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AU REVOIR
By Clara Muñoz

To introduce a message in a bottle and cast it into the sea with the intention that somebody might find it and read its content, could be seen as an uncertain game, as a romantic gesture or as the last refuge of a desperate message. It is then that the poetic sense of the most improbable means of communication opens. The chance that a bottle in those conditions may in effect complete such a hazardous ordeal is so slight that nobody in their sound judgment would suggest it as a minimally efficient alternative.

Yet if the remote chance that somebody sometime in some remote coast would discover it occurred, lying on the sand like a shell, or, if swept by one of those currents that flow round the world, it would end up ringing among the shellfish of some distant land, then, something in the manner of a prodigy would effectively take place. Chance would link the addresser and the addressee through time and space.

At that moment the message would acquire a new meaning. Nothing would be the same as the instant of its launching, neither the people, nor the signs, nor the land, nor life, nor even the sea. The chances are that it will end up breaking against the rocks or trapped by one of those huge nets that fish everything up or pulverised by the jaws of some marine monster. In any case it could finish up on the ocean bed; that place where gradually all the objects that compose the world gather. It could merge with the water, with that element that is corporeal, that has a soul and a voice, existing, furthermore, as an integral poetic reality.

Over one hundred transparent bottles with messages will be cast into the sea off the island of Hierro, near the Orchilla lighthouse, where the 0 meridian once lay. Pedro Déniz who since the

late eighties had been maturing this idea will act as the sporadic post-man. He will take with him a bulk of recipients with all kinds of notes, messages, poems, notices, missives, texts, narrations, visual poems, object poems, drawings, paintings, prints, small sculptures, objects, keen to go a drifting in such fragile vessels.

All the bottles will be the same, they will set off from the same place and they will progress in the same element, however, fate will decide on their selection. They will voyage under the Moon's and the currents' influence, that will slowly direct them in some direction. No point of the world's coasts is excluded from being the final destination of the trip.

However there is a time limit: the time the sea requires to dissolve every recipient. They won't be able to navigate eternally like the Flying Dutchman and become lost in time. There is a limit for them to be found that transcends our own existence. The erosion of the recipients would bring them to a state halfway between the natural and the artificial and, probably, the contents will acquire a pastier appearance.

To deposit over one hundred bottles in the sea is the most uncertain of things and that uncertainty is what inspires us to dream, which opens the channels of desire and for that reason seduces us. We could spend hours observing them drift away, floating, flirting with the waves and solemnly curtseying to the wind that displaces them. Inflexible, erect, rigid with their transparent masts bobbing towards the horizon, initiating a process of dissolution that commences with their own shape dissolving into the mist and distance until fusing with the landscape and disappearing making us feel the nostalgia of those who always remain ashore.

Artists from Spain, Italy, France, Marrocco, Argentina, Uruguay and Japan have been invited by Pedro Déniz to participate sending by Mail Art anything that they deem worthy of being found, with the sole condition that it may be introduced into a bottle or be attached to it.

For Déniz the bottle signifies the locus where memory is stored, remembrance, memory, information, desire, as well as being one of the theme he has currently been working on. In his previous exhibition entitled *A la deriva*, (Adrift), last year in La Palmita, the exhibition rooms of the University of Las Palmas, he spoke to us of the data confusion that we experience in a world

that lives perturbed by the mass media. That show, made up of several paintings and four installations, together with his present work define the sensibility of an artist concerned about communicating a period of time marked by dispersion, contamination, saturation and simulation. Slowly he has matured his reflections on information and the mass media in a world where excess of data makes us increasingly more hermetic and distant with our kin.

The messaged bottles seem to abandon us once confined to the forces of nature. The spectators remain on land while they observe how they begin an enigmatic adventure in which no further intervention is possible. In the installation called *El Pozo*, (The well), it is objects that seem to stay behind, in a place that lies beyond our memory. The bottles' role establishes a counterpoint with the marginal situation of all those things that have lost their use for us, that no longer interest us and for that reason form part of the funereal trousseau of oblivion. Their forms, their details vanish in our own memory. For that reason they have been lined in a thick cloth which unifies them. Sometimes we don't even recall their function and we lend them purposes that are alien to them. We associate bloody battles to swords fashioned to fulfill mere decorative ends. Bottles that no longer enliven a table with their contents. A sink where it is impossible to wash the dust that denies splendor and luxury. Only the form survives; the matter of a mere empty skin devoid of all function and thus open to any interpretation.

