

GALERÍA AGUSTINA FERREYRA

Tobías Dirty
Tomo lo que encuentro
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El avión ya despegó — and it all begins with the trip. That purposeful dislocation calls for a re-building in different orders of magnitude: Who will I be in this new place? How will my home look like? What will everyone make of me?

Upon his arrival in a foreign city, Tobías pursues lingering encounters and proceeds to take what he can find. One could speak of exoticization, but if we were to remove the power imbalance of a colonizing gaze, what would remain? The fantasy, the romanticizing that —as we all know— says more about the pathologies and truth-seeking of the one doing the exoticization than about the object of its desire. And what if the object were just trinkets? Precisely those displayed for the ogling, for the basic delight of the eyes of foreigners, for their easy consumption. Tobías' desire poses itself on knickknacks that are so industrially reproduced, so easily discarded that they can barely hold the reference and context that originated them — it makes no difference if they are little clay jugs, old bent spoons, Chinese-made plastic fruits, or an Art History jigsaw puzzle.

These object-encounters sustain his loving gaze, his earnest curiosity, and they become part of a crucial process: the material and aesthetic negotiation of re-creating his visual language for, and from, an entirely new milieu. And so the negotiation starts with a few spoonfuls of what he knows: a bit of Argentinian painting tradition, a bit of Latin American kitsch, some autobiographical elements, and a lot of experience — the phenomenological enactment of finding yourself in that which is other, a visualization of the world that is fully embodied and subjective, if not abstract at least distorted by a distance and affect that are unique to oneself.

Tomo lo que encuentro presents a body of work that in the trust it puts in the mechanics of the encounter becomes a bit of an *exquisite corpse* animated by the pull of experience and pure chance. These paintings and sculptures allowed themselves to be formed, to develop their strength from the resources offered by the new, that which exceeded the familiar and the comfortable. The transgression of this boundary is here articulated within domesticity — a configuration of marginality that is evocative of *camp*, described by Susan Sontag as 'the theatricalization of experience'.

And what are Tobías' topsy-turvy interiors but the theatricalization of daily life? His images transform home decor into a maximalism that manages to sweep within it his penchant for swirly artifice, the consistency of earthy sexuality, the wide-eyes of newness and the in-betweenness of a practice that thrives in a strange bi-dimensionality, where images tend to also have heft and shadow.

Is this an unnatural domesticity? Lacking in traditional family units but bursting with pleasure, textures and delirium; or is it simply the ever-changing rhythm of life? The constant assemblage-like anti-structure, a piling of things together —bodies, trinkets, touches, feelings— suggesting the shape of where we come from and always winking at what could be, the flirty wink that keeps us in place.

— Gaby Cepeda. CDMX.