

Irene González

Málaga, 1988

Currently based in Madrid

Irene González obtained a degree in Fine Arts from the Universidad de Granada in 2011 and the master's degree Drawing: Creation, Production and Diffusion in Universidad de Granada in 2012.

Irene González's work has been shown at several solo exhibitions such as [des]encuentros, Galería silvestre (Madrid, 2017); Espacios afectivos, zonas de ruina, Galería silvestre (Tarragona, 2016); Sueños de infinito. Galería Punto Rojo (Granada, 2014); Galería Benot (Cádiz, 2014) or En la caverna de la infancia seguimos aterrados. Galería silvestre (Tarragona, 2014).

She has also taken part in different group exhibitions. Amongst others, El proceso. Muestra de antiguos alumnos para FACBA'16, Feria de Arte Contemporáneo de la Facultad de Bellas Artes de Granada (2016); Hide and seek to A3Bandas, curated by Nerea Ubieto, Galería silvestre (Madrid, 2015); Una mirada a Japón. Galería Ceferino Navarro, (Granada, 2014); Galería José Manzanares (Linares, 2013).

Irene González has participated in Art Fairs such as Drawing Room, Feria de dibujo contemporáneo, 2nd edition, with Galería silvestre (Madrid, 2017); MARTE, Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo, 3ª edition with Galería silvestre (Castellón, 2016); Art Marbella, Feria de Arte Moderno y Contemporáneo, 2ª edition, with Galería silvestre (Málaga, 2016); Please, ART, Feria de Arte Contemporáneo y Joven, with Galería silvestre (Salamanca, 2015) or ArtJaen, artist invited by Galería Uno de Uno (Jaén, 2012).

In her drawings there is a predominance of black and white and a clear influence of vintage photography – mainly anonymous. It's precisely after rethinking these photographs that she begins to draw. The final result of this process is an oddity that creates an uneasy sensation which transports you, taking you further than in a superficial first glance would.

It's not a coincidence that her visual references are the images of nineteenth century researchers of physiognomies, such as Duchenne de Boulogne and George Seurat's drawing works, among others.

Through the memory, she reinterprets faces that might be called "abstract", immovable or inexpressive. In short, it's a "new realism" marked by scars and signs of wounds that show us the impossibility of a return to origin.

There is a fundamental stylistic feature that stands out in her series: silence. The images transmit stillness, an inner calm chaos where existence seems to be floating, on hold.

This year Irene besides participating in the art residency La Termica and has also been rewarded with the Novo Talento prize in the international art fair Drawing Room Lisboa by Viarco company. She has also been invited to participate in the artistic residency of ADDAYA Centre D'art Contemporani in Aleró, Mallorca on December.

Irene González _ Perseverations of the memory itself

17.11 - 26.01.2019

The paradox of change through repetition

Alicia Serrano

Internal and anonymous space. In the frontal wall, a shadow: the reflection of a window that you can't reach to see. You can only see its silhouette, its echoes.

Again, the same image: a neutral room and again the shadow, the reflection. It seems that nothing has changed, but watching carefully nothing is the same. Even though space hasn't changed, something is different. Sharpening your senses. Now it's evident; time has passed, a lack becomes remarkable through the light. Barely perceptible, small changes in the shadows reflected in the walls talk to you from different presents: 11:00 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.

As impressionists previously did, Irene González simplifies the picture until it reflects a basic magnitude that transcends the physical and static representation of reality: we see time reflected in the subtle variations generated by light, that works as engine that creates a space-time dimension in her pieces. Through this diptych, the words of Junichiro Tanizaki (1993) gain life, (...) *the mystery is the magic of the shadow* (1), because thanks to it, we can see nature from its essence.

Time as protagonist of Irene González's work has its origin in a previous series known as *(des)encuentros* (2017). This project includes 20 drawings in landscape format that suggest the concept of the film sequence by exhibiting one next to the other and, thus, covering almost the entire perimeter of the Galeria silvestre's former space in Madrid. This exhibition generated a narrative by association between the different drawings, but furthermore it indirectly invited the observers to build up a temporal dimension in their journey through the continuum these drawings created. As a result of this experience, Irene González has started researching and seeking for different formats through which she can generate a narrative journey based on the spectator's association of the images.

El instante y la Huida (2018) it's a good example of it. In this diptych, we can see how in one of the pieces the presence of the human figure has disappeared completely. And this is something interesting: the new pieces of Irene González seem to be living a process of image essentialization, that slowly leaves what is more figurative behind. This evolution has taken the artist to create (almost) abstract forms that when related to other pieces, in which the children's figure works as an anchor, are capable of generating a spatial sensation on the spectator. The spectators are the ones who develop a narrative and a temporal

dimension through their interpretation of the piece. By putting together the two parts of the diptych, as if it was a puzzle, the spectator finds the complete meaning of the piece.