A bottle trapped in a barrel of salt water. Facing it a sofa where we can sit comfortably and by which is a small ornamented table with ordinary household objects and on which we find a television. On its screen we can see the bottle submerged in the water of the barrel that is situated behind. A sequence of images derived from photocopies where we read the word «seasick» is visible on the wall. Four small formal works based on shop queue tickets define a mosaic of different daily moments of everyday history. A small ship, deteriorated by time and oriented to the west simulates one of those schooners on which the conquistadors travelled to America, evoking the passing of time and refreshing our memory. All of these works created by Pedro Déniz, have been christened as «Fragments of Reality», being for their creator pieces of the artificial universe, that combined following no rational rule, suggest those intertwined realities that we find in our current mediatised world. The data sickness caused by the mass media is a consequence of that continual bombardment of messages that we can neither take

on nor analyze. TV's reality shows seem to be wanting to stimulate the senses of the spectators facing a series of exhibited events thus pretending to provoke our gut reaction and make us feel guilty. Electoral campaigns with unkept promises. Fairy tale weddings of European monarchies with all their pomp and splendor. Wars that stimulate our after lunches with horrifying scenes. Accidents, rapes, the maltreatment of women are some of the news items that surround us twenty four hours a day in the press, the magazines, TV, even in the cinema.

Whenever we stroll through the city echos, experiences, or past interpretations come to mind mixed with present ones and with that imaginary future that we construct daily and individually. Imagination is fundamental to our lives. Bachelard assures us that it is essential in order to invent the future spirit and life, opening our mind towards new kinds of vision and rapture.

Many of the houses, streets, roads, beaches and mountains that we behold on passing by have been there for so long that they have served as scenarios for multiple realities experienced through time. In the city we have inherited so many different stories intersect that it is only from a multiple focal point that we find connections between those fragments that integrate the multicolour kaleidoscope of our world.

From the everyday experience of every individual, we can detect different kinds of realities. On the one hand that which derives from a more relaxed behavior, often shared with his more intimate environment, open to the mediatization of messages continually emitted by TV. On the other, that of the most intrepid reader that investigates any social, cultural or scientific theme, or of that person who chases the computer and spends hours in interface navigating in Internet. We are all immersed in the different realities that existence offers. The subtle, the ambiguous, rejection, attraction, tension, relaxation, displacement, love, hatred, passion, illness, existence or death, generated by life and its events, dwell within us without any consideration of sex, race, social class or age.

Baudrillard associates the TV image with our age. For him TV is the definitive and perfect object of our era. Our own body and all the encompassing universe become a control panel. When anyone holds in his hands the remote control unit or the computer keyboard we feel that we are

part of a multinetted channel terminal, with remote control facilities. Our sitting room or our study are increasingly near to science fiction.

The presence of TV transforms human relations in our homes. We learn, we feel, we love, we fantasize, we condemn, we demand, we teach, we learn, we travel and we even dress according to the standard that the screen imposes. Through it we visit the whole planet in seconds, discovering even the most remote abysses of the sea and some endangered species. Lady Di's private life, her death and her inconfessable private life. The problem of the kurds or the indians in Canada. We have learned the world with the virtual screen and that is why reality appears increasingly as a barren body that no longer interests us.

Our existence is immersed in a consumer society that continually demands spectacle because without it action would cease and this would mean that the frenetic scenes of contemporary life would stop. Romantic magazines and TV update us on all world scandals. Baudrillard warns us that we live in the ecstasy of communication, it being obscene; it isn't only the sexual that becomes obscene in pornography. Today we have a complete pornography of information and communication. That means, networks and circuits, that aim to give us a quick flash of anything, any event being thus dissolved in news and communication.

What characterises our epoch is the speed with which news reaches us from one part of the globe to another in an unstoppable vertigo that is irremisable. We live in an era that has brought to an end inner life and intimacy. In the era of communication, in the age of vanguard technology applied to information, the individual has ceased to see his image in the world since it is the TV's or the PC's screen that now speaks about us and represents us.