

Laura Spivak. Argentina.

Works 2006-2010.

El eco de sus risas.

(The echo of their laughter)

Galería Braga Menéndez. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2010.

The White of the Eye

Freedom is synonymous with sincerity, spontaneity, familiarity, honesty, reliance, simplicity. Relating art to this term does not seem to be a key part of the agenda when talking about contemporary art. There are always more habitual and urgent issues: market, galleries and fairs, biennials and museums, scholarships, internships and competitions, collections and collecting, and so on. However, we may have to reconsider freedom, as well as its relationship with art and life. If the world appears to us as unfeasibility, struggle, hindrance, then freedom should not be taken for granted and obvious, and thus, underestimated.

Tackling new projects is also reviewing those which preceded. Looking back may become a wonderful world to discover since it helps to understand what is difficult to explain and to recognize that which remains. Visualizing my earlier work with a certain perspective, showing dicks, boobs and erections, was a manoeuvre of preservation. It was a means to define my own space establishing it as a paradigm of what is politically incorrect. Because there was a prior notice of infringement, everything became possible in my space. A place where the quest for happiness and pleasure had no boundaries or inhibitions. It was utopian, but existent. Thus, it was real.

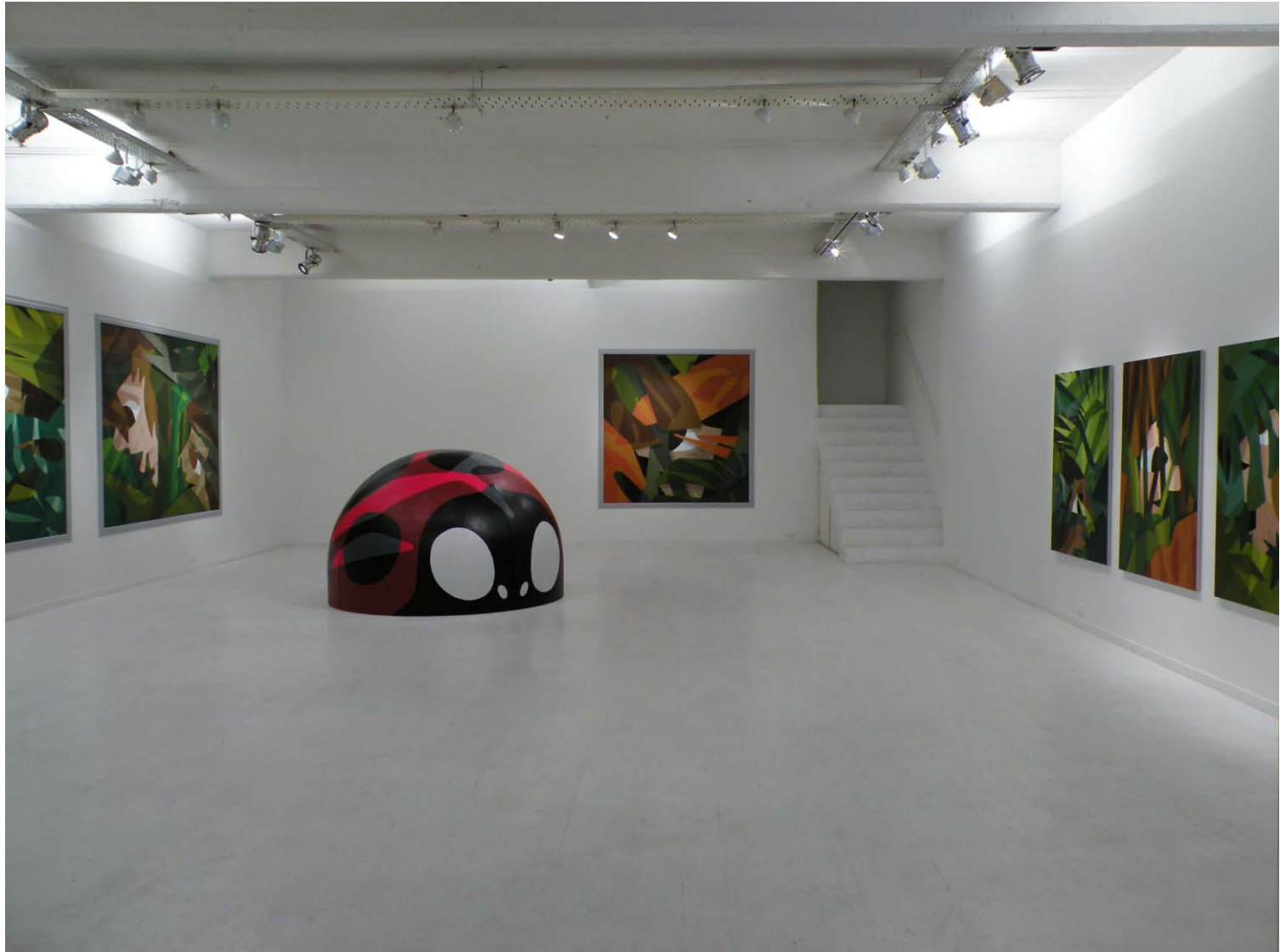
With time, those characters who wandered happily around the gardens of butterflies started to change, but kept their own ideas, their principles. They searched for new strategies, as much connected to desire as before, but with the experience of many roads endured. Now they glide to the thick forest. Cautious, imperceptible, they are ready to be seen, but they do not expose themselves, they do not reveal their nakedness. They are aware of the fact that they do not have to shout to be heard, that it is very easy to lose what was gained. They still keep enjoying with themselves, but this time, searching a friendly, hospitable space. Another utopia that may justify them.