The same thing happens in *Desplazamiento 2* (2018). In each of the three pieces, the paper transcends from being merely a support, to become a conceptual and iconographic part of the piece. The presence of a film has become more evident: Three pieces, three screens in which the image of different heights implodes, concentrates and occupies the space of a white panel. The dynamic succession of images draws a diagonal that compensates the emptiness. Again, the lecture of the piece is produced by the spectator. It has to be seen in a sharpened and calmed way. Only this way the keys to the game created by the artist can be discovered. Because another element has great importance in this game: repetition.

The three images are visually sequenced thanks to the repetition of one element that connects them spatially: to look at the triptych calmly helps you to understand that you are walking through space the same way as cinematic film.

Other resource that has acquired significant relevance during Irene Gonzalez's latest creative stage is repetition. This repetition has sometimes a temporal nature - it not only engages a creative tool and a challenging process, but it also acts as a device that introduce this time-space dimension from a cyclical and circular perspective. In this sense, the project that was essential to Irene González was *Toujours déjà*, made by the artist during her residence at La Térmica in Málaga between February and June 2018.

A series based on the idea of repetition, in which Irene repeats 16 times the same image. But each image presents very subtle changes, making a reference to the temporal multiplicity in her drawings. One more time, all the drawing are very similar but each one is different and unique. We can see the entire set and notice the representation of an instant in which, thanks to the shadow of an invisible window for the spectator, the subtle movement of a tree branch is perceptible. A movement that can only be produced thanks to the passage of time.

E. Kartsaki and T. Schmidt state that *loving repetition means paying attention to the formal properties of things, to its rhythms and structures* (2). With repetition, one can approach and understand reality by thorough and patient observation. This paradox of change through repetition becomes evident in Irene Gonzalez's drawings due to this observation and reiteration of images or fragments of them. Something else becomes notorious above all the elements of this project: the reproduction of a video with the drawings overlapped at a speed of 16 frames per second. Inspired by the chronophotography of Eadweard Muybridge in the 19th century. In which the limits between the beginning and the end of the action were not clear, creating a closed circuit where the idea of "Endless return" was reflected in the circular temporality that was the continuous apparition of 16 images.

On the other hand, Clare Foster explains that a reiterated piece of work or the repetition of an element in different ones act as a *canvas where visitors can project their own meanings and narratives* (3). The repeated image becomes recognizable and, therefore,

familiar. This proximity allows to create ties with the visitors, who are able to expand the meaning of the piece through their own experiences and memories (3). That's what happens in *Desplazamiento 1* (2018) where one more time, the artist leads us through the three images. Two of them are similar but still different. Thanks to the light variations we can see the passage of time. We are conscious that we are walking through an anonymous space but strangely familiar. Finally, in the third image, we stand in front of a recurrent element in Irene's work: a small girl. A fragment figure that from the intimate context of a neutral internal space awakes nostalgic memories and sensations.

Since the 19th century, images of kids were used to transmit ideas of innocence, purity, timelessness, and melancholy. Melancholy is always present in Irene Gonzalez's work. It is as well in this project, specially as reflected in the images of a timeless childhood that connect with the beholders through the intimate spaces of memory by offering contexts they can identify with their own memories.

Recuerdo is precisely the title of one of the pieces present in this project. It's a diptych in which repetition and time makes us think about our perception of reality.

Andrey Tarkovsky defended that the past is more real and stable than the present. The present escapes from our fingers. But what we lived in the past remains in our memories in the form of filtered images of our own experiences, that at the same time build our perception of reality. In the exact words of Tarkovsky "*things are not as they were, but how they are remembered*" (4).

In *Recuerdo* (2018) the bigger image puts us on the inside of a room. We are at the exact moment when we can't reach to see the entire drawing on the wall. The very precise time of the day when the shadows from the window are projected on the wall covering half of the presentation.

The passage to the other piece it's also a temporal passage. Suddenly we found ourselves in another present: the one from our memory. The image of the drawing that we preserved in our memory it's missed from the sensation we once felt as we got inside the room. A drawing made by shadows, that does not correspond to the entire and complex truth of the original drawing has become our vision and therefore our memory.

In the words of Andrey Tarkovsky *time and memory merge, being the two sides of the same coin* (5). However, in memory's timelessness, melancholy goes one step further and becomes the memory mechanism that continuously multiplies images of absence/lack and loss. This endless memory is organised in circular, labyrinthine, limited structures. Melancholy is stubborn, nostalgic and always reiterative. Melancholy, therefore, feeds on repetition and takes form and body through perseverations of memory itself.

(1) TANIZAKI, J. (1993): *El elogio de la sombra*, Madrid, Ediciones Siruela. (p. 48)

(2) KARTSAKI, E. & SCHMIDT, T. (2015) Editorial: On Repetition, *Performance Research*, 20:5, 1-3 (p.3)

(3) FOSTER, C. (2016): Afterword: Repetition as Recognition, for Kartsaki, Eirini (ed), *On Repetition: Writing, Performance, Art*.

(4) TARKOVSKY, A (1996): *Esculpir en el tiempo*, Madrid, Ed. Rialp (p.14)

(5) TARKOVSKY, A. (2012): *Extracts from Sculpting in time: Films, Stills, Polaroids and Writing* (p.32)