

## Anachronistic landscape

Alejandra Icaza (Bilbao, 1966) uses a pictorial language that moves over canvas and paper with an unconsciously cheerful rhythm of light brushstrokes, as if the moment she captures could last for ever. This creativity stems from the spontaneous nature of her subconscious, revealing her dreams and responding to the call of influences and fantasy.

Each of Icaza's paintings is a window that opens to reveal a new composition. She immortalises the moment with curvilinear movements, rejecting straight lines, in a search for natural shapes that are less refined, more elaborate and fun. When looking at these snapshots captured by the artist's eye, a certain perspective reveals technical skill, a certain sense of humour and a repetition of the absurd: characteristics that have become an indivisible part of her lively style. The freshness of the layout of the elements lies in the explosion of shapes and colours that are far from intentional structures. Improvisation is innate and forms a fundamental part of the process, leading to surprise, and the way in which she puts together the composition leads to the spatial expanse of the paint that could extend without limits beyond time and the base itself. The canvas becomes a small fragment that limits the expansion of a vast imaginary world, where small figurative designs float inertly within an abstract wave.

From a formal point of view, the way in which she paints refrains from creating a point of flight. Chaos becomes the protagonist of the composition and emphasizes the absence of a leitmotiv. At the same time, her creativity is governed by a certain responsibility that guides her hand, arising from her first intention and originating in unconscious reasoning to be developed later in the work. Facing a blank canvas is, at first, an impossible task for Alejandra. But later she gives in to the situation and enters a dimension that resolves the dilemma: the moment of rhythm. The artist materializes the sound of music with a Latin American feel, which she has made her own by using personal experiences at dusk on Ipanema beach, instead of drawing on the Cantabrian light of her native Bilbao. At this exact moment, the painting is finished and just one more brushstroke would break the balance of her anarchic composition. The result is a consequence of the idea, the medium and the process itself, each one indivisible in its own complexity. The painting also acts, participates and takes the lead to become the emotional paradise of its creator.

There is a certain similarity in the way she prepares the canvas, which is linked to the tradition of the Spanish painter Hernández Pijuán: a maestro who introduced the incision technique in his paintings on a canvas previously prepared with different layers of oils and superimposed shades. Alejandra, however, mixes wax with oils to achieve an engraving effect in her work, and investigates on a surface that is softer than the fabric itself. This enables her to work on the drawing with an engraver's chisel and to apply the paint with a brush, alternating these tools as she creates her compositions. Unlike the post-war maestro, who based his investigation on the pictorial space, the Basque artist experiments with time. Hours and minutes are reflected in her interpretation of sunlight on the canvas, as the painting transmutes, once more, towards eternity, immortality.

The second individual exhibition of the artist in Valencia alludes to natural landscapes where the sea, intimately linked to her childhood memories in Bilbao and the summers she spent on the Mediterranean island of Menorca, intermingles with rural themes and floral motifs. Shapes are distorted in an attempt to detract from any resemblance with reality, in colours that are also taken out of context and, in my opinion, resemble a

symphony from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, with Latin American tones. The thematic references are linked to the subjective interpretation of shapes that belong to the imaginary world of her daily life, and are arranged on canvas using an innermost personal language.

Several paintings of varying sizes bear the same title, suggesting an idea that could have been similar to her first intention, when a small painting is a detail of the larger one. Although the small compositions of the same title seem to serve the purpose of a sketch, the structure of each painting is unique and exhibited individually, like a new discovery, instead of belonging to a series that tries to provide a context with common meanings, precisely due to the arbitrary way in which the artist develops her creativity.

The use of colour on the canvas combines a chromatic range of similar shades, and unifies the surface from the base, to graduate the rest with shades that fit together. In this way, our gaze focuses on the pictorial experience itself, and the perception of continuity or unlimited painting emphasizes the moment that is represented, continuing fearlessly, anchored in its timeless state. There is no need to neither define nor place it in a period that does not come from the importance of a given moment, of capturing detail within a universe of shapes and colours that, despite its contemporary nature, extends towards all possible boundaries and becomes boundless, like time.

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