Nature is a refuge for these characters, an overwhelming place, but hidden, built up with shapes, tints and colours that call out for our senses. Light rises up with it, slips out and finds itself lost. A tangled net of shadows blends reality and fantasy. The limit is always vague, faint. Because life appears fuzzy, a blend with equal parts of light and shadow, movement and adjustment; life is built up of simple decisions which should be clear enough to be in favour of freedom.



El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter). 2010.

Laura Spivak.



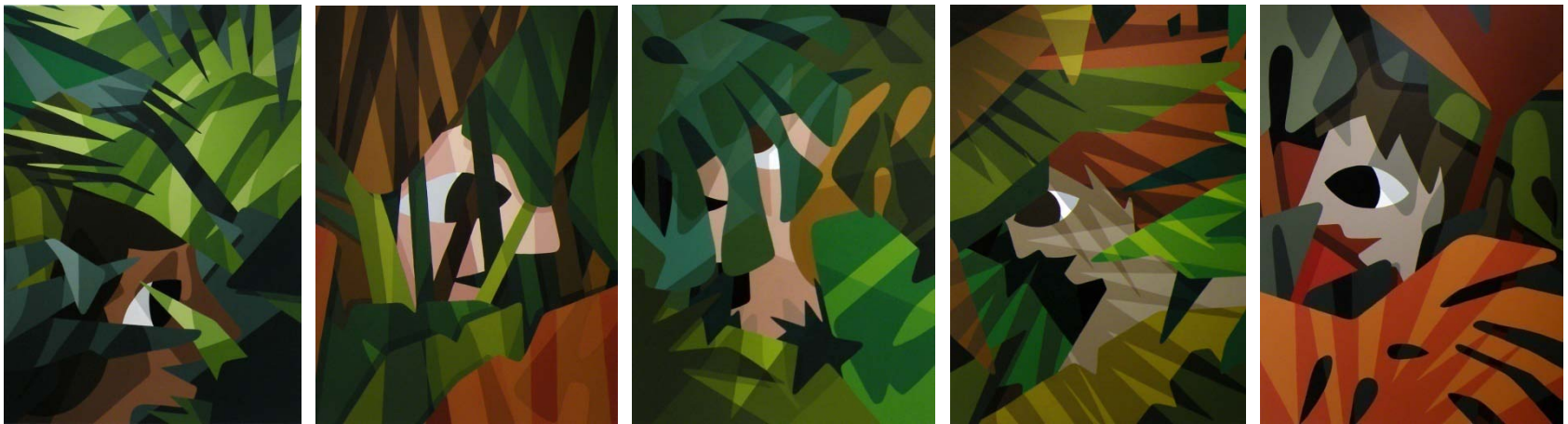
El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter). 2010.



