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PHILOBOLUS, THE BOTTLE THROWER

By Ángel Sánchez

Over one hundred creative proposals, carefully bottled and sealed, are presently navigating across the Atlantic's waters, irresistibly; their destination a mystery, for where the marine and submarine currents may take them is unknown. They therefore fulfill a young macaronesian artist's idea, that through this action is seeking to resolve a personal longing that has beset him in recent years.

The artist is Pedro Déniz and his condition as such implies a threefold tension. Being young, an artist and an islander does not necessarily confer the sailing skills required to overcome the high waves of the artistic circuit in the Archipelago where he lives and works. Nevertheless, and assuming all initial risks, Déniz has asked a considerable number of artists, authors and other creators, (who operate in the mediatic intersection of disciplines) to sail along with him. Quite a mental adventure that has gained phenomenological status, to the extent that subtle and very special satellites perched in the sky are detecting it and controlling us millimeter by millimeter.

With this action Pedro Déniz reveals himself as that Jonah who overcomes the wrecking of his illusions and embarks one day at La Restinga, (Island of El Hierro) to find in the open sea some compensation for his efforts in launching the Law of Communicating Bottles. The whale is absent in this case, there is instead a shoal of more than eighty fry making transparent their creative load, drifting, avoiding fishing nets, algae, sargassos and undulating mermaids' hair. For it is all reaching the most desired destination: other hands.

Déniz's project has much of oneiric recreation, although it can also be understood in natural or cultural terms. It concerns the expeditionary memory of his countrymen, the canarians; it concerns the curiosity for geomechanical forces, marine currents. We could even talk of literary romanticism, given the precedents that in such a sense exist in the motif of «message in a bottle tossed in the sea». We nonetheless prefer to think that the meaning lies, (and he probably already knows it), in the simultaneous materialization of both the collective and personal subconscious and cosmic laws. His idea concerns the drift of the feverish. Other than that is spying under our pillow, that becomes manifest in drowsiness and is unleashed in sleep until dawn. It is related to the captive dreams, which are the softest, and with the wilder kind that offer more resistance to liberation. When both kinds of sleep conclude, the slim transient happiness they offer sinks, and they tend towards recreation through evocation or through commemorative actions. *La Puente* is the neat objective commemoration of an amniotic dream, before experience, on the threshold of innocence.

Pedro belongs to the race of artists who jump without a lifejacket into the sea of difficulty; organising *La Puente* has brought him all manner of emotions, joys and shocks. All of them will go overboard on that morning of the Zero Meridian, when the northwesterly breezes will take charge of the crystalline ware that has occupied him over the last two years. When the moment of tossing them into the sea comes, I can imagine myself seeing him as Philobolus himself, the «thrower of vases», apocryphal character who was part of Jason and the Argonauts' crew. As his name implies Philobolus's role was to placate the wrath of Poseidon with edible gifts tossed at the most appropriate moments to obtain his protection. It was necessary to throw both content and container together, while in a loud voice the petition for succor was recited, this happening frequently to the indifference and incredulity of the younger members of the crew who ignored the immediate effect of the invoked intercession.

Deniz's is a desperate action /almost savage, one of communication stemming from yet another member of an Atlantic tribe whose most humble dreams have been insularised. A wish to overcome apathy or the tire-some repetition of those aesthetic gestures that are standard in his land; that drowsiness to which any aesthetic praxis succumbs as a «means» that never becomes «an end». The artist is not alone in this voyage, but accompanied by other dwellers of the Blue

Planet that have renewed themselves with an identical dream: a fluid communication, subservient to Night, the Moon, the Pale Planet. The authors of the bottled messages consider an additional dream: to reach other hands who will have to break the seal of the unknown in order to finally effect the communication-proposal.

Will it be perhaps a child of the Island of Goré, an eider of the Patagonian coast, an Icelandic fisherman, the High Seas child of Jules Supervielle, the glorious ashes of Agustín Millares or Captain Acab himself who will end up feeling that sheet, that tape, those woods, flowers or branches that so often symbolise silence and non-message? They may not understand what they read, or they may opt to communicate; all will depend on the bottle-tosser's ability, of his concentration upon reaching Zero Meridian, of his consideration in creating a collective objective in the limits of the unpredictable...

God knows where they'll end up! Those who have kept Pedro Déniz company from the beginning of the project would be grateful for a reply to our messages.

We are similarly castaways of creative solitude and incommunication, «little fishing's» of a Leviathan that persists in blowing strong to keep us apart from reality. Where will you end up on little archipelago map, fancy scissor cut shapes, when the unthinkable be unleashed? Never again was anything known? You'll be as near as you are far, always inside somewhere or within somebody, for whom you were intended, sealed and tossed by Philobolus. Who will return to the coast, the risk already fulfilled. And on the brink of awaking...