

Gabriela Bettini

Paisajes de excepción

Our fundamental relationship with objects is summed up by war and property.

Michel Serres "The Natural Contract"

In "Paisajes de excepción", Gabriela Bettini forms a universe made up of seemingly similar images taken from different examples. She uses painting to create a small atlas where she intertwines three great ideas: Landscape in Painting, Ecology and the coupling place/memory. The large size of the central piece uses up the extent of the gallery which as a result becomes visually enlarged via the creation of one space inside another. The painting recreates the walls of the artist's studio where some images are hung:



exotic birds and strangely bucolic landscapes creating horizontal lines that construct a kind of visual map, as if the author were searching for some kind of logic in the comparison of the images. Beauty seems to be a common denominator among them. As well as the fact that they all describe a tropical climate, just as is heralded by the parrot who is presiding over them.

However, the upper line is composed of paradisiacal images that have been found on diverse websites owned by extractivist companies that operate in Brazil, Honduras, Colombia and the Philippines (some of the most dangerous countries for those who defend the environment). The images show the efforts made by these multinationals to promote themselves on the grounds of their "ecological and social responsibility".

The landscapes in the lower line have a different character. They are images from the places where some bodies of female environmental activists were found. They were women who were defending the environment, a way of life that is environmentally friendly with the local natural resources and another model of society.

Two smaller paintings are also part of the exhibition. Both of them show a landscape that is superimposed over another. Again, the artist joins together two places which have different origins. The landscapes in the background recreate nineteenth-century paintings by European artists in Latin America and the superimposed images show places that were sites of environmental conflicts. Landscape as an independent genre in painting is relatively recent in western Art, considering that it only traces back to the XVI century. Several authors believe that the first incursions of European artists who depicted Latin America through landscape connected their views of this new magical land with the projection of this environment as an ideal for an apparently unlimited economic and cultural expansion.

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Material wealth was there for the taking and the local culture was underestimated, that is why the feeling of "everything is to be done and to be owned" also affected painting. It is here where the artist creates a link between the photographic and pictorial gaze. The spectacular representation of otherness is located on the same shot as the images used by modern corporations.

Painting as a way of creating images can be indebted to the photographic gaze and, yet it is one of the privileged mediums of a type of representation, which doesn't require a link to the original example. Just as if it were Non-fiction, it can create a discourse between the facts and the story. By linking these issues, Bettini gives us insight into a subtext where Ecology and Western Culture have a controversial intersection, which is also embodied in painting.

The artistic research of Gabriela Bettini about political matters is (itself) a way of questioning presents and futures. What's more is that the artist creates a bond between the motivation that led the first Europeans to become aware of economic opportunities in the southern hemisphere and the reason why so many activists are currently murdered every year. Between the colonialism and late capitalism there is a fine line, which is often euphemistic.

In "Paisajes de excepción" the works displayed have been configured like a decline about the same theme: the way of understanding the culture where we were born, where we fit in and how to escape from it in order to allow the emergence of other ways of understanding the world and society, and the role that Art plays in this questioning.

Bruno Leitão

Gabriela Bettini

Madrid, 1977

She lives and works in Madrid

Gabriela Bettini (1977) is a visual artist who received her BFA from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (2001). She then expanded her training by attending the Máster en Teoría y Práctica de las Artes Contemporáneas (UCM, 2002) and obtaining a Master in Fine Arts (UeL, Londres, 2003-2004). She also received the Postgraduated Scholarship in UK for international students awarded by Fundación "la Caixa" and the British Council to expand her training by attending and obtaining a Master in Fine Arts (UeL, Londres, 2003-2004).

Actually, she has received numerous scholarships, including the Scholarship from the Real Academia de España in Rome (2015-2016); the Scholarship awarded by the Centro Cultural de España in Buenos Aires (Residencia Internacional para Artistas URRRA, 2010); the Workshop Scholarship in Visual Arts INJUVE and Muestra de Arte INJUVE (2009 y 2005); the Artistic Creation Award from Comunidad de Madrid (2007).

Gabriela Bettini is part of the Archivo de Creadores de Matadero Madrid and she is currently represented by Galería Silvestre.

It should be noted that her works have been exhibited in many solo exhibitions such as Larga Distancia, Galería Silvestre, Tarragona (2015); La casa roja, La Fresh Gallery, Madrid (2013) and Galería Mundo Nuevo, Buenos Aires (2013); Acentos, Casa Museo Evita in Buenos Aires (2012); Un tiempo casi cercano, Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires (2011); Algunas de aquellas historias, Galería Asm28, Madrid (2010) and Casa de América Latina (Lisboa, 2011).

Gabriela Bettini has also exhibited her works in numerous group shows, including In Situ 2013-2015. Projectes d'artistes en residència in Addaya Centre d'Art Contemporani. Sa Quartera, Centre d'Art, Inca (2015); S/T in Galería Nuevo Mundo, Buenos Aires (2014); ArteBa, Feria de Arte de Buenos Aires in La Fresh Gallery (2014); Obra abierta in Obra Social Caja de Extremadura (2014, 2015); No limit in Centro Cultural Coreano, Madrid (2014) and Big in La Fresh Gallery, Madrid (2014); Hinterlandmark, Addaya. Centre d'Art Contemporani, Alaró, Mallorca (2014); Premio de Pintura Focus Abengoa, Fundación Focus-Abengoa, Sevilla (2013); Anacronías, Fondation Argentine, París (2011) or Casa abierta / Open house, London (2010).