El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter). 2010.



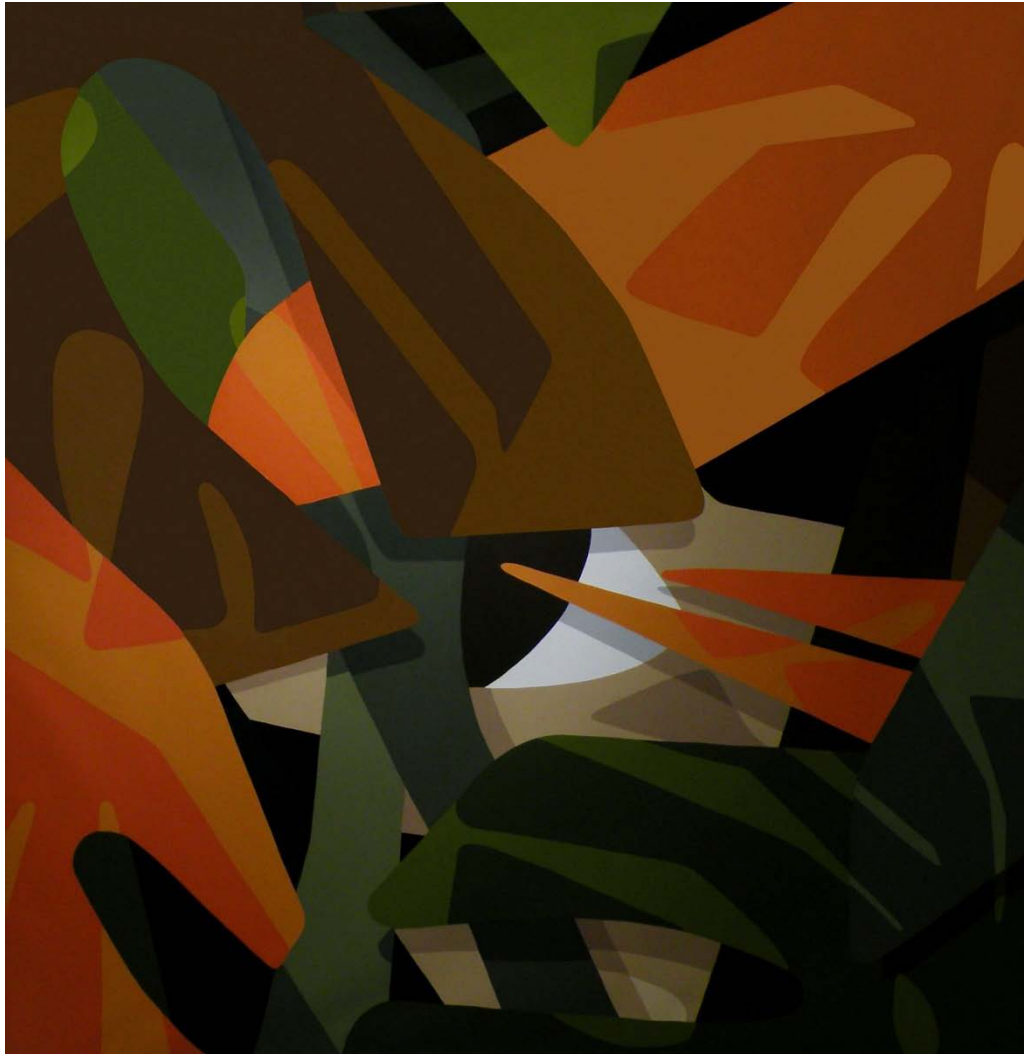
El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter). 2010.



El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter).
Acrylic on paper, marouflage. 100 x 140 cm. each.
2010.



El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter).
Acrylic on canvas. 200 x 250 cm. each.
2010.



El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter).
Acrylic on canvas. 200 x 200 cm.
2010.

Si me dieran a elegir preferiría ser gigante.

(If I could choose, would rather be a giant)

Galería Braga Menéndez. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2008.

The tree, the apple mouth and the dick.

