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Illustration

JAVIER CABO

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“*The Maid of Orleans*” painted by Javier Cabo initiates us in the subject of the avant-gardes and the crises they establish, not only in art but also in the representation of the world. These experiences of modern art open a prospect of confrontations regarding aesthetics, to the point of inquiring what art really is. In fact, the definitions of this requisition sought by the observer, through criticism in art, is the forcing scenario that introduces us to modernity in order to unravel it.

Modern art does not enter into the axiom of beauty established by traditional aesthetic. Here we must delve into the concepts that separate art from the rest of human activities based on knowledge and experience. At this point of the analysis there appears a confrontation with Theodor Adorno (“*Aesthetic Theory*”, 1970) concerning his statement that art has to align with truth. This is a committed territory of criticism because art in its modern concept does not respond to the criteria of human truth, but to a primordial psychologization above its communicational character. Therefore, what can be considered in modern art as fictitious or as the imprint that does not arouse feelings, should not be considered as a defect, but an “*articulation of needs*”, as Frantz Koppe says in “*Fundamental concepts of aesthetics*” (1983). At this point the truth of the everyday world confronts with the authenticity of necessity. The *truthful* language of human knowledge becomes insufficient in the face of man’s psychological need. Modern art is the bridge on which a language is exercised to close the gap between the world and the psyche. Its role becomes considerable due to the fact that it advances on “*needs*” that would remain empty, not formulated. That position collides with Adorno who had stated that modern art is silent, does not communicate; and its communication is denial.

These antinomic positions on the role of art have their reaction in the reflection that can be exerted in the very retinue in which it has developed. In this succinct analysis we assume that modern art occupied a vein in the search for the existential explanation when it marginalized from a world anchored in mechanical concepts, far from the biointegrity of encompassing



body, psyche, society and nature. Up to this stage art passed from the Romanesque period, where the basilica was the object represented, to the staging achieved in the Renaissance with the church and the palace. Then it sought to explore, leaving aside the pacified image of the external, to meddle in the impression of the senses, to search the inner world and to find an explanation for the existential, the anguish.

This modern journey traveled through various stages that distanced it from the artistic sense understood as aesthetic and that led it “to art for the sake of art”, where it seems to lose the true and plural world as an objective, and introduces itself into the existential need of the singular, of the man cloistered

in a glass tower. Of that being that articulates a need and does it with a contingent language. In this individuality art is encouraged to externalize a cry that finds no possibility of being expanded with the plural, mundane language. It reflects that need of the present human existence before an unsatisfied factual experience.

Without freedom we cannot think of art. Human completeness through its consciousness is full of realities and imaginations, of instincts and reasons. This is the true deprivation that alienates man. Where to go? Towards the materiality that the body screams? Or to art, the spirit that proclaims our reflective consciousness?

This work by Javier Cabo is a language that seeks a horizon. The silence of the painting is the need articulated by modern art in the search of bridging this discrepancy between the contingency of life and the affinity of its aesthetic representation. The times of man happen among agitations and expirations. It depends on the thinkers to follow or reject them. Society behaves like an instinctive mass. The anonymity it delivers protects the speculative, the reflexive conscious, the instinctive man. The collective facts act negatively against moral growth. This gap between the plural and the moral behavior is accentuated the more anonymous the individual is, allowing him to take risks without condemnation.

Only an ethical education protects society. Without it, individuality in a community accentuates the "bad faith" of the Sartrean consciousness "to be what is not and not to be what it is". The answer is to throw oneself to the "other" as an act of justice while retaining freedom. Is this possible in man? The absurdity of human history poses a rough interrogation. Human is a being alienated by the reality that contains him, doomed to update his present. And perhaps we should understand this situation as an observance of his knowledge about time. Without freedom there is no individual or social revolution. Consciousness (individual and social) alienates by being contradictory. And Cabo exhumes that autonomy of art. The position of this individual value, by withdrawing from the painless ethics that brings current existence closer, anticipates a crucial passage on men's opinion that is seldom considered: "there is nothing as dangerous as

the certainty of being right." And the social dogmas with which man coexists are trapped in their own language and reason. This situation reminds us of Kurt Gödel and his theorem of incompleteness in formal logic. In it he warns that in formal systems we cannot use a document alien to the system. And we all know that from the "human factor" -consciousness- one reaches emotion. Here, pain legislates slightly more than matter. The incompleteness theorem can be the "missing link" that justifies the missing information, both in formal and probabilistic methodology. In science and art. And this position is not a mere curiosity, but a transcendent fact.

This vision established by Javier Cabo is deeper than the need in art, it is born in discouragement. And in that place modern art seems to especially originate, which, as no other, must meet the classical criteria of veracity, leading us to another point in this analysis. Does this need arising from *discouragement* only cover the artist? Between creative production and reception of the observer the boundaries are not clear but are interrelated through *perception*. Here lies the reason for the aesthetic behavior that embraces the *emitter* and the *receptor*, and which must be understood as *experience*, in the sense of trying to relate to our own observations. We have already talked about the autonomy of the artist. And this is an antinomic but vital concept, faced with the perceptive bridge with the receptor. It is based on the fact that the sovereignty of the artist exceeds plural reason, since it is its absolute. The artist must represent a danger because it is the need of someone that has no other possibility than to be dragged unfailingly towards the end, without being able to choose or renounce.

Unlike the concept of Nietzsche's use of art to support the truth, Javier Cabo safeguards the autonomy of the proper convictions that monopolize modern art. The work goes beyond the aesthetic perception as an object, and the observer must make it converge in his own perception, in a quiet language but with deep emotional motivation. Ultimately, it is about ourselves facing a mirror that exceeds reason, crosses through experience and delves into passion.

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