

Rafael Monagas: Introspective visions

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The work of Rafael Monagas is made up of unconditional images. The essence of his work responds to innate impulses. That doesn't mean that he hasn't been open to influences and experience, but he is among those few artists that don't require great gestures. His world is self-sufficient. The paintings of Monagas strongly obey intense principles of light, as well as responding to ordered and rational strategies of colour, that attract the company of ghosts, and their connivence. The work of Monagas is a psychological whole, where a group of sensorial processes describes the sincere perceptions of the artist. He is an analytical painter who carefully studies his fundamental synthesis. Light, is his dominant, ordinary causal agent, provoking determination. Scale is reduced to representative signs that are completely primary and genuine. His recent work seems to reveal a hypnotic series, where the painter symbolizes the image of his new sensations through the "absence" of shadow, and projects the atmosphere of his dreams, the construction of a climax that is self-complacent, and which becomes an imaginative journey transferred to the spectator.

This is evidence that Monagas has embarked upon a more reflexive course, where the fundamental stimuli, though remaining the same, are renewed and express an expansion of their mental process.

Presently his discourse is engaged in self-oriented inflexion that leads him to purer fields, where the pulse and the trembling of the spirit are the only code.

There's a self-awareness per se of each element with which he represents desire. Monagas is sure of himself and he knows his double, the determination of an experience derived from his own sources as an emblem of his creative independence where the traits of his risky pictorial directions are decyphered, a simple essence of time, that has within its balance the compact figure of space and its transcendence. Monagas is a long way from that chaotic essence of elements (that immoderate realm of the Titans) that have been transgressed and are now boundaries of a transformed reality, of

the tense limits of the world that surrounded him. In his works the obscure trace of those passionate excesses remains, the Sky, that have been replaced and distilled by the luminous essence in company of shadows, the Sky, the Earth, the Ocean, the Sun, the blind Typhoon fire, the Alisian winds, the Pino tides and the african cupola.

The first issue that arises with any kind of approach to the work of Rafael Monagas, is limited to the clear knowledge of his canarian origins and the evolution of the dominant concern in his work throughout his life: the processes of light and the formation of colour fields as indicators of a complex and rigorous pictorial history, that look back to the figure of Vermeer.

The habits of an introspective tendency are especially significant in this last work by Monagas, that warns us that his space is a pictorial dimension for emotions and mythic senses, a territory for aboriginal memory, that has only tangential relations with the european enlightenment (Vermeer and Malevitch, for instance), a manifest love of the variations of light, a spiritual connection with the superior reality of dream and the sea, that reveals the cryptic reach of his metaphysics, and above all, his "path of enlightenment" as Zaya wrote in 1984.

Monagas represents one of the profound experiences of canarian painting of our time, who has been able to renew his expression without giving up one of the fundamental meanings of his work, that is the recuperation, the rehabilitation of Myth, an attitude that he has persisted in and which confirms the consolidation of his own poetics.

*Rafael Monagas. Simulación del Sueño I. 1993.
200×225 cms. Acr/L. Cortesía: SIC. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.*