Laura's work is paradigmatically so politically incorrect, so inevitably transgressor, that at the time of presentation, dressing it and giving it a status, many have done what was done before to other serious artists: buy an over performed politically incorrect theoretical frame. Considering that Spivak's transgression is the visibility of sex, they force a clichéd description: the recurrence of morbid, a recurrence which is proper of the institutionalized call for the contemporary. Then, the focus appears in the speech about the sexed children. I affirm the profound transgression in Spivak is not that, and my clear point is that if I felt her work was what the obviousness of a first glance brings to our mind, I would surely be totally indifferent to it. I want to share my feelings because I "cojonudamente" (1) like Laura Spivak's universe, and I dare place my text in an "anti-theory of sexed children" perspective, in so far as she herself allowed me to.

The iconoclastic, the astounding fact in her drawings is that they are men and women, they are not sexed children (which would be easy gruesomeness), they are clearly recognized adults (with hairy pubis, beautiful as hearts, females with boobs, males with huge erections, irrefutable adulthood, glandular maturity). Nevertheless, they show the nonchalance of naked children playing with water in their backyards.

The nakedness in her characters is a utopia, vital, not sexual. It is much more a motto of liberty, equality and fraternity, than the opposite equation of fucking youngsters or adult-like children.

It was probably at the base of the fantasy that the French Revolution proposed that made women switched on to believe that the promises of equal freedom would reach them. Three centuries if political psycho destroyed a great deal of that illusion.

Nowadays, Women's Day is celebrated as well as Secretary's Day. Announcements show with irony allusive texts related to women's power stuck to images of prostitutes or subtle depilated angels. Men do not stay behind demanding their star role, and all the sexual activity is ruled by the procedures handout of porno films where we learn what to do first and how long it should last. Neither joy nor games, only robotics and market logics.

Meanwhile, Spivak's sexualities smile in the simplified landscape where no patriarchal capitalism has made anyone bite the apple yet. Eyes are big, mouths are frank, heterosexual, they enjoy the dialectics of paradise as our parents would have wished for us, something similar to the ideal and impossible to find adulthood of Mafalda and Felipe in Dalan Kifki's plaza (2).

(1) Term used in Spain and adopted here to strengthen the idea of "awesomely, brilliantly, exponentially", but with a less formal meaning. (2) Mafalda and Felipe are characters of the most famous Argentinean comic by Quino; Dalan Kifki is the name of a famous book written by late and most famous writer of Argentinean children's literature, .María Elena Walsh



Si me dieran a elegir preferiría ser gigante.
(If I could choose, would rather be a giant)
Wood. 4 x 6 mts. 2008.



Si me dieran a elegir preferiría ser gigante.
(If I could choose, would rather be a giant)
Wood. 4 x 6 mts.
2008.

And they are Argentinean, Spivak peculiarly achieves the connotation of a gaucho intelligence in them, that which nobody has been able to take away from us. Her children are not Rugrats, they are from Buenos Aires ("porteños"), they are native, and we can see Cortázar in them, Horacio Quiroga, Fontanarrosa's (3) humour, and the sexuality of the camp and the fire of the vanished left.

