

casa sin fin - Iván Candeo

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Iván Candeo

IDENTIDAD Y RUPTURA

Madrid, 2/02/2014

En “La tercera orilla del río”, un relato magistral de João Guimarães Rosa, un hombre construye una canoa y, tras abandonar a su familia, se instala a vivir en mitad del río. Nunca amarra la embarcación en ningún muelle, nunca busca la orilla. Tampoco se pierde río arriba, ni río abajo. Sólo permanece allí, sin avanzar pero en perpetuo movimiento, apenas negociando con la corriente para garantizar su inmovilidad perpetua: “Voces y noticias llegaban cada tanto por boca de ciertas personas —pasadores, ribereños, incluso gente de las lejanías de la otra banda— diciendo que nuestro padre nunca aparecía para tomar tierra, ni en saliente ni en entrante, ni de día ni de noche, describiendo su manera de navegar por el río, dejándose llevar, solitario.” Y así se le van pasando los años, las décadas, mientras el hijo asiste atónito a esa transformación lentísima del padre en un fantasma.

Creo entender que la obra de Iván Candeo, señala el escritor latinoamericano Juan Cárdenas, aborda esa circunstancia paradójica del movimiento: siempre más acá de las fantasías bergsonianas sobre un supuesto “plano de inmanencia”, es decir, en el terreno de lo fenomenológico, en el terreno de lo estético deviniendo social, a efectos de configurar una experiencia del presente donde irrumpe la memoria colectiva, sus videos y pinturas se demoran en ese conflicto y nos presentan cosas quietas que se mueven, cosas que se mueven quietas, quietud ilusoria, engañoso movimiento. Y por curioso que parezca, esa característica emparenta su trabajo con la gran tradición venezolana del cinetismo, solo que Candeo consigue desplazar las investigaciones de Cruz-Diez y Soto hacia un relato más amplio del arte latinoamericano, donde salen a la luz las continuidades y discontinuidades de los complejos procesos de “modernización” —en los que el cinetismo, por cierto, jugó un papel tan relevante—.

En ese sentido, Candeo se nos presenta como una rara especie de forense benjaminiano, más preocupado por la disección de las imágenes del pasado que por la postulación de símbolos, siempre atento a las fisuras alegóricas que transforman a los iconos en ruinas. Como en esas novelas policíacas que muestran todos los ángulos de un mismo acontecimiento, revisitándolo obsesivamente, las piezas de Candeo desmontan al derecho y al revés los bloques de imagen-tiempo y detectan canales de perturbación sinestésica entre la voz, lo pictórico y lo cinematográfico. Asimismo, hay en esa noción de desmontaje una secreta voluntad constructiva en la que interviene una gestualidad afirmativa, una celebración de las energías cotidianas que se desatan en medio de la debacle.

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In *The third riverside*, an excellent short story by João Guimarães Rosa, a man builds a canoe and, after abandoning his family, he settles down in the middle of the river. He never ties up the boat in a dock; he never looks for the bank. He neither gets lost, up and down the river. He only stays there, without moving on, but in a constant movement, just negotiating with the flowing to guarantee his perpetual immovability: 'Voices and news arrived from time to time through certain people — passers-by, riverside dwellers, even people who lived far away in other side — saying that our father never showed up to touch down, neither to make sail nor to moor, neither night or day; describing its way of sailing on the river, allowing the running to get him carried away, alone'. And so years pass by, decades, while an amazed son witnesses the very slow transformation of his father into a ghost.

I reckon Ivan Candeo's work deals with this paradox of the movement: always refraining itself from Bergsonian fantasies over an assumed 'level of immanence. That's to say, it dwells in the phenomenological terrain, in the aesthetic terrain becoming social, in order to shape an experience of the present where the collective memory bursts into, his videos and paintings stay in this conflict and they show us still things that move, things that are moving while being still, an illusory stillness, a deceiving movement.

And although it might sound odd, this characteristic relates his work with the big Venezuelan tradition of kinetic art, only that Candeo succeeds in moving Cruz-Diez and Soto researches to a wider narrative of Latin American art, where continuities and discontinuities of the complex processes of 'modernization' come to light; processes where kinetic art played a very important role.

