

[...]

I'm thinking of a tomogram. It's not the same as a snapshot, which has to do with time, whereas the tomogram is more a question of space. I wonder what the tomogram of a forest would look like? *Coupe de bois*, the French for logging or woodcutting, could literally be translated as 'cutting the forest', but if you cut through a whole forest with a cross-section you get a tomogram. And now when I think about the two prints you sent me, especially the first one, that's how I see it, a deep oblique cut that interrupts the official time of a living place.

Incision as printing; piercing to see what's underneath. But particularly to underscore. The drawing underlines and at times strikes, like a blow or *coupe*.

[...]

"It often seems as if time doesn't pass for me at the same speed. My time passes slowly. At times a small movement is prolonged as I watch it. And the decision to make this small movement and the actual gesture itself are also prolonged. As is the time of observation. Stretching out my hand to see the lines that appear takes me an unusual amount of time and intense concentration. [...] I focus on a detail while all around me looks like an image sweep. A motion blur filter. Motion Gaussian Blur."

[...]

And I think of lava. Lava as a material, as the tomogram of an eruption. An eruption frozen in the moment. A block of lava. I imagine your 'Ls' as bricks of lava cut at an angle. As it negotiates lava still retains something of the eruption, with the block that orders. You arrive at the angle but always through lava moments. At lava speed. It's a good pace for working. Moving forward and creating folds.

[...]

There are two windows in every cell in the San Marco monastery (which we visited together). The physical window to the outside world through which the monks look out onto the time of the seasons, and the fresco painting by Fra Angelico which I imagine allowed them to observe the passing of other symbolic times at other speeds. The friar painter cut out the transitional spaces in his frescos in the same shape as wooden windows, underlining that above all else they are windows.

Now I can see several simultaneous times in your monastic-artistic practice: the official time marked by the bells, the time of lava, the time of the action itself of art practice, the time of the seasons shown in the real window through which the sun enters and the time of the form, the time of the fold that creates the form.

[...]

That precise moment I am talking about, when the wall ceases to be a wall, in the case of Fra Angelico, for instance, would he have started with colour?

What brings colour into an art practice where once there was only black and white. I wonder whether for you the trace of sunlight on paper would have been the first colour.

Once the window is open to the priming of the sun, all the other colours could creep in, little by little, in lava time. Because you arrive at colour, not through the stain, but through the line; colours saturated by the insistence of the line. As if you had no better way of relating with the material than through the stroke (which is never an outline) without letting go the rhythm and the patterns of slow time. Always the line, above all supports; a crossover between disciplines: drawing with engraving ink on a painting canvas, stains with strokes, engravings made with sunlight: photo-graphs... we will call it painting when we see it on a canvas, but they are still windows, strokes and time.

I also think that in your practice, like in the cell of a monastery, everything is measured on a human scale, time is ordered in strokes that play the part of seconds, the space of your bigger works is the reach of your outstretched arms, never any more. That is why your geometry is always soft, like a mathematics of your fingertips.

[...]

There was a time when I believed that the ideal duration to contemplate a work would be the same as the one the artist used to create it. That would make the beholder another contemplative ascetic whose act of gazing would have the same gesture as the stroke, a stroke made with consecutive gazes. The ideal beholder of this exhibition will probably be someone who would follow every line with their desire to gaze at lava speed. This ideal beholder would contemplate the sun drawings for the time of the seasons, until their gaze turned yellow. The gaze of the ideal beholder must burn the paper as much as the sunlight, it must leave the mark of contemplation.

First of all, your works are windows.

Marta Azparren*

*Based on conversations held with M.B.

(About the exhibition Corte de Bosque by Manu Blázquez at Galería Luis Adelantado. September 2024)