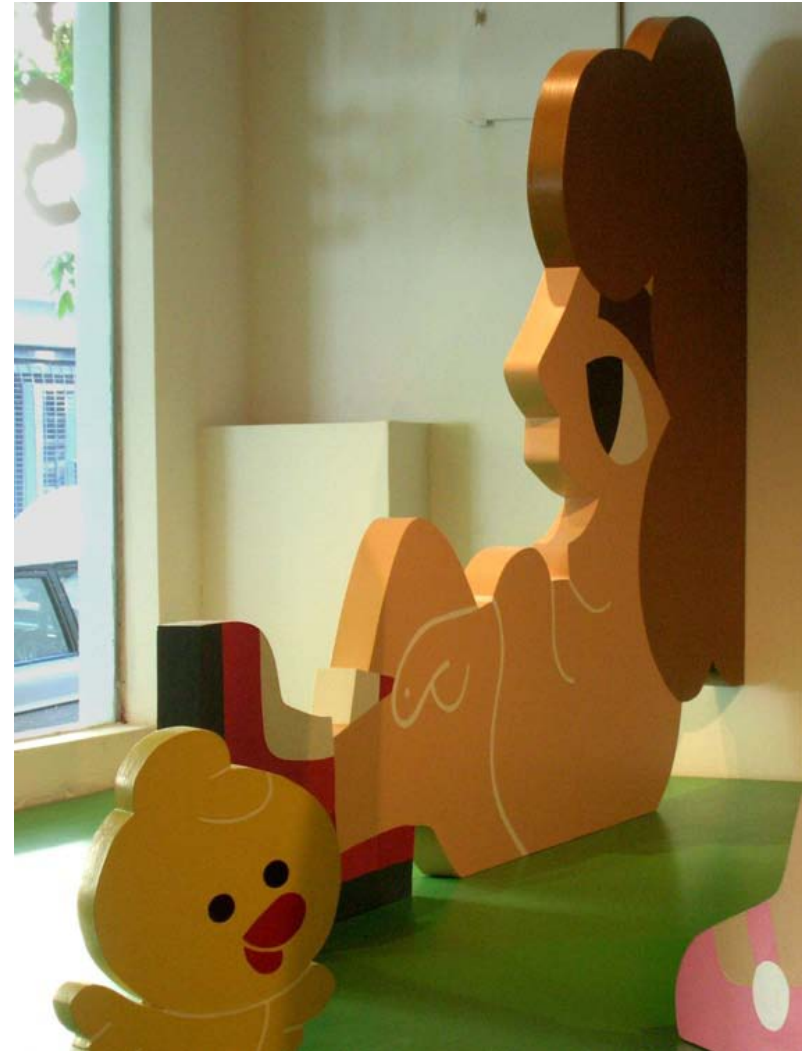
It's been years since I have undressed at ease in front of someone. I am positive of the fact that almost no woman lives her nudity without being aware of her genitality, these organs have long stopped to be in a symbolic parity. Surgeries further polarize the textural distance between the intimacy of the fragile skin and the skin in a static turgor and prosthetic tension. The breasts of older women work socially while the relaxed folds of the knees hide their tenderness behind tailored beige pants.

I made a survey once, and I did not find one adult woman who could say she was able to run in the midday light from the line of the canvas up to the waterline on the beach, having her husband sitting in a straw-woven chair behind her, without at least being minimally aware of the cataclysm of jellies she could be performing to the eyes of the spectator.

This is an unknown situation for the absolute happiness of Spivak's buddies. They are "pre-menemists" (4), they are para-postmodern characters, they are what we were not or could sometimes be when by ourselves. They are no hair highlight adults. The bodies of these impossible adults share with the children the level of a compact cohesion of parts. Dicks are dicks, not cocks or penises. Neither an hygienic post mortem attitude, nor night eroticism. It is a party of intimate simplicity. It is an innocent encounter and joy of life, they move, they relax, they fling themselves, they laugh, they laugh until they cry, they chat, they tell things to each other, and they don't care a damn about us, as it corresponds to a real love story. Among the weeds and in the kitchen, the lovers are friends or the friends are lovers. In any case, they do not fear, there is no paranoia in them, there is no risk. This is an remarkably intricate arrangement of synthetic illustrations without a textual reference which, in this new XL format, bets for the design as never before. Texture is not tempted with details, it resembles a chocolate sweet, stimulating our taste, our palatability and fantasy, and even our smell; texture is like a sweet without coating or candied cherries, the solid surfaces are welded together forming a compact of colours which could be sliced like butter, like the deep consistency of joy in Spivak's paradise were molecularly made up of the pigment spirit.

Florencia Braga Menéndez.

(3) Cortázar, Quiroga and Fontanarrosa are some of the most representative writers in Argentinean literature. (4) It refers to the time before the tenure of President Menem (1989-1999).



Si me dieran a elegir preferiría ser gigante (If I could choose, would rather be a giant). Wood. 4 x 6 mts. 2008.

Enanos de jardín.

(Garden dwarfs)

Galería Appetite. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2007.



Enanos de jardín (Garden dwarfs).
Expanded polystyrene sculptures, tv and animations, objects. 6 x 8 mts.
2007.

