

PEDRO'S TRAVEL

Clara Muñoz

The ancient Greeks considered travel as an essential approach to the world experience. The travel is for Pedro Déniz (Gran Canaria, 1964) a life experience that makes contact with other beings, other cultures, other ways of seeing the world. The travel raised not only as a geographical journey but also as an interior journey. In *Welcome Bridge*, retrospective presented by the artist in San Martin Centre for Contemporary Culture (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2014), it includes most of the representative works done in the last twenty years. Different proposals through which he aims to make visible the perversity of the frames of power in a world shaped by migratory flows (south-north), inequality and social discrimination.

Despite the political and social criticism implicit in his work, it is positioned in the artistic space. That is, in the territory of video, performance, installation, sculpture and the object, and also appropriating some strategies from Arte Povera, Minimalism, Surrealism, Conceptual Art and even from the actions and Performance Art of the seventies. The reflections that he raises are not detached from its conceptual and object trajectory, nor of visual poetry, a form of non-verbal poetry that allows us to experiment with the image and with some art resources. The work of Pedro Déniz is situated on the border between genres and the arts. A processual work that is preceded by a concept that he develops through different disciplinary fields, leading to a subversive poetic that suggests the enigmas that the artist questions. Unanswered questions that are thrown into emptiness and are drawn from other questions about human beings and about himself, in relation to the world around him. Thematic issues such as the Landscape/Territory binomial, Identity, the Body, Pain, Illness, Gender and Memory, but also the War, Inequality, Migration or Displacement, both ethically and culturally. A series of questions that suggest other questions and interweave meanings that enclose issues that the viewer must solve.

Just as we go up to the first floor of San Martin a red carpet leads us into the exhibition. *Welcome 4 Horizons* (*Welcome 4 Horizons*), *sitie-specific* made for the occasion reminds us the type of carpets that are often used to mark a route.

The red carpet brings to our minds the red carpet of the Academy Awards where the actors walk. Associated to power, it is often used in ceremonies that attract important people and celebrities. Pedro Déniz's carpet welcomes us and invites us to walk over it. The artist tries to break up the banal sense of this icon and give it another deeper

reading. In previous works Déniz, has laid carpets around the city, on the beach, in the museum, encouraging people to walk over them. The carpet extends its conceptual horizon and thus becomes a device that serves to build bridges with the public, to propose a route that will take us to a better world. Its red colour is associated with power and ambition but also with love, blood and passion. The carpet is oriented towards the four cardinal points, to the sea. A mythical place on an island that traditionally connected with the world through the sea. The sea as an opening point, not of isolation. The sea as a travel, as a bridge.

A travel that, according to Orlando Britto, the curator of the exhibition, "allows you to go to a utopian horizon, arriving in a new place free of war, genocide, famine, poverty, diseases and deprivation of the most basic rights and freedom."

The bottle is another essential icon in the work of this artist. This transparent object that shows what is carrying, is the centrepiece of works like La Puente, Implosion, Japy New Year, Serie Kóctel Molotov Series o Triumphs, paths of thought. The bottle was used as a container in La Puente (The Bridge) in 1998.

A project in collaboration with eighty artists of various nationalities who sent an artwork which Déniz introduced into a bottle and tossed into the sea in an action performed at the zero meridian, located on the island of Hierro.

Déniz assures us that " this project comes from the media confusion during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the communication led to misinformation and being adrift media became something ordinary and anonymous".

This project not only speaks of the information derived from the media but also about travel, that type of travel the artist is so interested in.

In fact, several bottles have appeared on the other side of the Atlantic and the artist has travelled to meet the people that found such unusual messages, making contact with them, finding different environments through which to access to other cultures and ways of approaching such different worlds.