

Catalog "2x2" Déniz & Luzardo

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THE EYE OF THE CYCLONE IS THINKING

Pedro Deniz seems right out of Rick's Cafe from the film Casablanca (1942). He's been there the whole time, among refugees, escapees, whites and blacks, lovers and gamblers. It is Rick's Cafe as a war zone, Beirut, Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan: a foreshadowing of the third millennium, a metaphor of ethnic diversity.

Diversificación ("Diversification") is a technical term from the LOGSE which Déniz assigns to this artistic project. And infinite diversity is what characterizes the contents of his object-boxes that, like scenes from a comic strip, narrate his worries about non-communication, pain and education. The poetics of a wounded man from the islands, about the world and its ambiguities.

His pieces explore, bear witness and embody areas of dislocation and flight, architectures of transition by the quintessential nomadic subject. The border of a flowing eviction that throbs with the heat of defeat; the sequestered infancy of his future. The base of his boxes is made from small black slates made in China by exploited children, so that in this chain of production other privileged children can learn. This unbearable paradox of usurpation and inequality make it possible for the artist to formally represent his rejection. This is a work that has been long and viscerally thought out by Déniz, since he lived in Tangiers and spent time with Mohammed Chukri and Paul Bowles, among others. He had previously displayed his disturbing poetics in A la Deriva ("Adrift"), La Puente

("The Bridge"], or more recently in Imagen y Poder ("Image and Power"), an exhibition held in Santander which included Buzón de Voz ("Voice Mail"), his interactive piece about communication being rendered banal through the use of cell phones.

The box artifact or object poem offers the artist considerable formal ductility in its dysfunctionalised repertoire. The object-paintings acquire a poetic meaning in their unexpected juxtaposition of things that are never conventionally related. This magic combination triggers anti-rhetorical narrative associations.

As Eduardo Westerdahl has already written of surrealist boxes: *the box constitutes imminent contact with marvel. It becomes each person's poetic projection. The box becomes the secret of life and art.*

In *Afortunadamente 7 cajones* ("Fortunately 7 Drawers", drawers with the knob upside down so that the spectator opens them), we come across that drawer full of extraordinary jumble that Westerdahl mentions.

In Portales ("Gateways"), Encuentros ("Encounters"), Norte y Sur ("North and South"), Pizarras con libros ("Blackboards with books"), Métodos ("Methods"), Blanco y Negro ("Black and White"), Estela ("Wake") and Transfer, Déniz displays a rigorous orientation toward the deconstruction of normative meaning. He works with simulation to evoke the emotional load his stories bear and to annul the physical reality of his objects. Thus he transcends and preserves his complex magic means. Déniz has himself expressed interest in discontextualising in order to reinterpret what is classical or banal, ethical and aesthetic fundamentalism.

His Baroque disposition is intentional. Despite the minimalist languages that currently hold sway Déniz seeks to overload symbols with the air of arte povera and of the ephemeral. What interests me is expressive gesture, not the mummification of things, he adds.

The codes of urban culture, the dialectic of signs, turning points and the technological eye are all present in these pieces that speak of violence, the mechanisms behind the manipulation of contents in mass media, educations freebooting interests, and the interdependence of their globalize worlds.

Pupitre ("School Desk") was rescued from a girl's convent. The piece is placed in graphic parentheses. It has an incubator seat of inquisitorial design and emits a clear and provocative message about bewilderment and loss of innocence.

Both Pedro Déniz and Jose Luzardo work as teachers.

They know much about the ignominious affairs of the dark tribes. This exhibition of their exquisite artistic production proposes to offer a valid conversation, one which emits so much light. And, with wise melancholy, it seeks an innocent country.

Cristina R. Court