Conquest is historically associated to appropriation, to the sum and accumulation of territories, knowledge, supporters. But, when our intention is the conquest of inner spaces, it may frequently refer to giving up and abandoning part of what we had. Conquest sometimes involves having less than before, clearing up the unessential to find behind that which is simple. It's long since Laura Spivak's work does not show any labelling. The text has disappeared, and the provoking dimension of her paintings has disappeared with it. The instant humour that led our observation of her images gave way to a pleasant atmosphere where there is nothing to understand, it is only observation. Former humour has been transferred into pleasure.

If the artist's engagement with eroticism and sexuality could make us suspicious of her discourse about pleasure, this installation brings us closer to live that experience.

It happens because the artwork moves back some steps in the pyramid of visual language and comes closer to the most basic levels of perception: volume and movement. She chooses a simpler perception field, less intellectual, which hooks up faster with our emotions. It gives one step forward towards us, or better: she invites us to go deep into that garden which we could only see through a window until now, she invites us to try how that feels before it was a story. By then, we do not feel our clothes. We read with our skin.

Now and again, guessing the mood of an artwork is a great challenge. Can the artist decide about it? Is that which the artist feels while working?

I imagine Laura in her garden, with the AM radio spitting her Sunday mantra, with her dog lying in the sun while she finishes the second eyebrow in her dwarf. At times, the radio loses the signal and there is silence. Then, the ocean wind may be felt blending with the hound's dreams and she risks: "life is much more important than art".

Et Basualdo



Enanos de jardín (Garden dwarfs).
Expanded polystyrene sculptures, tv and animations, objects. 6 x 8 mts.
2007.



Enanos de jardín (Garden dwarfs).
Expanded polystyrene sculptures, tv and animations, objects. 6 x 8 mts.
2007.

El jardín de las mariposas (The butterflies garden).

Museo de Antioquía. Medellín, Colombia. 2006.

La fuente de los deseos (The wish fountain).

Galería Agustina del Campo. Buenos Aires, Argentina. 2006.

Las malas palabras (Bad words).

Baltar Contemporáneo. Mar del Plata, Argentina. 2005.

About ice creams, fountains and utopias, a particular version of Paradise.

Literalism is one of the first findings in relation to poetry: a gesture that reveals the language in its beauty and its absurdity. Children are used to experimenting with this mechanism of repeating a word many times until it becomes a lost sound, empty of sense, extraterrestrial.

Laura Spivak does these exercises, but answers herself with images. This is less frequent. And, as the damsel locked up in her small room passing a coded message in the form of a lace handkerchief, her work is disguised in something else, it transvestites in nudity. Skin here and skin there, little and incomplete clothing, the more absurd as hats, boots, canes abound. The characters in her paintings run happily next to us, we see them sideways, we always see their profiles. It is undoubtedly a stage. Except that in this case, unlike a peep-show, this voyeurism cannot be experienced in privacy: we find ourselves looking, willing it or not, and the second feeling after the first glance is thinking that someone sees us watching.

In order to hide that nudity, the scenography comforts us with palm trees, trees with thick climbing plants, plaza seats, humanized birds, balloons, pets, candy, and fresh fountains.

Nevertheless, there are some camouflaged tensions under that serene appearance. People are running and playing, but movements seem static. The characters have fun like children, but they are adults (we know that through their beads, pubic hair, erections, and big boobs). The painting in this series means to be flat, but it has a rough surface, full of signs. But from a distance they seem engravings... But closely... But...

It is possible that these small dislocations, which pass through and show a somehow elusive place, may indicate the point where the eroticism of this artwork lies.



From de series Si me dieran a elegir preferiría ser gigante.
(If I could choose, would rather be a giant)
Acrylic on cardboard. 60 x 80 cm. 2008.



Edilson. From the series El jardín de las mariposas.
(The butterflies garden)
Acrylic on paper. 100 x 70 cm. 2006.

Unquestionably, there has also been a sensorial pleasure in “doing” this. The painting gives testimony of that sensuality: the brush touches with fondness, the colour covers the skin of the paper with big licks, and now, not even the words were left; those words that still anchored the first images, the series of paintings based in flattering comments, dirty words and erotic proverbs. The needle, that precision instrument, also disappeared. Everything became gigantic and fell silent.

