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Visit to Fabiola Torres-Alzaga's studio

Accepting deceit is the price of experiencing illusion

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"Nothing is true. All might be."
Edmond Jabès. *The Book of Resemblances*.

Magic lies beyond morality. Magic seeks not truth but the logic of creating an experience that expands that which we call real. True and false are not opposites but front and back of the same card. A certain degree of voluntary ignorance is required for magic to exist. Fascination is the reward.

Fabiola Torres-Alzaga arranges external reality in a system of invention that creates a space calculated to exist only as a reflection. The illusion is built within the empty space of the mirror's surface –space without space. She does not attempt to show what is there but what could be. To produce appearances, she uses pre-modern techniques: cabinetmaking,

calculated edition of reflections, precise mirror cutting, and playing with the transparency and opacity of materials. The non-machinic dimension of the trick operates as a reminder of the ways in which we edit time in the mind, while recreating the pleasure of disorientation.

When we recognize the limits of perception and the possibility to modify the effects of reality without relying heavily on electronic,

mechanical or cybernetic technology, we may realize that surprise, within our own scale and limits, has boundless dimensions. Blinking at different speeds is all it takes to disrupt our perception of time and space as an unbroken continuum. When uncertainty is constructed, some elements are concealed. This concealment increases the pleasure of surrendering to deception.

Blinking and winking: exceptional intervals for magic and art.

To show and to hide, to reproduce and to fragment, to multiply and to suppress: glossary of mirror verbs to edit mind projections.

Fabiola Torres-Alzaga's work produces counter-spaces -which Foucault called heterotopias- of one's own body, of objects and of space- which we normally consider stable.



The location of one's body: Portable-infinities

The first vanishing trick is, at least in my memory, to cover your own head: you disappear along with the world. Children have a large repertoire of strategies to disappear and to feel disoriented: covering each other's eyes, hiding their heads behind rows of clothes, spinning around until they feel dizzy, seeking the pleasure of instability. *Portable-infinities*

are fold-out structures that operate as helmet-prostheses that produce imbalance and spatial uncertainty, reproducing the dizziness, fascination and terror of those children's games. Putting one of the portable-infinities on your head is like entering a portable mirror scenography where your own reflection is multiplied and fragmented, erasing the space that surrounds the subject immersed in this kaleidoscopic and self-absorbed universe.



The location of objects: booths and vitrines

All artwork belonging to the *El Problema de lo Real* (*The problem with the real*) series has the anthropomorphic scale of furniture. But far from respecting their status of staticity, utility

or containment, the pieces create a different space and temporality that alters the comfort of the perceptions we are used to. As they set traps for the eyes, booths cause disorientation.

Magic happens without the magicians' presence, without the need for hypnosis nor prologues to the event. The trick is activated by the spectators when they move around the objects, and its time can go forwards or backwards at their will. You tilt your head while looking at a vitrine and the card spread changes. Chance is excluded from this space of illusion. There is no drama but precision. Surprise, however, dispels the coldness of calculation.

A small vitrine holds a preserved butterfly inside. Gestures are gone from the butterfly's image. A frozen flash that turns the butterfly into a sign is all that remains. I take a step forward and the butterfly disappears before my eyes without having flapped its wings.

Optical booths fragment and multiply space kaleidoscopically in the emptiness of mirrors. Apparent spaces are juxtaposed on the reflecting surfaces, making space explode in an infinite optical dance. A whole world, one that disturbs our familiarity with the objects in the room, unfolds.

There is no linear path through Fabiola Torres-Alzaga's work. It keeps us on our feet, so as not to take for granted any information about what we perceive. Contrary to the disenchantment of minimalism, what you see is not what you get.



Location and movement in space.

In the maze titled *The Space in the Middle*, the spectators' presence and movements are part of the artwork. As they move around the space, the viewers' reflections change in sharpness and blurriness. Mirrors function as the walls of the maze and at the same time as semi-reflective and semi-opaque panels that synthesize different locations in a reflection, so that shapes physically distant from each other appear on the same surface. Bodies going through that space are bodily presences in a specific point of the maze and ghostly shadows in another at the same time. Meeting another presence is only possible as

A world that disturbs our familiarity with objects and spaces unfolds in Torres-Alzaga's work. It is irrelevant if something is true or false, what matters is your stance facing reality. With no message, no morals,

an illusion in the mirror (When is meeting others not so?), an effect of unfolding and detouring. Fabiola Torres-Alzaga points out her interest in the language of cinema, which cuts and edits time and space on the screen. But her interest makes no use of the camera or the machine: cuts and edits are created with the spatial deployment of modules that frame reflective materials, with the play of light and shadows and the movement of the viewer. We make the previous agreement with illusion because we are promised the transformation of a magical experience. Like a leap of faith with no belief involved.

and no specific narrative, the artist's work as a whole reminds us of access to magic and the power of mystery, and of the possibility to build time and space, casting light on the forgotten square of art's autonomy.

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