

JAVIER GARCERÁ
Y en mi jardín

2nd July -22nd October 2021

In 1533, Hans Holbein The Younger painted a piece known as *The Ambassadors*, which today is displayed at the National Gallery in London. In 1958, during one of his seminars, Jacques Lacan referred to this painting in order to speak about that strange, oblique object that appears in the foreground in front of the portrait's subjects. As is known, this object is the anamorphosis of a skull which only recovers its "correct" position when observed from the end of the canvas: "We shall then see -Lacan would say- drawn from it (the gaze), not the phallic symbol, the anamorphic spectrum, but rather the gaze as such in its pulsatile, dazzling, spread out function."

I recalled this question revolving around the gaze as I reflected on what I would write in this piece on Javier Garcerá. He too offers the viewer a spreading out of the senses, albeit without seeking to reconstitute the form, as Holbein does. In his works, light leads to an optical excitement which expands to multiple fronts, but also to representation being diluted in the ungraspable. In order to access these works soundly one must put aside the alienated and digitalised gaze that devours everything that crosses its path. A different kind of perception is needed, one capable of conquering meaning of its own in the experience and of bringing an awareness of what we are seeing into the present.

In the room we contemplate the sensoriality of the silk and the monochromatic strength of the green, black and red tones. As we get close an interspersed image emerges. It is composed of the brushstrokes that are camouflaged in the silk and the small erosions in the fabric. Carefully crafted procedures which invoke the possibilities of what is visible and what isn't. We are faced with an exquisite "drawing", if we are to understand the discipline as María Zambrano did. Drawing to her was one of those things which, "if they are sound, they border on silence; if they are words, they border on muteness; a presence so pure, that it borders on absence, genre of being on the edge of non-being." So, between the detail revealed and the representation lost, lies a liminal state that puts the viewer's subjectivity in play.

This liminal state is always present in Garcerá's silks, with forms that dodge us as easily as we perceive them. Letters, words and sentences are common. In addition to expressing ideas they seek a broadening of perception from which a longing to see, as well as to read, emerges. Also recurrent, are pictorial images of flowers and plants; and while we develop our mental map of the garden, part of the terrain disappears from our vision.

In some compositions, the messiness of nature is opposed to geometric ornamentation, an element that has consolidated in various cultures as a result of what Ernst Gombrich termed "force of habit", whose origin would lie in our need to put spacial order in our surroundings. This order, unstable under the effects of light, is replicated in the blinds of the gallery's windows, which in turn remind us of those in Garcerá's studio in Madrid. The latter is a space where poetic reason operates as a mediator between technical process and deep thought, as reflected in pieces which

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refer to his personal library, the titles of which direct their attention to Eastern thinking.

If we invest our energies in the cultivation of the soil, we shall be rewarded. It is very much the same when we direct our unprejudiced gaze at the work of art. In his pursuit to broaden the reach of our senses, the artist incorporates sound: a bolero played by Ibrahim Ferrer emerges from a stand on which rest two representations of books by the poet François Cheng, dedicated to reflections on beauty and on death.

The exhibition unfolds before our eyes as an open choreography, in which each body defines its own implementation settings. Rhythm is activated by grasping the instant, by recognising the form, by imprecise memory. Later on, once we have left the gallery, there will be time to fill in the gaps, to think rationally. While still inside, we are located in a place of uncertainty, at the point of conflict, at the heart of doubt. We need not resolve any enigma, but rather be delayed by deflections and movement in the areas of light and shadow. This is where the "aesthetic experience" takes place; whereby life, through art, becomes more interesting than art itself.

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