It needs courage to make such a journey, to watch in silence.
How is the damsel built up? With humour. That is her horse, her spear and her shield.

(False modesty is a mask. If we change a letter, something rotten appears (1). The scene starts to rot away. That’s how humour works; it is the destitution of all solemnity, knocking the face out of position, retracing the common place of a stereotype. *La palabra puede ser erótica bajo dos condiciones opuestas, ambas excesivas: si es repetida hasta el cansancio o, por el contrario, si es inesperada, succulenta por su novedad (...). El estereotipo es la palabra repetida fuera de toda magia, de todo entusiasmo.*) (2)

This is ultimately a very rare model of hedonism in which dichotomies become a universe of multiples, mixtures, mixed races, shades, and combinations. A pleasant landscape, of infinite ice creams, inhabited by living beings who do not ask for permission nor need to lie. Actions are performed with joy, there’s no rush, no hunger, no desperation. The scene is quite comparable to a Paradise, not quite biblical, a bit heretic perhaps, but undeniably the one in which many of us would like to live.

Leticia El Halli Obeid

(1) False modesty is “pudor” in Spanish. Something rotten is “pudro”. Here the writer plays with words and letters to reach the sense of this sentence

(2) “Eroticism may be in words under two opposite conditions, both excessive: if it is repeated ad-nauseam or, on the contrary, if it is unexpected, succulent by its novelty (...). The stereotype is the word repeated, apart from all magic, all enthusiasm”.

In: BARTHES, Roland, *El placer del texto*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2003. p. 68-69.



Luiz. Mural. 6 x 10 mts. 2007.



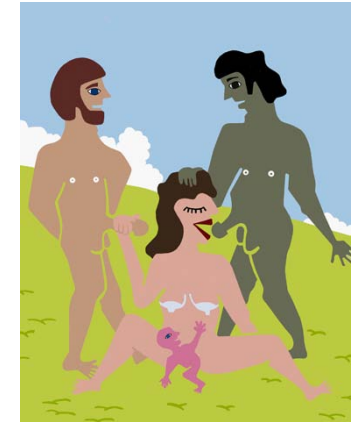
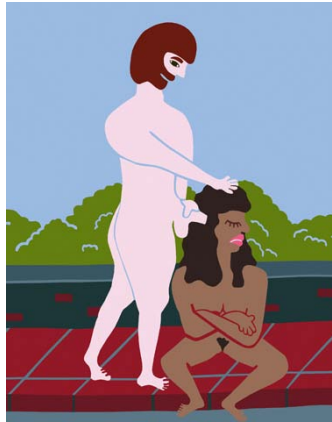
El jardín de las mariposas (The butterflies garden).
Lea, Chico, Luiz, Amaro, Antonio, Adonia, Margarida, Milton, Ida Lina, Tomás y Renata.
Acrylic on paper. 100 x 70 cm. each. 2006.



Antonio. Comic. 29,5 x 53 cm. 2007.



La fuente de los deseos (The wish fountain). Acrylic on paper. 100 x 130 cm. each. 2006.



Las malas palabras (Bad words).
Pajera, Pendejo de mierda, Malcojida, Chupame un huevo y La puta que te parió.
Acrylic on paper. 28 x 30 cm. each. 2006.

Cv. Laura Spivak.

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I began my art studies in 1994 at Martín Malharro School in Mar del Plata, Argentina, where I was born in 1976. Since 1999, I have been living in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I obtained fellowships from the Fondo Nacional de las Artes, Fundación Antorchas, Secretaría de Cultura de Presidencia de la Nación and Fondo Metropolitano de la Artes. I participated in several national exhibitions.

I have worked in the Centro Cultural Borges in project selection, managing and coordination of Contemporáneo C.C. Borges program (2004-2007) and was in charge of the curatorship coordination of art spaces in the Centro Cultural de España en Buenos Aires (2008-2010). www.ccborges.org.ar / www.cceba.org.ar.

Solo exhibitions.

2010. *El eco de sus risas (The echo of their laughter)*. Galería Braga Menéndez. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2008. *Si pudiera elegir, me gustaría ser gigante (If I could choose, would rather be a giant)*.