In that sense, Candeo is being presented as a unique kind of Benjaminian forensic, more worried about the dissection of the images of the past than the proposition of symbols, and always attentive to the allegorical cracks that transform the icons into ruins. As in these crime novels that show from all the angles the same event, revisiting it obsessively, Candeo's works dismantle the image-time blocks and detect sinesthetic perturbation channels between the voice, the pictorial and the cinematic. Moreover, there is in this notion of dismantling a secret constructive will where an affirmative gesture intervenes, a celebration of day-to-day energies that trigger in the middle of a debacle.

Exhibited works

Monturas ecuestres

Inspired by the Étienne Jules Marey cronophotographies and Eadweard Muybridge studies about body movement, Candeo seems to break the stillness and the physic magnificence of the equestrian monuments in a group of paintings where the steeds give the impression of gallop past, after becoming detached from the pedestals that should hold them. Paradoxically, this displacement of the volume into the painting (through photography), only represents the transition to one form of immobility to another. In other words, both animals and their distinguished riders [Bolívar, Artigas, Máximo Gómez...] are forever stuck in its virtual gallop through the paths of history.

Félix Suazo

Miranda en La Carraca

Vídeo (DVD)

A photocopy of the painting by Arturo Michelena *Miranda en La Carraca* (1896) is being devoured by rats. Putting this work, an icon of Venezuelan art, at the rats disposal, has been interpreted as a direct questioning of the “contemporary forms of historic institutionalization and structuring the real that has been imposed by the current consumerism of producing and spreading images as official approaches of the true, the history and reality” (Lorena González). The video shows a sort of disappearance of a fix image, altered by rats who gobble the print paper.

It is not by coincidence that this work was done months after the celebration of Mirandino year was over —the date celebrates the bicentennial of the landing of Francisco Miranda who raise the National Flag for the first time in the seaport of La Vela de Coro, placed in the Falcón state, Venezuela—. In this case, the construction of the history is a legitimate knowledge through the artistic creation of Michelena as well as the narratives built around it. Among them, the heroic and patriotic historical narrative is to be found, recreated in the current Venezuelan context, where a political use of the history —and its images—, have been manipulated through different ways by media serving power. By this means, the aim is to discredit history with the physical disappearance of the “copy” of an iconic painting for the Venezuelan art and history.

El Nuevo Mundo

Installation

In Latin American, during the last decade, a rearrangement of the historic narratives and values has taken place. It has been done by invoking a remote past, referring to the indigenous resistance. These new narratives have forced a new significance of images, such as the one by Cristobal Colón representing the model of conquest, domination and genocide. This image has connotations of control, territorial domination and imposition of a particular urban planning confronted with other preexistent spatial organizations that derived from different cultural logics. Paintings and monuments devoted to Colón have been attacked recently. The statue of Colón at Triste Gulf was destroyed; the one in Puerto la Cruz disappeared in 2001, the date when the square that was named after him was demolished; and the one in Caracas was got down from its pedestal on the very day of 12 of October 2004. This date no longer refers to the “Discovery of America” or the “Meeting of Two Worlds”, but the “Indigenous Resistance”. The destruction of the images is endorsed by ideology. It’s a sort of a “programmed iconoclasm” that aims at destroying the imaginary of the past. The work done in site in the walls of the gallery Casa sin fin is based in the work *First landing of Cristobal Colón in America*, by Dióscoro Puebla, a Spanish painter from the 19th century.

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Retrato populista

These series of C-prints are taken from a video inspired by the narratives assigned to ordinary people and transmitted to them (the recipients) by populist leaders (the speakers) throughout Venezuela's history and other countries of Latin America for more than fifty years. Leaders send out explicitly adjectives, characterizations or definitions about the receiver, as ordinary people, or as a multitude, or as Venezuelans, or as Latin Americans, or as working class, or as supporters. Their mentions portray the recipients as passive beings, who are described as simple receivers and defined only by their needs. Some of the adjectives used are: hungry, voter, organized, fighter, poor, ignorant. The Venezuelan people have been assumed as an omnipresent presence, homogenous, that it is not only conceptualized but it's nullified by describing it with euphemisms, adjectives and synonyms that belong to populist narratives. These rhetorical forms that Latin American leaders have used have been drawn from various resources, after doing some research. A good sample was found in the research done by Luis Britto García at the end of the eighties. In his two works *La máscara del poder* and *El poder sin la máscara*, he shows how some of the adjectives used by politicians to define the Venezuelan people have been used recurrently both locally and, more generally, in the south of the continent.

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