

Darío Urzay

En una fracción. (Frost frames)

From 10 November to 10 January 2017

Opening 10 November at 8.00 p.m.

The Galería Pilar Serra presents the most recent project from Darío Urzay in which the artist introduces us to his latest explorations into the image.

The first time that the gallery (then Galería Estiarte) exhibited Urzay's work was in 2003, and on that occasion thirty paintings on paper were displayed. This was the series *Ae – mol*, which shows us the artist's concern for the hybridisation of processes and concepts, the relations between digital art and its virtual facet, photography and reality. In that series, digital printing processes alternated with diluted and stratified painting in a strange world that confronts and combined forms and antiforms, the chemical structure of matter and its presence, with a random and surprising behaviour.

In 2007 the gallery exhibited a project created out of an action carried out on the landscape of La Rioja. It was titled *Paisajes (Landscapes)* and it showed us a new expansion of the possibilities of making images known. Urzay introduced the self-referential nature of the project with respect to its own content, specifically the quality of a certain landscape located in Sazarraja, La Rioja, involved in an action (a *performance performed in situ*) which combined certain events of an emotional, personally experienced nature.

Four years later, *Phaistos* was presented, which was based on original images and data gathered by Urzay of what remained of this Cretan city. These he introduced into a computer where, after being processed via algorithms and specialised programmes, gave results which were later on reformulated by the artist, creating a parallel world, a hypothetical reality of a particular reinterpretation of the ruin, which presents nature and construction in an indissoluble way.

In *Construyendo en las Ruinas (Constructing in the Ruins)* (2014) his daily world can be made out, and we could say that this paintings originated in the space of real events and continued in a space of imaginable events. By means of pigments and resins he began by interacting with small blocks of plastic, which were dissolved and fused with the paint, and then photographically transposing them to a pictorial medium.

On this occasion the artist presents us with his latest series, some of the works that have been displayed in his most recent exhibitions in Belgium and in Santander. The starting point is the production of a video showing the melting of a water- and pigment-based model which, in order to preserve its three-dimensional form, had previously been frozen in a mould. For this, the artist created a construction on the basis of small plastic bricks and, by means of a mould, he managed to achieve a small sculpture in frozen mud having the exact appearance of the original. The thawing process was photographed every 30 seconds over a period of several hours until the small sculpture became reduced to liquid. The three-dimensional image became a two-dimensional plane on a surface but in its liquid thickness it contains the materiality that seems to be lost in the final images.

The more than 2000 shots are frames that were used for assembling the video in an accelerated process whose duration has been compressed into a couple of minutes. The final projection was assembled in the form of a loop with the same frames being added in the reverse direction of time. In this way, the construction disappears to a point of return when it starts to reconstruct itself again.

From among all these frames, fractions of an entropic process of degradation, Urzay selects some of them and transposes them to various media that form the basis of a series of paintings making up the present exhibition in the gallery.

The length of time for producing the paintings lasts for weeks, the temporal process of the initial images is diverted towards another territory that has another materiality and which is finally immobilised once the artist decides to consider an image as concluded. From the temporality of the video one passes in each of the paintings to the synthesis of temporal fragments which are offered to the viewer in a continual present. The execution time remains as a vestige by means of layers.

The exhibition brings together some of the common ingredients of the plastic language of the creator which plays with the contraposition of opposites when facing the tension between the micro and macro dimensions or between the static and the random.

Over a period of time we have seen how Dario Urzay (Bilbao, 1958) has developed one of the most forceful and interesting plastic reflections in our country when it comes to the permeability of artistic and scientific disciplines, exploring – among other things – the relations between digital art and its virtual facet, photography and reality, and the new codings of painting, a painting, his, that is open to outside contact and to linguistic contamination. His work stimulates a restlessness in the viewer, a curiosity regarding the construction, not at all casual, of the reality of the work. They awaken the viewer towards a position of critical responsibility avid to unmask the mechanisms that provoked those worlds which spring up in the works of Urzay. The visual world which he proposes to us is as ordered as it is chaotic, apparently scientific, the result of a personal assimilation of concepts of physics, geography and anthropology. “I work in that space where the real and its image overlap, creating a tension that can be seen in the resulting image, which reveals and traps light, delivers broken outlines causing the evocation of fractality.”

Dario Urzay graduated in Fine Arts from the University of the Basque Country, where he also taught from 1983 to 1988. He spent a year in London in the Delfina Studios Residence and from there he moved to New York where he stayed for ten years. He currently lives in Bilbao.