

GALERÍA AGUSTINA FERREYRA

RAMIRO CHAVES & MANIMAS

NIESO NIESOTRO

MARCH 4TH - APRIL 15TH, 2018

For *NIESO NIESOTRO*, Ruberta is occupied in large part by a roll of paper that is 10 meters long. On this surface, Ramiro Chaves in collaboration with MANIMAS, have produced a continuous drawing made out of ink, paint, photographic impressions and mud, among other materials. This work has an all-over solution and an expansive quality to it that could be associated with categories such as outsider art or art brut. Chaves has placed special attention to these artistic forms in previous graphic, photographic and sculptural projects, more eminently in *Lxs Brutxs* (2015). The artist has also devoted a considerable amount of time to research different understandings and processes of artistic expression through workshops that he organizes. It was in one of these that he met the members of MANIMAS, four children between 8 and 13 years of age. MANIMAS is composed of María, Daniel, Bernardo y Eduardo, all of them siblings.

Chaves placed a few images through the length of the paper, quite randomly, as the first clues for the construction of this composition. These were impressions of photographs of some clay sculptures, among other things, produced also in collaboration with MANIMAS during their work sessions. Then, from top to bottom, the five of them articulated a sort of landscape that unfolds through 10 meters of paper. *NIESO NIESOTRO* makes reference to two old-Castilian words used by John of the Cross in his 16th Century poem *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. In this way, the drawing could be seen as a diagram in which the reference to the metaphorical Mount Carmel stands as the apex of a collective endeavor, the spirit of collaboration negotiates in order to reach its summit.

The landscape in this work is highly ambiguous. The worlds of land and water, for instance, seem to interpenetrate constantly. It also gathers a whole array of incongruous spaces, creatures and animals. In the topography of this drawing it is possible to spot beaches, gardens, architectural plans, monsters, hills, soccer fields and a variety of animals, most numerous dogs and tons of fish - rendered with a simple graphic solution that recalls archaic, children's and symbolic representations. If someone is acquainted with Chaves's work, it might be possible to spot some of his interventions - like the photographic impressions of the cave-like modern architecture of Javier Senosian or some drawings that might recall his

interest in the work of Joaquín Torres García and the aesthetics of La Escuela del Sur. Nevertheless, this monumental drawing defies authorship through its constant negotiation of relations, interests and referents that move, as the artist mentions, between the collective and the individual, adulthood and childhood, consciousness and automatism, control and chaos. Just as it happens with works of outsider art that can be connected to, this piece seems to contain a play of narrative elements. When confronted to this kind of works, one is invited to decipher it through the imaginative negotiation of its multiple fragments.

Along with this drawing, the exhibition *NIESO NIESOTRO* features other works, such a piece composed of two large scale hands connected with an aluminum tube, *Las Manos de Dani*, (2018) almost a large-scale toy that, through its use, might imply shared play and communication. The object recalls the homemade toy of a “telephone” constructed with string and Styrofoam cups. There is a series of photographs featuring the members of the collective, locations and events related to their workshops. A diptych shows the twins Bernardo and Eduardo, their faces covered in mud. This mud is the same used in the large scroll of paper and it shows the interest in experimenting with materials in the work of Chaves and in his collaborations with MANIMAS. To refer to this work as a scroll is not arbitrary. As it can be seen in one of the photographs of this show, one of the tools used by the members of MANIMAS are smartphones that they use to document their everyday activities. As such, new modes of perception, brought forth by new technologies, seem to be translated in this large scale drawing. Against contemporary perception and attention - characterized by fast and distracted consumption of images, the scroll in this exhibition invites careful observation and decipherment.

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