

# Every story is possible now

EL PUENTE DE LA VISIÓN

2 October, 2010 – 10 December, 2010: MAS, Santander.

**Artists:** Alexandra Aguiar, Ruth Gómez, Fernando Gutiérrez, Raúl Hevia, Moisés Mahiques and Tilo Schulz

**Curators:** Salvador Carretero Rebés and Belén Poole Quintana

Reality is never certain. We could say it is arbitrary and yet subjective. Reality and time are two of the key concepts in the work of Ruth Gómez. Right from the beginning of her career –*Te sobrealimentas* (2003), *El artista de la vida moderna* (2004), *El asesino de su persona* (2003)–, her concerns with alienation in contemporary society and the tedium of routine are self-evident in looping videos where techniques prevail over messages. No beginning and no end. A metaphor of cyclic routine in contemporary life. With time, without abandoning the features that characterise her work, Gómez has become fully aware of her use of metaphor. Thus, if her early work brought no answer, states of mind individuals were confined to, now they have found an outlet in fantasy and illusion, conceived of as possible places. But let us go step by step.

The images used in the work of Ruth Gómez come from digitally edited real videos, which results in a typical personal aesthetics. Her techniques are based on maths and geometry: numbers, points and vectors in space, coordinates and parameters in a timeline that combines 2D (drawing) and 3D (sculpture) in a collage style, on the basis of audio. The artist thus manipulates time and reality. Also, she resorts to similar colour shades in all her works, pink being the prevailing colour, and a synthetic finish that brings them close to drawings or paintings. However, despite the apparently simple strokes, her digital drawings and videos are the result of a complex structure of lines and points. What really matters to Gómez is how an individual can go beyond unreality and become a cartoon character by means of rotoscoping.

Even when Ruth has worked for many years in advertising and the audiovisual industry after getting a degree in Audiovisual Design from the School of Fine Arts, what defines the aesthetics of her drawings beyond the language of advertising, videogames, video clips, or pink shades, is her technique, close to classic drawing and painting, and reminiscent of manga. In fact, her fascination with Takashi Murakami's flat graphic images, Yoshitomo Nara's drawings, and Hayao Miyazaki's films is present in her work.

Most of her videos make reference to films, not only in frames or the use of narrative language but also in plentiful allusions. In *Animales de compañía* (2005), for instance, some of the shots reminds the audience of *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933), *Godzilla* (I. Honda, 1962) or *Night of the Living Dead* (Georges A. Romero, 1968). In addition, Gómez uses films to explore the behaviour of individuals in society, resorting to the metaphor of the jungle to show how men are ever-evolving animals (progressive or regressive evolution). *Magic Mirror's Slaves* (2007) features Oskar, the protagonist of *The Tin Drum* (Volker Schlöndorff, 1978), whereas its soundtrack is a dialogue between apparently unrelated fragments of other films (Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*, Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*, Milos Forman's *Amadeus*, Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*...), food for thought on vanity and the distorting mirrors that were so dear to Jorge Luis Borges, an analysis of perception and its reflections. *Las ilusiones fantásticas* (2009) –a clear allusion to imagination and fantasy as featured in the films by

Georges Méliès—praises fancy in all its forms, no matter how trivial, as an antidote or outlet in a society marked by disappointment. In Gómez's words, "I try to pay tribute to animation movies, to tricks, special effects, fiction within fiction... and, above all, to illusion. For it is hope, lost or found, based on hard real facts or fantasies, that enables us to survive in everyday life." In *Las ilusiones fantásticas*, a young boy plays hula hoop while his shadow does something else, so that both the subject and the shooting technique, fictitious and related, replicate fantasy. "Likewise," Ruth adds, "I try to remind my audience and myself that, paradoxically enough, even when it is unreal, deceptive, and fictitious, illusion is not false. And many times, what we call 'fantasise' is just a necessity, a survival mechanism, for if we lost our ability to build someone's or our own hopes, we would be at a loss, no matter what age we live in."

In works like *Made in MUSAC* (2004) or *El artista de la vida moderna* (2004), Ruth Gómez uses her own reality and the art system to reflect on her stance as an artist. This is also a reflection on the other, that is, us. But it is the only drawing of 2009 that is not related to a video that best embodies the honesty and commitment with which Ruth opens up her world. In this drawing, the artists is shown giving birth to herself.

The use of a similar colour range is a metaphor for her stepping back from reality—an allusion to what is transitory, vulnerable, and against the war. Pink is usually associated with peace and quiet and with innocence. The metaphor, however, makes a counterpoint between the colour and its connotation on the one hand and the underlying subjects in Gómez's work on the other, thus emphasising the irony of denying or opposing the existential conflicts posed. The association with pop art becomes evident in the use of colours and, above all, in this counterpoint, which is reminiscent of the works by Andy Warhol, most (if not all) of which speak of death under a coating of apparent vitality: the Marilyn series, the *Tuna Fish Disaster* paintings, pistols, electric chairs, and so on. Death, after all, is a part of life. "We could say there is a certain pessimism in the work by Ruth Gómez, but it would be more accurate to describe it as a cry and the need to lay down new rules for the game she is playing, which is the only possible game: inhabiting a complex, contradictory world where you have to be always on the alert and where you cannot be innocent, since we have never left the jungle," Rafa Doctor holds.

The works by Ruth Gómez are not autobiographical, but they are extensions of her own experience, which is also our own. Her world is populated with the characters that appear in her work once and again, as a metaphor of the multiple roles played by individuals in modern society. Insecurities (*Animales de compañía*, 2005; *Bubble Bobble*, 2005), vanity (*Magic Mirror's Slaves*, 2007), ego and love (*Caleidoscopio*, 2009; *Cariño*, 2009; *Amor*, 2007) are shared projections where reality and fiction get intertwined in little animated stories. This exhibition is thus an attempt to bring our contradictions into question. "The real world is perhaps less important than the world we need," Ruth says. After all, who cares about reality any more?

Tania Pardo, 2010