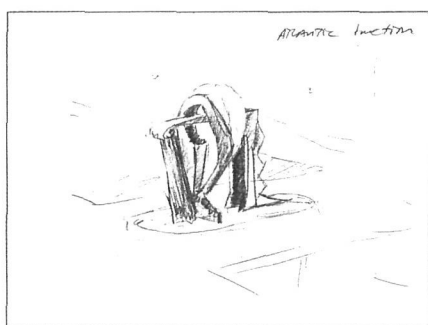
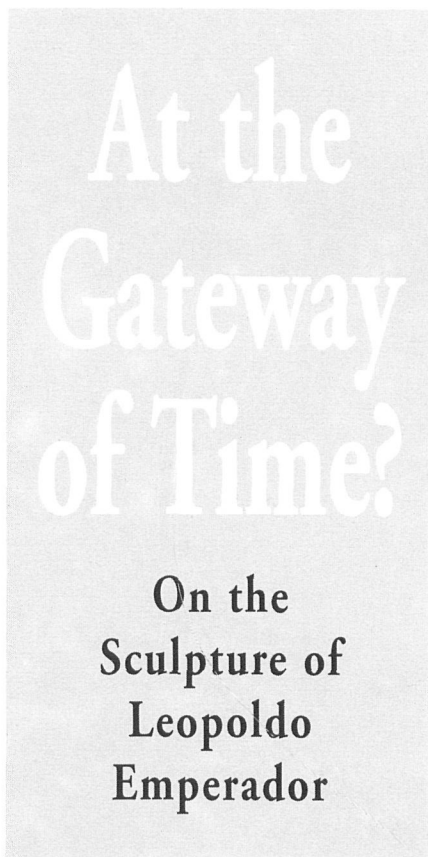


## NEXUS

When I alluded to “drift” in a previous article about Leopoldo Emperador’s sculptures (1), it was not my intention to attempt an iconographical rescue of the cultural facade on behalf of the new iron cycle he had begun. My proposition (I though it was sufficiently explicit at the time, hence my double interest in noting the maritime origins of the sculptor’s “paradigms” and “seasicknesses”) (2) was simply their literalness, their Atlantic significance as shipwreck. His work, fragile and ethereal, had shattered during the voyage and now it was time to pick up the thousand pieces of memory on the shore of a new territoriality, or at least of a territory which was mistaken for another, at the gates of the Sahara.

I understood that work as an announcement –confirmed daily– of his African encounter: “an enigma that we may no longer allow, since it is like trying to hide the sun with our hands.”

Now these hands which contrive our fate in the tangle of roots of capricious memory, are as refined as they are untamable, as natural as they are cultured, since they are the offspring of the simultaneity of time, the schizophrenia of space. And when I said that Emperador’s sculpture was impregnated with the deepest historical roots and referred to the trends making up the century in the Canary Islands (Symbolism, Modernism, Surrealism and Conceptualism), my intention was to



“Puerta Atlántico.” Preparatory study n. 3.  
Crayon on paper.

sketch the parallels between his recent work and our history, for it was as much a historicist re-reading, as a burial, because his portrayal of our recent history pushed him further into the past, to the heart of absence, loss and oblivion, which he took up as the vestige of a redeeming Darwinian archaeology

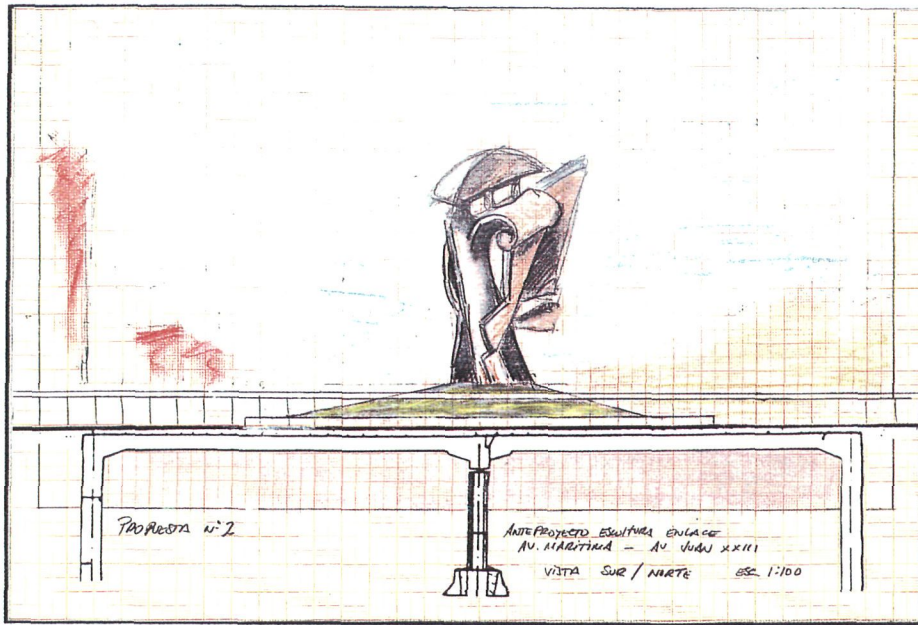
that had been implicit in his previous works.

