

GALERÍA AGUSTINA FERREYRA

It was campsite and method

Santiago Villanueva on Ramiro Chaves

There are no references, just insistences.

If there's any novelty in its inception, a work is the promise of insisting: very 20th century. The work that insists is the work that thinks of itself as not only part of art history, but rather as part of many other histories that can't be told. Insisting is also accepting that much of what we wanted to learn and know has been lost. A collage, or the encounter among strangers, is also, beyond any technicality, an acceptance of what is lost in the work.

The table as a method. The world raves around a table. It is the liminal, symbolic space where the agreement is presented and disagreement assimilated; it is where we try to get to the center of things, untangling previous moves. But it is also around that table, where cruelty is unleashed and the pain of growing and scaling it all, manifests. The kitchen table, the one that Sara Ahmed says becomes a press, is also the space to say the inadequate, to express, maybe only with a gesture, the arrival of the killjoy: showing up only to ruin it all. Many of Ramiro's works consider that *aroundness*, regardless of whether they have the table as a center. They go around *it*, they roam and cover the outlines too. Making a work of art is in a way rebutting or rejecting a plane, changing posture and position. Reorganizing what is unorganized is also composing, and to only compose in a disorganized manner is to always approach a messy, scrambled table. The messy and scrambled as a genre, is thinking way too much about categorization so that you can't touch it. The upside-down table can also be the base for a tent, and many tables together can be a campsite, a choir of circuses too. The sole initiative of thinking collectively changes the way of thinking about a plane. To linger around a table is to remain in the *aroundness*, to support, and sustain without the fear of being dumb or appearing to be. The table-talk-sit-around-lingering works feel comfortable in that ridicule, they are not afraid of it.

The ghost works. The ghost work is that which, in an excessive display of material presence, unleashes a certain disregard for the material, for its physicality, for its presence. An opaque mirror in favor of an adrenaline driven present. Things appear to be able to sit on

it. It not only serves as a support for other things; objects, activities and interests, but it also thinks of itself in a horizontal plane: more floor than wall. The ghost work values and prioritizes adornments, those that would appear to be extra, but are also a synonym of whim and tenderness. The whimsical strokes, the assemblage adornment, are the ones that come the closest to a certain will of proximity and folly. The non essential quality of the ghost work is what's constitutive about them, the ghostly is surplus.

Dispersion is my mode. Movements are what we use to compartmentalize, the movement is what refers to dispersion. To move is to disperse, to move in a group is to be organized. But what if we don't think like that?, what if instead, we understand moving only as personal gymnastics? Dispersion can be a difficulty in communication, and that should be added value to a work. To stand still is synonymous with madness, incomprehension from the get go: A shout into the air. But being alone is not only dissenting, but rather valuing the self at one's own pace. Not all of us are good with rhythm.

Contact lenses. Those small bugs that see, beyond looking like they want to register and gather, are mounted on these lenses in order to not remember so much. An eternal need to always be out of focus.

Method or manual. A while ago, Rosario Bléfari wrote about the influence of school manuals and textbooks, cooking ones and such, in the methods that she came up with herself to write songs, and decided to write a whole thesis in the form of a song. Ramiro presents himself between the methods of Best Maugard and those of Fernand Deligny. The first one is called: "*Tradition, resurgence and the evolution of Mexican art*", it is for primary school and it develops between the copy of the natural and the construction of toys, always based on what according to him are the seven primordial elements of Mexican art, aimed to prepare a child: "The works of our children are superior. In them, they imprint their ideas, their ways of being, their visions, their heritage. Everything is sympathy, grace, freshness and naive contempt for the ordinary conditions of drawing. Color tends to be a 'delicious impropriety of things'. This sympathy that fills up the page, stems from the drawings as a fruit of the imagination, a powerful reality of such human truth and purity that it doesn't matter which child drew it in which part of the world"¹. In Argentina, somebody who also thought of primary education was Martín Malharro, the first to declare a war on the pencil eraser. He

¹ Text by F. Orozco Muñoz, November, 1923.

suggested its prohibition to overlap new decisions with old mistakes. Deligny says²: “What remains is the question of whether a work of art has a sort of flying fish quality to it, of being that outline that is not from the same nature of the one which is conferred to us by symbolic domestication, and embarks us into what we could call history. If the flying fish seems wild, nothing stops us from thinking that in spite of our incessant caulking and patching, the outside will filter in and it will puddle and become a mirror that is not a mirror, but that reflects the face of the one who is looking at it” The work as a gesture and a stroke, as a fence, that limits the inside from the outside, an image and what is reflected on it. What limits it as something circular. What traces, also confines. Having a method is something very simple, how to limit your own fence, enclosing up to a “tent state”, of protection. Héctor Murena says that many cities, in spite of their places and buildings, are still campsites. Buenos Aires is one, Xochimilco is not a city, but it's another campsite. I like to think about this type of permanence-impermanence in the works. I think the works of Ramiro can be understood as campsites; they have the nomadic movement of the provisional and the inevitability of what is alert. That which refuses to stay still, but which can also be established quickly. The campsite is also both manual and method, just like drawing.

A frame. Framing is a term in photography and art history. Framing always leaves something out. What were we looking at? There's a lot of motifs that were so proliferated that they lost meaning and we lost sight of them: clowns are one example, toads are another. The off center frame, a little off, and as a mark, opens up another plane and allows us to see. When we see something twisted, we see more, being crooked is making yourself evident. Being out of frame is also avoiding repetition.

Flying fish. It flies over the frame. It jumps from one place to another, it is in that trajectory that it reveals itself. It only shows a little part of the whole project. It does not install, it does not linger. It decides to never come back. It only shows itself in torsion, in order to be able to practice holding different positions. Secret species that only for a few seconds, escapes its own ecstatic comfort.

² In the text “*Art, the outlines....and the outside*”, 1978.