

ROMEO GALDAMEZ

Dialogue-Art at the End of the Century

The art work of Romeo Galdámez falls into a category I call Dialogue Art-the dialogue of a certain Culture throughout different historical periods. It is not the art work of an artist who is only dedicated to the visual sphere, it is the deep concerned, realization of he who lives in a continuously cracking world and reflects upon *The thunderstorms which shall give birth to peace* (José de San Martín). Galdámez remembers the coexistence of Romantic facets -the active ones and the melancholic ones- of those moments which should always be remembered because they are part of the reconstruction or the recovery from wounds. His work is not the what-to-do of a resentful being, or one in exile, but of a responsible author intelligent and sensitive, who reflects upon the world he lives in through his works, and invites us to accompany him in those thoughts without the intention of indoctrinating. Galdámez makes references, reminisces, thinks, investigates and gives translucency to some social and aesthetic personal decisions.

The Visual Arts have gone through a diversity of periods, almost all of them trying to introduce something different, while at the same time, abolishing the previous artistic movement and setting themselves up as the possessors of the final truth. It has been said many times - and there is still validity to it today - that the relationship between art and the social reality of each period, is that of a mirror. Let's just recall the various types of possible mirrors. loyal or changing, with significant or caricaturesque variables, illusory, autonomous or dogmatic.

More than political work, it is historic, making references to personal or autobiographical coordinates in a human and aesthetic reflective way. Galdámez has been able to surpass the catharsis to work with neither special effects nor theatrical screams, and without resentment. We learn from his capacity to ponder, to retain only what is substantial, instead of lingering over useless and superficial situations. His art works are mainly silkscreen and or contain that method of imprinting the numbered originals, occasionally in conjunction with other techniques. The images are not only mimesis; they do not refuse illusionism completely, and they are not dependent upon commissions, fashion or the production of his generation.

"Art History is not a library always full of new volumes where one could just take any book. Art destroys its past. To be more specific, this means that all the great creators have been destroyers: they destroy the concept of the wooden church to replace it with a new one made out of stone". These words were written by Viktor Shklovsky in his *The Horse's Pace*, and describe precisely what Galdámez does not do. His artistic voice is not ostentatious; on the contrary, his work is deep and subtle. He does not destroy it to rebuild it. He places it in his neo-conceptual structure

holding it to the flat surface of the graphed paper. He traces the images and gives expressive power to them, with no intention of destruction or replacement. The technical process is clearly out there, without the need to glorify it. Its secret stands in life itself through a cloning process that is definitely historic and esthetic.

Ever since the human being began to express himself, from when he lived in caves until Vermeer, and from the Mexican Muralists until Graphic Design and advertisement, there was always an ideology in the images produced. Even at a time when paintings seem to be superficial, only decorative and unintentional, the evidence is there showing the ideology of such the time. In France, the Louis XVII with the Rococo, the excessive decoration-was the time of decadent luxury and moral decline in which the sole purpose of heads was to act as support to wigs. On the other hand, we could recall Robert Rauschenberg's artwork from the 60's and 70's during which the encounter of sensibility and lively days at the atelier working with various kinds of media produced strong and unique pieces. Even though one now cannot make observations using the same lens, the comparison is still valid and clear. Rauschenberg has the type of intellectual restlessness one finds in the artwork of Galdámez. He demonstrates that in the author's expression, there is not one direction only, but an important objective: to create a piece of art that moves people day after day while it also invites thought. Habermas said *The word might have lost a fixed historical reference*.

There is no doubt that our question has to do with how we could break the shell of modernity. Galdámez asks this same question many times; he and I spoke about it trying to shape out some ideas; we went after it, we discussed it, we pursued it, and we might have had the illusion of having touched some conclusions with our fingertips. Maybe we just imagined it, seeing it only seen through our eyelashes, as answers disguised as butterflies, plain and delicate, changing constantly while revolving very close to us, unattainable and never the same.

Looking for neither a historic certainty nor a unique style, and without considering the technique and the materials, the artist has to have a clear objective: to direct his work at the important things, at the deepest channels of communication. His pieces, instead of reciting things in the usual way, reveal these changing reflections in a time of crisis.

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UNAM, México, July '97

English version: G. Kartofel and Ariadna Rodenstein