

INTERVIEW WITH RITA MARTORELL
By Rafael Sierra

The individual in his most tragic and solitary concept is ever-present in the work of Rita Martorell (Zürich 1971), whether in her gallery of characters, sketched in with figurative strokes of the brush, or in her drawings in which the blend of styles and tendencies is slowly steeping.

There is a complete leap from your previous work to what you're showing here. Are you conscious of the metamorphosis your work has undergone?

I do not mean to constantly change or adapt the past, I just want to observe it. My work has undergone change in terms of language and materials through pure intuition and analogy. They have been incidental changes, sometimes with a kind of notable coherence and other times without, because my work is an open, unstable concept, a protagonist of our time and obsessions. It is freedom.

We can detect numerous influences in your work. Are you set on finding your own particular path?

The only thing I'm set on is focussing on an idea, the idea.

A person's work consists of the images and marks of his existence, it is the result or transfiguration of our obsessions. Full and disturbing images which constantly replace themselves.

Art is like running long-distance, a race in which many will fall by the wayside. Are you conscious that, in this world, only those who contribute something new will reach the finishing line?

The artist is responsible for his work.
Contributing something new means being able to strip down ideas and not accumulate detail.

What do you feel could be your contribution to art?

I wish to contribute my personal experience.

Following on from a maelstrom in which it was possible to see almost everything, in this exhibition you seem to return, to some extent, to some of the Old Masters. What have you learnt from them?

These pieces, the content of this exhibition is like some kind of flashback for me . I don't mean to go back to anything. It is simply a recovery of some past moments, of an accumulation of experience.

Almost all creators, at least those I know, are driven by certain obsessions. Looking at your work, I have the feeling that more or less the same thing applies to you. Where do your works come from?

As you say, our work derives from our own obsessions, obsessions we create and hold onto through any form of behaviour or activity.

Creating belongs to an internal manifestation, an extension of our desires, a constant experimentation on the part of our bodies and minds in conjunction with the external participation of individuals, atmospheres or actions capable of setting off the metamorphosis of the creator.

I would like you to tell me about the process through which you develop your output. Intellectual, intuitive, sensitive, how would you describe your work?

I feel the term output is too subjective; my work is constant and consecutive. Perhaps the only time we stop producing is while we are asleep, or maybe we also make use of our dreams to interpret our personality. In this way, the process or development of one's work – a product of the unconscious and of our everyday experiences, is ambiguous and doesn't become defined or intellectualised until the final result, whether material or ephemeral.

How can a creator be true to himself?

As Socrates said, "Know yourself ;"

What do you feel is the role of the artist at the start of the 21st century?

An artist should be both archaeologist and scientist.

The human form is at the heart of your work, both in your previous phase and in the current one. What do you search for through this form?

I chose the human form as an element at once of communication, of fantasy, of dialogue, of monologue, as an aesthetic element, a fetish.

The figurative elements of your canvasses and drawings have become blurred. It seems as if you want to remove any elements which might obscure ideas. Is getting to the root of things the most difficult part?

For me the root of things is the concept, the most concrete, minimal aspect of a work, though in essence the most unequivocal. I don't have a conscious desire to break with my earlier work, I only wish to feel more grounded in my decisions, synthesising and retaining the most essential symbols for my development. Getting to the root of things is what we strive to do throughout our lives. Without doubt it's the most difficult thing, as Matisse declared: " The less complete it is, the more sensitivity should be apparent. "

Does your work leave you with mixed feelings? Why are the majority of artists permanently dissatisfied with their work?

In my work I can see my own contradictions, quite apart from the supposed connections between them. Mixed feelings lead us to a happy non-conformity and thereby to the unstable task of self-knowledge and self-questioning.

What drives you to create?

Life drives me to create and art drives me to live.

Given the effort expended by the majority of artists, doesn't it frustrate you that art only appeals to a minority?

Art is elitist. An elitism created by a sensitive hierarchy which has nothing to do with social status. The frustrating thing is that many of those who can afford to surround themselves by great works of art do not possess the sensitivity needed to appreciate them.