

**Simón Arrebola, *With good intentions***

The paroemia that reads “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”, which was attributed by Francis de Sales to another French saint: Bernard of Clairvaux, refers both to the purposes that remain as such, and to the good intentions that without intending it, they cause harm. “Of good intentions” is the plastic allegory in which Simón Arrebola once again approaches the social fairs of morality, but now perhaps making more evident the civil mechanisms that divert or annul laudable pretensions.

In most of the works that make up this exhibition, the characters become entwined or cling to these gears, slide and rush from their structures, or flee by crossing their barriers. These are the possible human actions within landscapes of the world in which open nature is now seen, with its regulated trees, betrayed by the saturation of managed leisure and condemned to be a spectator and shelter of that inauthentic life of the community, which seems to have turned the signs of its freedom into an obligation. Nature is interpreted by the park and the natural park by the amusement park.

The artist does not offer, however, a moral perspective, but rather an attitude of estrangement towards such human actions, towards such endeavors for heights, flight and speed –Benjamin thought that, due to this desire for speed experienced as relief, Amusement parks were a “previous form of sanatoriums.” Arrebola does not apply the traditional forms of satire, nor the devastating aspect of irony; with his graphic schematism, with his figures of incipient geometry and his constructive frameworks, he presents us in a serene way the unthinkable stubbornness of behaviours.

The entire tradition of collective representations must therefore be seen with that absurd stubbornness of behavior that in his painting takes the form of a dispersion of contorted figures. Thus, the staging of the sacramental autos is now contradicted by the tenacity of some bizarre actions, and the mania and hubris of the myths of Icarus, Daedalus, Ganymede or Phaethon reduced to trivial pursuits, also removed from work and activities, tests of classic heroes.

Amusement parks have a singular character as licenses that the objectifying reality of the social allows itself to produce bubbles of unreality in which to see itself reflected, now with the playful deformation of those ephemeral spheres. But such parables inevitably lead us to a paradoxical revelation: the reality they stylize is already a fair in itself. Therefore, when the artistic action takes on the allegorical character of these

fictional spaces, it happens that the satirical and elusive allegory is reduplicated: from Hogarth's symbolic carousel in the ironic engraving *The South Sea Scheme* (1721), to *Dismaland* (2015), by Banksy, which has the collaboration of many other critical artists, through the artistic amusement park *Luna Luna* (1987), conceived by André Heller (with pieces by Dalí, Hockney, Haring, etc.) and which the rapper Drake finishes to recover.

*Good Intentions* does not contain the acidic gesture of these sarcastic fables, rather it provides a tone of integrity, unusual in critical speeches but customary in the art of Simón Arrebola. With their gradients of tones, the skies calmly reflect that transcendental air – metaphysical, because abstract, it is often said – of the skies of Agnes Pelton or the Japanese print, and the Sun appears with the same phlegmatic symbolism of medieval representations. The disorders of this distracted humanity are somewhat belied by the cleanliness of the drawing and by a cutout of the figures that brings the volume to an ideal flatness. It makes us think of that Western tradition of the visual arts, which goes from Giotto to Balthus, capable of making the expression of affection compatible with a certain disaffected point of view.

Also the colour – Arrebola has enlivened his range, approaching that of artists like Jules de Balincourt – seems to celebrate rather than negatively judge the crazy catalog of behaviors that are observed. And the same can be said of the careful and happy dedication to the construction of complex ferris wheels, merry-go-rounds and other structures of playful architecture, reminiscent of the complex work of the utopian models of Bodys Isek Kingelez. In this way Arrebola reminds us that art does not need to adopt the forms of criticism to highlight the adverse nature of what is presented and that, precisely, in contrast to the meticulousness of the form, the senseless is evident.

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