that encompasses something immense, but empty, hard and meaningless.

It is significant, due to the expansion of the register that it implies to understand the work of Mónica Alonso. She will always be judged in a pre-architectural key, of models and color symbols, which, being valid, is still incomplete because it relegates the true ambition of her proposal to a second place. In the same way that Matisse wanted to carry out a work that would favor the rest of the bourgeois when they got home, Mónica Alonso proposes another twist: not to approach the viewer but to encourage him to come closer. And he gets it. In the choice of colors he defines his space, his world, his intention. In the tension of the chosen pink, yellow, green, blue or orange. They are not electric colors but almost, they are not aggressive but they touch it. And it has been happening since its inception, since that Barcelona exhibition of 1997, in whose catalogue, by the way, Alvaro Rodríguez Fominaya wrote a text (“The construction of dreams”) in which he outlined the keys of Mónica Alonso with remarkable precision.

The words sifted with the drawings of the dream define the space of the Cuartos de Loucura, a space inhabited by a bed, the strongest iconographic reference in Mónica Alonso. From her, taken almost as an observed character, she proposes a patterned and successive articulation, incorporating elements within an austere general discourse. Although Mónica Alonso frequently speaks of the baroque character of his thoughts, the plastic resolution tends to austerity, to a warm minimalism, never cold, apparently fragile, never industrial. This apparent fragility is, however, one of the features that make his work conceptually stronger, because it responds to his own choice, it is the result of an investigation into his past (his first house, the traditional scheme of the Galician rural

house, the houses he lived in). Yes Manuel Mugica Laínez will recount the stories of the inhabitants of a house to find in those echoes a kind of collective voice, Mónica Alonso dispenses with the details, the accidental, the events, to stay with the essence, with the sense. Dispenses with the exterior, seeks the interior, the lines that define the space, the internal structure. And he endows each of his proposals with a complex intention, presenting them as parts of sophisticated projects that aspire to improve the life of those who enjoy them. To provoke the viewer's reaction, he resorts to two complementary strategies, even though they seem antagonistic: he turns the spaces into real bubbles, isolating them with colors that refer us to a dream world, never real; and accompanies the "parts" of information brochures, as a book of instructions for sale or use. Perhaps on the first occasion the spectator will be surprised, but it is very possible that on the second he will feel the seduction, the spell.

Mónica Alonso constantly refers to moods, sensations, feelings, but she does not need to resort to the human figure. It does not incorporate music, nor nods to club culture; he maintains a disturbing distance, between the neutrality and rigor of someone who knows that he is proposing a different way out, without easy references in his generation. The bed as a physical symbol of passage to the house, to the building, to the hospital, to therapies, to mental references. There is a medium plan in this progress, in this progressive development, in this slow unfolding of a theory already pointed out in works from ten years ago. There are no steps back, everything responds to a kind of internal and driving logic.

If I began by recalling the museographic intervention that Mónica Alonso prepared for an exhibition by others, it is because of the relationship of that proposal with the work presented in her current exhibition in Teruel. It would be forced to establish precise formal references between her work and that of Sonia Delaunay, although it cannot be ruled out that the woman from Lugo is interested in delving into the plastic thought of the French woman (Cápsulas mamá arouses a closeness to a spirit between the avant-garde and design which includes both Sonia Delaunay and Marcel Duchamp as well as the less rigid of the kinetics), but there is a line of continuity between *Centrifuga para amor* and the ideal structure from which the showcases designed for *Las palabras de la pintura* emerge. I suspect the reason is obvious: many artists seek to inhabit a world transformed by colors, integrated into their way of seeing. Mónica Alonso puts it into practice with as much determination as luck in the results. It intervenes and decides, regardless of the medium or scale from which it is requested.