

FROM PAINTING IN THE AIR, SPEAKING TO EMPTINESS

by LELIA DRIBEN

“And painting shall be obliged to set aside what is dispensable: the representation” says Jorge Juanes in a text about Beatriz Ezban’s work. This author analyzes in other terms, the way in which the artist’s production is inserted in the whole layers that make the visual forms’ history point out to what is unavoidable: its link with the impressionism. The same catalog contains another prologue, written by Ernesto Guzmán.

Facing both readings, a third approach to Ezban’s aesthetic experience produces the idea of certain enjambment: if her painting lies on that consciousness of artistic historic knowledge, this new approach intent risks to be inserted in a kind of rewriting of such texts. There we have the analogy between the two processes: the language that links and builds the painting and the writing that reflects on it. And what probably occurs is something that seems to be a specific condition to both tasks, painting and writing: a constant rewriting – in the painting’s material and the writing’s material- just as if that writing (and rewriting) would comprise unavoidable marks: full of our traces, our names, our pulse deposited on the internal and external vision, the painting’s body and the writing’s body take to the swinging inflection of that different signature, always displaced and nevertheless, always present: that of our own bodies.

If the task is then rewriting us incessantly, this kind of corporeity is still displaced towards the painting’s center and has known –during Beatriz Ezban’s trajectory- several instances. Around 1990, the completely yellow surfaces abounded. That is, the color was established as an excluded nucleus from the image; however, another element was sharing such protagonism: the material paint brushing, enunciating and connotative just to “tell” the public that what they were seeing, was not another thing but painting. Later on, the canvases where the green prevailed –until very short time- and where the stroke, the material thickness and the chromatic diversity unchain a reflection in situ on the discovering of impressionists and post-impressionists. But there is more about these landscape remembrances, an added value that exceeds the election of abstract as a pertaining zone: Beatriz Ezban realizes a trimming in nature’s vision so as to proceed to fragmentation as constitutive and symbolic spring of

dissolvent capacity, memory disoperation. In such context, the painting comes from a series of intermediations that go from the observation to the memory of what was observed, from that evoking to its stumped persistence in the retina, and from that retrospective fragile visualization to the concrete consistence of what is painted. In sum, a temporal sequence that the image once built, completes and eliminates at the same time, converting it again to the painting's unique time and absolute present. That is the operation opened by the fragmentation. And starting from it, the painting emerges as a field ruled by its own rules which attire several shades: it can variegate in shapeless paintbrushes or distend itself in calm and diagonal brush strokes; stretch its thickness or allow the subtle waving of insinuated plans. It has to do, in sum, with a field full of flotation and soft mutations, which undulates and soothes, flashes brilliantly in soft tones and darkens; very little gloomy and a gruff and aggressive density use to win in some paintings.

We will never know why an artist needs to keep during a specified time, soft changes in the same image. These are the enigmas of a practice which only certainty is what it concentrates itself on its strict vision which, at the same time, "shoots" other enigmas. *Shoot!*, which translation to Spanish is *dispara*, is the title of this exhibition which second works' section, abandons the well strengthened line screen and changes the elements organization towards an opening, literally speaking. Through a lighter and washed paint application, there is a significance of the surface that highly dimensions its space capacity. On the other hand, those small and superposed paintbrushes – those of former step- that kind of arch writing that crossed over a clogged field, are substituted by big and thick dark lines in actual paintings.

Those long stripes are intercepted, put farther away, approach and plow through the space in different directions: vertically, diagonally and horizontally; and producing contrasts between fond and form. But, what forms are we talking about? There are no forms but another substitute mechanism, precisely because stripes here allow the possibility to become forms and figures, emerge just as their clues, thus making another conformation of pictorial arch writing viable. A good example is in a painting that works in a transition mood: some curved lines outline some delicate visceral in it, just as if it were the veil, secret lean of a human figure.

The exposition includes a triptych titled *Stark* (straight, rigid) which synonym *bleak* means "something exposed to wind and cold". Despite of its bold abstraction, this work

allows analogies with a desolated, calm and abysmal landscape, all this within a worrying simultaneity. A simultaneity that, in this and other paintings of the last collection, touches, rubs, a border, an edge, up in the air, in suspense. Beatriz Ezban, the painter who hardly two months earlier filled completely her canvas without leaving any glimmer, presses now the other side of the pendulum: she searches, she drills the space, she shows her nudity; in sum, she puts her painting on the fluctuating crossing line between attraction and horror to emptiness.

THE PAINTING LIVES DYING

by Benjamín Mayer Foulkes

We usually suppose that expositions are about a Work or, at least, about works. But isn't it that what is exposed is just the evidence of a break?; the rest of some logic that, when bumping into its own limits, has finished to tear off in bets for impossible renewed future? This, at least, is what the present exhibition suggests, which invites us to drill the traces of a deep break, still fresh, that has taken place along the pictorial journey. How to understand such break? In what terms is it present? How to approach what we are facing? As it happens with all events in painting, break singularity that we have to attest, makes sense just against that curtain that is the challenge and impulse of all painting, namely the radical impossibility of pictorial articulation. If consistence in figurative expression is the impossibility in itself to access to absolute referring, the abstract expression, on the other hand, consists on a not less unsuccessful attempt to put the painting operation itself visible beyond any representation wish (I say not less unsuccessful because this expression is unable to consume itself without falling in the trap of changing the painting itself in a *representation*). Anyway, mimetic or not, painting is desired precisely because it is impossible. This is the great curtain that allows us to understand what is common between *broken* of the break here exposed, and the *breaker* of unpublished bets arisen from it. On the one hand, if such *broken* and such *breaker* in this sample do nothing but watch themselves, by the other hand they fraternize when talking about alternative answers to the riddle of last impossibility of painting.

