

TERRITORIES

I am going to focus on the most recent work of Yamandú Canosa (Montevideo, 1954) exhibited in 15 visitas comentadas at the Studio Meyetta in Barcelona.

In the text he wrote for this exhibition, Canosa discussed the face, which he calls, among other things, "the compulsive visitor of our gaze". He also refers to it as an "accumulation of all the faces we have been and those we have seen/loved."

Without undermining the artist's poetic lucidity - seen before in texts such as "La mirada rampante" and "Suite dispersa" - I think it would be quite valid to change 'face' for 'trace'. By doing so, I think the painter would agree that the result is the same as that of a gaze: the territory it invades, the landscape it unfolds, going far beyond what the eye sees. In some ways this idea was already present when Canosa occupied the mythical-poetic space of the Hotel Nada.

We might certainly change face to trace, but also the other way round, in a process of pure transitivity: trace to face.

Seen in this way, the artist, now a

The Trace that Emerges

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sort of portrait-painter, a commentator on encounters in the house of gazes, would no longer await the visitor so as to record a gaze or a sign, but would go out in search of the face which meanders across paper, beyond the precision of a word.

The paper's surface is like a smooth desert, in the middle of which, and not by chance, he finds, groping and speechless, wells of meaning, which enable the spectator to see an accumulation or mixture of faces.

Thus, the apprehended face is the *other side of the ever-vanishing trace*. And so, in the here and now, trapped in the supposed stability of a form, which

is also a voiceless, colourless graph.

For the trace is an act of seduction, and therein lies the hand's attraction. By this I mean the painter's intelligence in guessing where to find the well and how to extract this accumulation of appearances from the depths, from the other side of a surface: the hint of an image which moves hesitantly to and fro, settling on the outskirts of our gaze which surrenders itself to the metamorphosis. And then *the translated image twists and turns* and becomes blurred: "All art is a gesture of translation", Canosa wrote. Like a prisoner who evaporates from the siege as a result of too much self-contemplation.

An image for a landscape. A *landscape full of traces which the artist*, by means of transference - again this concept of moving and translating, so common in his work - turns into looming faces, astonished traces.

In Yamandú Canosa's work, landscape has long been of great importance. Perhaps because he knows the subterfuges of brevity and landscape, the enigmas of its perpetual

movement. Because he knows the importance of a rampant gaze gliding across a waste-land. Across white paper. Across that place, always mental and physical, where the map-making takes place, so characteristic of most of Canosa's recent work.

In "La mirada rampante", written for the exhibition of the same title held in the Museo Blanes in Montevideo (1993), Yamandú Canosa wrote: "Perhaps we paint what we are unaware of, but our attempt resembles, imitates and loves all that which never uttered a word."

And also: "Every gaze draws a landscape."

Therefore, it is not surprising to see words appearing as organizers and/or protagonists in the rough sketches for the (re)presentation before being transferred as images onto paper.

Words as forms, linked to colours to make place-names, suggesting a message, signs, a mixture of automatism and vigils, a way of gaining access to a sort of treasure island: a world map, a tapestry of the world. In Canosa's latest works, these are the inventions which arise: territories moved from mysterious imaginations, deconstructed and re-constructed continents, border-lines which have been re-written.

And what better example of all this than *La isla del sujeto*. Here, fixed to a lit-up wall, are open eyes and an open hand moving trance-like, making new senses, or meanings in movement, within the plane of desire.

As we can see, this process redesigns the various continents. Canosa not only re-maps the land, but also transforms it into an island, as if island-forms were the most appropriate for the ever-eager eye to see.

From then on, beyond the new geography which enlightens his latest paintings, appears the unexpected face: the result of all the traces pursued by the hand of our gaze.



Yamandú Canosa. *La Mirada Rampante*, 1993. Museo Juan Manuel Blanes, Montevideo. Installation view. Photo: Álvaro Zino.