Galería Braga Menéndez. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2007. *Enanos de jardín (Garden dwarfs)*. Galería Appetite. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2006. *La fuente de los deseos (The wish fountain)*. Galería Agustina del Campo. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *El jardín de las mariposas (Butterflies garden)*. Museo de la Universidad de Antioquia. Medellín, Colombia. *Dijo la doncella con su habitual timidez (The damsel said with her usual shyness)*. Centro Cultural de España en Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2005. *Dijo la doncella con su habitual timidez (The damsel said with her usual shyness)*. Espacio Baltar Contemporáneo. Mar del Plata, Argentina. *Y del susto salió corriendo (And of the fright, they left running)*. Espacio Casa 13. Córdoba, Argentina.

2004. *Y del susto salió corriendo (And of the fright, they left running)*. Espacio La Tribu. Buenos Aires, Argentina / 2º Conart, Bienal de Arte Contemporáneo.

Cochabamba, Bolivia / Galería Oxígeno. Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

2002. *Contar el Sur (Telling the South)*. Museu da Gravura. Curitiba, Brasil

2001. *Contar el Sur (Telling the South)*. Espacio Ojo al País, Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2000. *Tejiendo dibujos (Knitting drawings)*. Centro Cultural Villa Victoria. Mar del Plata, Argentina.

1999. *Contar el Sur (Telling the South)*. Gráfica Contemporánea. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Group exhibitions.

2010. *¿Cómo es tu radio?* Centro Cultural Rojas. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2009. *I van rosado*. Rosario, Argentina.

2007. *Máquinas de tiempo*. Centro Cultural Nordeste. Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina. *Latido terrícola*. Fundación Estudio 13. Gral. Roca, Río Negro, Argentina.

2006. *Neologismo Encarnado*. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Sobre Textos*. Galería Isidro Miranda. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2005. *Traffic*. Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Chateau Carreras. Córdoba, Argentina. *Ego Trip*. Galería Appetite. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2004. *Proyect Hall*. Museo Eduardo Sívori. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Proyecto cubo*. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2003. *El juguete*. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *La extensión del grabado*. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2002. *Pulsar*. Centro Cultural Borges. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2001. *Vamos por partes*. Centro Cultural Recoleta. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2000. *Luz Flexible*. Museo de Arte López Claro. Azul, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1999. *Luz Flexible*. Museo Nacional de Grabado, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Casa de la Cultura, Gral. Roca, Río Negro, Argentina.

Contest and awards.

2010. *Salón Nacional de Pintura Banco Nación 2010*. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2009. *Bienal Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo de Bahía Blanca*. Argentina.

2006. *Premio Platt*. Galería Isidro Miranda. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2005. *Third award. Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Textil*. Palais de Glace. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2004. *IV Bienal ArteBA de Gráfica*. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2002. *III Bienal ArteBA de Gráfica*. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2001. *XLV Salón de Artes Plásticas Manuel Belgrano. Grabado*. Museo Eduardo Sívori. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Mención. XC Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas.*

Grabado. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *IV Bienal Nacional de Grabado en Relieve. Pequeño formato. XYLON*. Museo Nacional Grabado. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

2000. *IV Salón Municipal de Grabado*. Río Gallegos, Argentina. *Primer Mención. XXV Salón Municipal de Artes Plásticas de Avellaneda*. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *XLIV Salón de Artes Plásticas Manuel Belgrano. Grabado*. Museo Eduardo Sívori. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *LXXXIX Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Grabado*. Palais de Glace. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1999. *Primer Mención. III Bienal Nacional de Grabado en Pequeño Formato. XYLON*. Museo Nacional de Grabado. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *LXXXVIII Salón Nacional de Artes Plásticas. Grabado*. Buenos Aires, Argentina. *XLIII Salón de Artes Plásticas Manuel Belgrano. Grabado*. Museo Eduardo Sívori Buenos Aires, Argentina. *II Salón Nacional de Salta. Grabado*. Salta, Argentina.

1998. *2ª Bienal Nacional de Arte Joven. Pintura*. C. Cultural Auditorium. Mar del Plata.