Ezban originally chose the figure and form disintegration, until getting more recently to the extreme of eliminating lines and facing the white canvas with the only mood to paintbrush colors. (Not any mood if we consider that before texture, and of course, before form, the color acts as the possibility itself of graphic distinction, that is as the matrix itself of (im)possibility of pictorial articulation). And this path, running at moments the proper risks of a chimerical search for painting and chromatic scent, finally came to a kind of automatism that makes us think. But before talking about such automatism, we should highlight that this path was rich during long time, as we can appreciate in derived works of that intense second vision leaded by Ezban from impressionism and post-impressionism canvas that J. Juanes accurately characterized as "metapainting" (effectively, it has to do with an intervention *in* the painting *from* the painting itself) and whose later samples can still be appreciated here. And talking about the said automatism, it's simply paradoxical that this be precisely the final destiny that what was in a beginning a clear impulse to avoid any reiteration, not only showed in the way of forms and figures, but also as simple lines, this much more radically. It would seem that such "metapainting" finally was implied with what it pretended to unmark itself. Just as if a return of repressed figurative (or protofigurative) would happen, return that we can realize if we remind that, far from searching a break with realist seduction, impressionist people wished to represent the same reality of ocular "impressions"; that is that despite of its opening to abstraction, impressionism was essentially figurative. Then an irony of a "metapainting" that, in spite of considering itself as such, it was finally discovered as another pictorial impossible articulation.

Unusually, the *breaker* of this exhibited break appears now, for a moment, under the hilarious appearance of the line, that ground for all representation possibility, for all form and all mimesis. The line, with all its implications, seems to have "come back". Has our painter retired? Has she been overtaken by a classicist regression episode? Do we see ourselves an artist's new defeat by that tyranny ruin which is the painting history? Not at my eyes. Because if Ezban's "metapainting" was formerly captured by certain melancholy of plain representation, now the lines of her canvas are plainly displayed before the impotence to articulate. Differently with the classic Line, these "lines" figure only despite themselves. They doubt, they are defined only to better draw its own caducity, without heroism, without show, without any "meta" prestige. The canvases take these "lines" upon themselves as they also take their illusions.

Against what it would seem, painting is another way of consigning the painting impossibility. That is, the wish to paint. Because painting lives dying. Because the same canvas, the great scenario's curtain is the impossibility itself of pictorial articulation. Because, I insist, painting lives dying.

Beatriz Ezban's Interior Landscapes

by Vicente Quirarte

In a Moby Dick's chapter, Herman Melville sets a parallel line between the sea and the meadow: from the highest point of the mast forest, and when seeing only sky and water, the sailor feels taken to those plains where nothing interrupts the green symphony, while the earth man who enters the marine kingdom evokes inevitably his domestic domain when his spirit melts with the greatest extension on the planet.

Such deliberate ambiguity, distinctive sign of one of the founding works of our modernity, is showed in Beatriz Ezban's paintings. Nothing is what it seems, but everything may be read in this language where color creates the most daring and demanding realities. Her adventure has not been other than arts, since painting's autonomy was decreed in front of a realism inheriting the manufacturing fever of industrial revolution.

An invisible platform throbs under each one of her paintings. Her passion changes to atmospheres where chances are so controlled that we admire her paintings exactly as a striped notebook hypnotizes us, where notes are written to set its own choreography. Along her work, Beatriz Ezban has talked with teachers that, just as her, have showed that landscape, taken to canvas, should be a pictorial fact before nothing. Sister, in an instant, of Joaquín Clausell –just to refer her to our Mexican domicile--, knew how to get, as the last Monet, to that lightning that allowed him understand that painting's soul resides in color and it demands, soon or later, its autonomous existence. From Delacroix's loosen paintbrushes to tortures to which Van

Gogh submitted yellow colors; from Kandinsky's concentrated movement to monochromatic explorations of present time, Beatriz Ezban has established her own syntaxes, her equivalences' personal system.

Her elder people's inheritance, who knew about the mystic and aesthetic experience about melting sand and sky in the desert, was decisive in her encounter with Icelandic nature – also inopportune and subjugator. From there, the so marked contrast of her canvases, we seem to go through a desert which shows her kingdom's different shades. There is a sea, in others, that rebels against its horizontal condition to express its wave condition that was formerly a stormy sky and tomorrow will wish to be a loosen rain. Her flowers are flames, open hearts, fruits. Fragmentary reading of the universe: the reality dislocates but comes back to its riverbed, thanks to the eyesight watch and its crystallization in the painting.

Jorge Cuesta, one of our critics and more demanding creators –for every creative work is also a critic work--, sometimes wished the landscape to stop being a soul state to become a coordinates' system. Of course he was referring to that dangerous and marvelous moment when the painting becomes its own subject and when the artist fights against purity and sterility. Beatriz Ezban has learned how to walk a step forth, without falling in the abyss. On the other hand, she gives us wings and gills, to be a fish in the air and a bird in the water. Finally, she gives us weapons for the landscape to breathe through the eyes and the soul to spread in the contemplation of the micro cosmos, where, as said William Blake in his poem, eternity holds in the hand's palm.

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