



Barcas, 1976.

MANOLO QUEJIDO *Painting in action*

16 March - 11 June 2006

CENTRO ANDALUZ DE ARTE CONTEMPORÁNEO
Monasterio de Santa María de las Cuevas
Avda. de Américo Vespucio nº2
Isla de la Cartuja. 41071 - SEVILLA

Access

Avda. de Américo Vespucio nº2
Camino de los Descubrimientos s/n

Transport

Buses: C1 y C2

Opening times

1 April - 30 September

Tuesdays to Fridays: 10 - 21 h.

Saturdays: 11 - 21 h.

1 October - 30 March

Tuesdays to Fridays: 10 - 21 h.

Saturdays: 11 - 21 h.

Sundays: 10 - 15 h.

Closed: Mondays, 24, 25 and 31 December, 1 and 6 January.

Ticket sales until half an hour before the museum closes.

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MANOLO QUEJIDO

Painting in action

This retrospective exhibition brings together the most relevant works of the different creative periods of Manolo Quejido, an artist given to reflection, restless and socially committed, for whom painting is the principle medium of expression. Born in Seville in 1946, he has lived in Madrid since 1960; throughout his career, he has developed a series of pictorial practices interrelated with what might be called extended painting or painting in action. The phrase "to paint = to think" is the connecting thread in his work, which has a distinctly conceptual nature and a more or less explicit political sense, and yet does not renounce the exploration of aesthetic values. His conceptual ideas have often translated into an active commitment to the creation of venues and processes for collective debate.

The exhibition proposes to follow Quejido's creative course, which the artist himself divides into three large blocks: The Difficulty (1964-1974), Painting (1974-1993), and The Resistance (1993-2005). The first of these refers to a period in which the artist publicly formulates his own learning process, to the search for a language of his own. The work of the period he denominates "Painting" includes a series of drawings and oil paintings in which Quejido reclaims the relationship of continuity with the history of western painting. Finally, "The Resistance" alludes to the latest period of aesthetic production, in which the artist carries out a defence of the act of painting in a world he sees marked by inequality in the social distribution of wealth and by the compulsive consumption of images that comes close to disabling the subversive power of artistic creation.

Manolo Quejido's work was initially formulated in the context of avant-garde and politically committed experimentalism so characteristic of the end of the sixties of the twentieth century. His first artistic experiences were oriented towards concrete poetry; in 1967, he collaborated in the foundation of the *Cooperativa de Producción Artística y Artesana* (Cooperative of Artistic and Artisan Production), an artistic project that opted for group work and emphasized the need to reflect on the social function of art. Soon afterwards, the artist began to work in a format half way between painting and poetry, devoid of colour, and connected with the conceptual practices carried out in that period by certain artists in Europe and the US.

In this initial period, there is a clear influence of the artists' group *Equipo 57*, reflected, for example, in the series *Secuencias*, developed within the framework of the Seminar of Automatic Generation of Plastic Forms, at the Centro de Cálculo de la Universidad de Madrid. Beyond the search for an objective art subject to a series of generative rules, in developing his artistic work, Quejido shared a socially-sensitive attitude with *Equipo 57*.

The passage to his next period, Painting, in the mid-seventies, was the result of a "machination" that was more costly and problematic for the artist than his later development might suggest. In fact, the schemes in which the artist presents the evolution of his work show that painting appears relatively late, in 1974.

At the end of that decade, Quejido participated in two polemic exhibitions, 1980 and *Madrid D.F.*, which opted for painting in a decisive and almost proselytizing way. In his text for the catalogue of *Madrid D.F.*, Ángel González termed the artist's commitment to painting a "strange machination". Certainly, Quejido has always had an interest in both the mechanical and the *machinic*, as it is reflected in his computer-generated art projects. It might even be said that he made a sort of work formula of "machination", bringing the machine to the canvas, and representing himself and his relationship with painting as someone who works at a typewriter.

But this "machination" of which Ángel González spoke was not only that of painting as such; also involved was an exploration of the political potential of painting. Furthermore, it had its origin in an attempt to establish a relationship of continuity with

the great western painting tradition, from Piero della Francesca to our days. Quejido's return to "painting with a capital P" (an expression repeatedly used by the artist) also represented a decision to start anew, both in artistic and vital terms.

In any case, this return to painting did not imply a rejection of avant-garde practices, or of the idea of politically committed art, which may be identified with life and may generate processes of social transformation. The proper conceptual tradition also has a profound resonance in Quejido's work of this period. It should not be forgotten that the artist went so far as to develop an exercise of the pictorial representation of painting, turning into paintings a series of conceptual schemes to do with the history of art and with his own aesthetic evolution.

For Quejido, an intimate relationship exists between painting and thinking, which he conceives to be the same thing. This "thinking" nature of painting is clearly reflected in a 1993 work entitled *Pintar = Pensar* (Painting = Thinking), although this concept had already appeared in much earlier works. In a way, Manolo Quejido may be considered a sort of painter-philosopher or, as he wrote in 2003, "a thinker-painter, someone who thinks as he paints and paints as he thinks". This relationship with philosophy has profoundly marked his work, work in which the notion of seriation, of process, has always been fundamental.

In the scheme in which he represents his own pictorial evolution, Manolo Quejido places the eighties under the heading "Painting", enclosing it between two doors: *P.F. (Porte Fermée*, or Closed Door) and *P.I. (Puerta italiana*, or Italian Door). These were the years of painting "inside the cave", during which Quejido shut himself up in his studio and focused on making a pictorial investigation of artists such as Ingres, Bonnard, Matisse, Gauguin or Cézanne.

At the end of the eighties, he begins to execute works in which his painting attempts to come out to the exterior, into the light, seeking a new active relationship with the world. Convinced that it is time for combating outside the walls of his studio, he initiates the third period of his pictorial evolution, denominated The Resistance. A resistance which involves, on the one hand, a negation to accept the fickle nature of the market, which turns artworks into mere consumption goods and, on the other, a total rejection of the new international order which legitimates such actions as the war in Iraq.

Quejido's renewed critical and political commitment materializes in works such as *Acrílicos sobre El País* which, in his own words, "were meant to show the de-alienating potential of creation, its commitment to liberty". In the exhibition *VerazQés* (1996), in the form of a dialogue with the painting of Velázquez, he proposed a devastating reflection on power and the institutions that represent it.

Quejido's attitude towards expanded painting or painting in action had already ripened in the eighties, particularly since the move to the *Nave*, a space shared with other artists in Madrid. There, what used to be a storage area was converted into an exhibition hall and venue for debates; the participants edited their own catalogues in the form of booklets published under the common name of *La Grapa*. This stake on cultural and reflective activism was consolidated with the the Quejido's active implication in the creation of the association *CRUCE Arte y Pensamiento*, a venue and meeting place for artists and philosophers, which took on the artist's idea of the intimate relationship between painting and thinking.

Since the nineties, Manolo Quejido has executed conceptual works in which, as Miguel Cereceda points out, the artist actively addresses the great questions of art, of painting and its relation to society, politics and the market, strengthening and consolidating an extended concept of art that transcends the limits of the canvas.

In these years, the artist creates series the titles of which begin with the preposition "Sin" (without): *Sin nombre* (*No name*, paintings which originate in images that appeared in the press), *Sin consumir* (*No consummation*; recurring to a pop aesthetic that is the heritage of Warhol, the artist engages in an ironic critique of consumerism)... His extensive series of acrylics on newspaper, such as the one titled *Irakusa* (2003-2005), also belong to this period.