

*“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”*

John Keats

“Everyone follows the inclinations of his own nature.”

Sextus Propertius

To approach Felipe Ortega-Regalado’s vast works in a text such as this, is unfortunately as impossible as scrutinising the mysteries they enclose. To want to do so, furthermore, would be as pretentious as unseemly. However, the mere idea of a detailed study in depth of them and of an intellectual dissertation about each fragment composing them, is as tempting as tasting honey.

His works enclose lessons that, taken as a whole, could shape the script of a thesis, the doctorate exercise of a valiant scholar whom I imagine to be romantic, multidisciplinary and with vigour enough to manifest the courage involved in upholding a stout compendium of disciplines seemingly gathered into only two: drawing and painting (including, in a single ensemble, his excellent works in video).

I should brand as disturbing the rivalry between the hidden and the explicit while contemplating and breaking down his work, itself a refined creation offering a host of interpretations which, with time, transmits an elegant caution, understood - almost - in a religious manner. It has to do with a secret and active dialogue which disconcerts as it clashes violently with the clamour that strikes the individual who is looking, with a “Bretonian” shout, beautiful and convulsive.

Ortega-Regalado’s overwhelming commitment to rigour, passion, intellectual generosity, artistic promiscuity and further elements, always makes for a masterful and delicate result in which the artist imparts a grandiose cult of nature, using capricious forms of tangled circumstances or of fantastical hybrid beings.

Characters that sometimes seem to give way to gravity, like the famous “lead sheet” by Gilberto Zorio, yearning at other times for the flexibility which annuls inexpressiveness, and play in the scene at adopting an unshakeable erectile state *per saecula seculorum*. Be it one process or the other, whatever happens, the volumes and surfaces so meticulously crafted recall the spectator to the empirical, to a study of trial-and-error, at the same time to the anatomical, to Juan Eusebio Nieremberg’s natural studies, to the representation of a “registered” nature, developed within an immodest context that makes one imagine Baroque illustrations, exotic

settings with dwellers who are independent or who are longing to mate. Thus, the occult or explicit eroticism is absolutely present through non-literary paronomasias with the similarities they evoke and the differences that look alike. Scenes which inspire passion akin to the sexual, to the most delightful lust, to the most voracious appetite.

As to the strictly technical aspect, the normal spatial relation of the most classical perspective is transformed and diffused. The objects he draws or paints wander arrogant or deeply sad, through a scene in which they may boast of being more important than reality. Ortega-Regalado shows us sophisticated “stereographic” images and makes a most surrealistic and metaphysic impression, coming close at times to the concept of *dépaysement*.

He handles eclecticism with respect and reverence. He puckers vegetable skins, irons animal wrinkles, hurts mutant beings with a supine wickedness. He shows still lives of apparently inert figures who live or live ones who seem to wish to die. Some of his compositions form a technically masterful all-over, carrying the perfection of his drawing technique to a pitch. Others yield prominence to entities that are isolated, or wish to interact. He kills what lives. He revives what is dead. With precision he sketches veins and arteries, branches and roots, rounding off, detail by detail, a whole of exceptional artistic quality. As is the case with the unquestionable beauty of the manucodiata, the exuberance of each composition cannot be denied.

The magic with which Felipe Ortega-Regalado manages to bemuse us by means of the antagonistic is truly praiseworthy. One must just stop to listen to the beat hiding behind that gauzy veil through which he gives a glimpse of the mixture that shows with its extreme sensitivity the gashes of desire.

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