

As if detained

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Judging by what is said in the chronicles – the non-combustible land of the commonly shared places – it seems to be that the artists all speak the same language. Or what is even worse, with the way they speak, they always end up saying the same thing. However, this is not totally true. Although it is undoubtable that concepts such as silence, loneliness, emptiness or uneasiness have been converted, due to one's wishes or necessity, into some of the principles about which a good part of the creativity has come to configure in the structure of its particular universe, one can not affirm that the whole of the current artistic production enjoys the same aptitude for inducing people to walk past the most intimate cubby holes of the essence of being. It is quite possible that not all artists even intend to. Not all works of art penetrate with equal intensity into the enigmatic terrain of the nature of man and also that of the world.

Oscar Wilde pointed out that people had never seen fog until certain poets and painters of the nineteenth century showed them how to feel what was behind the density of a few simple clouds or the mist in the great extensions of the landscapes.¹ There existed a mystery provoked principally by the infinite nature of all things. Based on the consideration that all that we look at – whether big or small, close or far away – enclose in themselves an equal part of mystery, some of the artists of the Romantic Movement described the forms of nature with shadowy images – confusing, uncertain and blurred. Their profiles are in a mist that veils, provoking in the imagination unknown realities and unconfessed passions. In this way, if the evocative capacity of art is found in the blossom of creativity in the same way that the ability to illuminate is used in the service of obscure proselytism, with the clouds of Caspar David Friedrich or the colors of William Turner, it begins to permanently alter the subjectivity of the viewer.

1. Quoted from Susan Sontag in *Estilos Radicales*, Muchnik Editores, Barcelona, 1985.

Ever since then, certain artists, who are also poets, continue with exquisite ingenuity to advocate for the primacy of the imagination.

When faced with the flood of artistic proposals that with more luck, or less, arrive to lay the foundations of their reason for existing, or being, in the active participation of the viewer and in the procurement of an accomplicity that only rarely accomplishes what it set out to do, the work of José Noguero, (devoid of the profusion of unusual experiences and appealing with total serenity for a custom that is unfortunately in disuse), invites others to explore it as if one were dealing with an immense landscape. Linking itself in this way with the pleasure of contemplation as in the esthetic relation that man maintains with nature, the work of José Noguero – like the landscape – doesn't demand that we comprehend either adjudications of transcendence or anxieties, or sympathy; it only demands our absence and it asks us to add nothing to that which it considers to be already complete. A Thought behind its apparent impenetrability, which is equal to what happens with silence, unfolds other possible ways to interpret his work that would be envied by other artists' pieces which call themselves open but that don't manage to stimulate, nor even less help fix our attention on looking at them.

Everything is fine up until now, if we can maintain the conviction that the work of José Noguero induces contemplation more than rapid and frivolous visualization which we unfortunately made ourselves overly familiar with. It's not only because it demands us to – and it does it successfully – forget about ourselves but also for the apprehension that, in its plurality as well as separately, it extracts the time that is within it. To better penetrate its complexity and reinforce the bond that his work establishes with nature, we must start by considering that every one of his works, equal to the elements that make up a landscape, form part of a group that esthetically, is perceived as being compact. Contemplated in this way, that is to say in a simultaneous channel, it appears that time doesn't exist in his work. However, going beyond this initial atmosphere of uniformity and making us concentrate more on the individuality of each work, we notice that, yes, it is there but detained between two realities that belong to the same subject: between nature and sculpture, sketch and photography, between sculpture and room, between landscape and ourselves. In a way that every work arrest sequences of a life that, although it could very easily be ours, correspond to the artist's own life.

Nobody doubts that an artist is present in all of his works of art, although it isn't always possible to say whose life is being related to us. In the work of José Noguero, however, it is clearly evident whose life it is that the painting

is talking about. This is because, in some of them, his presence is more than just evident. In the rooms where they are framed, the setting in which the artist moves about is perceivable; reflected in a mirror, through glass, drawn on some sheets or modeled with some sort of mass. Although never from its interior because, opposite to what others demand to us, his works aren't intended to make us identify ourselves with what happens in them; they only want us to observe them from the distance that the artist establishes. As if he were an exhibitionist, ourselves the "voyeurs" and the whole of his work is the friendly voice that reminds us to this.

Below the cloak of this deliberately reflexible hermeticism, the work of José Noguero conceals questions that can't be answered; enigmas that our life can never solve. As a consequence, we shouldn't be upset if, when contemplating the plurality of his work, we feel captured by a certain uneasiness. Although he doesn't intend to, his work invokes solitude – in a voluntary and self-satisfying way – the emptiness that emanates from all things. It runs from the situating of objects in diaphanous spaces to the difficulties which we have to communicate between each other – looking at a dog without anything happening – all together, the futility that emanates from life. All of this without shouting, but speaking in a low voice. In the same way that poetry speaks.

*Mallarme thought that the mission of poetry consisted of unblocking, with words, our reality which is jammed up with words, by means of the creation of silences that surround all things,*² José Noguero, for his part writes to us with images that poetry does with words and recreates, around his work, the emptiness where the silence lives, not only fulfilling the same mission but also making it possible for his works to become impregnated with that mystery which, according to certain artist of the Romantic Movement was provoked by the infinite nature of all things. Perhaps, I would think, by the infinite nature of a piece of artwork which, as happens with that of José Noguero, succeeds in helping us to liberate ourselves from the pressure of reality. Contemplating it clearly and without pinpointing exactly what it is that obscures the mist.

2. Quoted from Susan Sontag in *Estilos Radicales*, Muchnik Editores, Barcelona, 1985.