I would not say that Emperador’s work is an archive of memory, nor a chronicle of remembrance, but, on the contrary, it is the announcement of things to come, of new times of hybridity and bilinguism, times of the other. Are his masks not masks of recycling and mutation? Even his welding establishes a levelling of all the fragments, a neutralization of the elements of a composition still without form, unnamed, unthinkable.

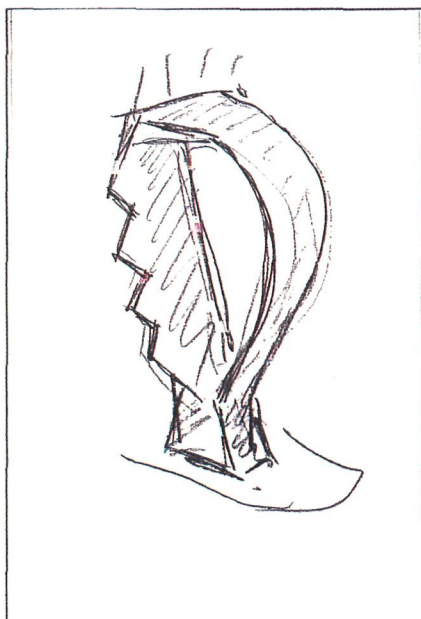
This exploration is also a shipwreck in the shipyards where old burnt and forgotten boats are no longer repaired, a mosaic made up of attempts, articulated fragments and able to erect a new face.

For many, this face will prove impenetrable, a face blind and mute to the storm, and yet, even though it keeps silent, this is no longer the silence of stones, nor of whitened sepulchres, but rather the final overcoming of all language.

Now without prescription, without order, without a command, this yet imprecise figure has left the past in its place and the future open to a vision which progresses as it sails further into the open sea, toward other lands, towards the desert that the night covers with shooting stars, which are imperishable and non-existent, like bright and precious metals which



Sculpture for Maritime Avenue. Proposal n. 2. Crayon on millimetric paper.



"Puerta Atlántico." Preparatory study n. 2. Crayon on paper.

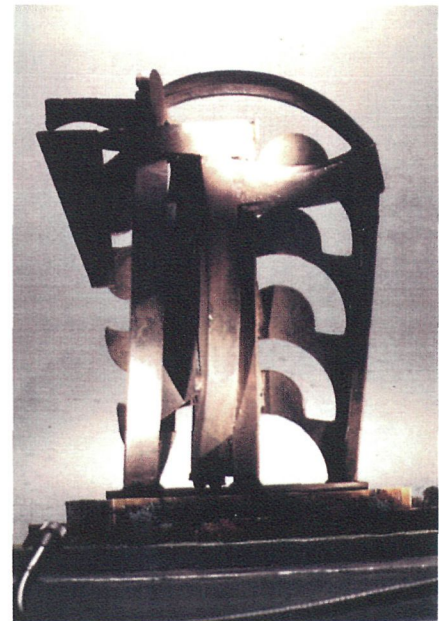
orientate the traveller on his voyage to the heart of the light that awaits at the end of the dark night.

Some earlier articles point to the poetry implicit in these junkyard pieces, now returned to life as if they were previous sentences, loaned, appropriated, assumed, like the

homunculus dreamed of by Millares and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. But, as with the poem, one observes the magic of the forge, the sweat and the salt, where fire and water dwell harmoniously in the shipyards of creation.

That salt and fire are those elements that his land furnishes to the artist, the volcanic fire from the heart of the abyss and the salt from the marine cemetery where the ghost ships that cross the horizon of this chimera nest, where the sea rocks the iron of expression.

This impossible flotation is also that of the sense that illuminates these skeletons, vertebrated in the diversity of the tongues of fire that articulate them, in the plurality of their origins, necessarily gathered in re-invented times and spaces, refuelled and returned to life as fragments, by strokes of selection and renunciation, in a grammar in which dissemination and difference are



"Puerta Atlántico." Diurnal and nocturnal posterior view, Still. Maquette size: 32 x 27.5 x 16 cm.

configured as genuine attributes of their multiple peculiarity.

A.Z.

#### NOTES

- (1) "La deriva de los tiempos". Catalogue for "Emperador-Sculptures" exhibition. Comisión de Cultura del Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, Las Palmas. March, 1992.
- (2) "Hacia el Paradigma". Exhibition at the Centro Insular de Cultura, Las Palmas, 1995.