

On Laws and Jungles

ANIMALES DE COMPAÑÍA

8 March, 2006 – 6 April, 2006: CAI Luzán Space.

What attracts us to the work of Ruth Gómez? What are her contributions to Spanish contemporary art? How can we define her work and in which context can we observe it? Where are the parameters of her discourse situated? What is the objective of a work with these characteristics? Where does it come from and what is its intention through these short narrations?

To try to resolve these questions is more than enough to propose an approximation to the short but intense and fascinating trajectory of Ruth Gómez.

The work that is known at this moment, and that is shown in part in this exhibition, started only three years ago, the time that the artist crosses the limit of what she has learned in a College of Fine Arts and faces the challenge of defining her own discourse, and even adapt a unique language in order to tell all those things that she hasn't been able to do so to date.

In the search for the right language, Ruth turns to drawing as the most elemental of expressions; however, she doesn't use it as a traditional pictorial representation, but does so from the very attainment and thought of images in movement. The original process of the succession of drawing is what originates the precise optical illusion that allows her to organize her narrations, but at the same time is what permits her to fix certain images such as big drawings wherein the story tends to appear perfectly compressed. This original drawing stems from the assumption of various new techniques of image creation through photographs and computer programs that are used with natural flair and freshness. In this way, photography and its computer process create a perfect line and their own state of light and shade. With this simple scheme, Ruth adds a new element: the predominance of a specific color all the time. Dark pink in her first videos, green and grey in the latest ones. This predominant tone maybe understood as a way of unifying the visual aspect of the story, but at the same time tries to constrain the elements and create a clean and direct vision that is capable of transmitting a clear and clean reading of the works. However, the symbolic value of these colors is fundamental. Thus, in the dark pink used in her first narrations, a tearing context may be assumed of a monochromatic visual trap. As such, with these little elements, the artist was able to configure her formal universe and demarcate her from the rest of the existing drawings and animations, defining a perfect sense of identity that can help her tell her stories in a very personal manner and at the same time, gives a differentiating visual aspect that the very artistic system usually demands in order to make way for new proposals like hers.

Above all that can be said about Ruth Gómez, the most important without doubt is her obsession and necessity to tell certain concrete stories; at the same time all these stories seem to be always the same: the difficulties and contradictions of living in the present society.

There are six visual narrations that make up the work of this new creative stage of the artist. Six stories that are condensed in six animated videos and various drawings associated with each one of them. In the first story, *El Asesino de su persona* (The murderer of himself) (2003) the subject is the alienation of the

routine labor and everyday life of the contemporary being. Through the proposed visual loop, the human being appears like a machine with programmed movements and predefined behavior. In *Te sobrealimentas* (You overeat) (2004) the subject is the absurd relationship that Westerners have with food, and the aesthetic canons associated with the body. In *El artista de la vida moderna* (The artist in modern-day life) (2004) the author realizes a self-critique on the artistic system and the strange values wherein it is supported. *Ruth, made in Musac* (2004) is her personal vision of her own search and her road through diverse difficulties that she encountered in her creative progress wherein she constantly falls and stands up but in the end, seems to be satisfied. With *Animales de compañía* (Animal companions) (2005) the battle that she once faced with herself is now extrapolated to a wide group of persons that inhabit a jungle and wherein some seem to be executioners and the others victims, herbivores and carnivores, the devoured and the devouring... persons of everyday appearance in both cases, facing themselves from two opposing possibilities; the alienated being is now essentially stepped on and destroyed, gobbled up literally by other equal beings. Finally, in *Bubble bobble* (2005) a person appears chewing gum which at times give glimpses of persons inserted inside the bubble of the chewing gum.

Each and every one of the stories seems to be the same. There are not many ways out, it is not possible to go far since the society that wraps everything is what it is, and does not offer in any way a window to salvation or nothing similar. In this way, this office worker, this overweight girl, the artist that walks the tight rope, the other person that constantly falls and gets up, those that run and hide so as not to be devoured, as well as those that are chewed on, are her heroic victims, her good modern-day Saints. In front, the devils, those that write with a book in the face, that girl with the perfect body that controls her diet, the carnivores that search for their prey in the jungle or the one that chews gum in an innocent and almost enjoyable manner to the sound of the music, appear on opposing sides and, in this way, act as victims as well, as they are in reality, the other side of the same coin which is western society with all these everyday conflicts plagued with pain, bitterness, and above all, a lot of stupidity.

Everyone, main characters of a stage in which the roles have been assigned randomly and in which each one should represent what has been assigned to them in the best possible way.

We may speak of a certain persisting pessimism in almost all the works of Ruth, but it is more correct to speak of the shout or the necessity to propose new rules for the game that is being played, the only game possible, the game of being an inhabitant in a complex and contradictory world in which we constantly have to be on alert and in which there is no innocence possible because, at the end of it all, we are still in the jungle.

Rafael Doctor Roncero, 2006