THE DYSTOPIC DRAWING

For Manuel Calderón drawing is not only an end, it is a beginning, it is research, it is learning, and it is thought. The artist, educated in the rigorous techniques of drawing, invites us to see a certain construction where order is expressed through space-time paradoxes and seeks to assert the oppressive environment perceived by the artist in contemporary living.

Calderón’s work uses different drawing, photography and video techniques. He combines academic resources inherent of anatomical drawing, as well as the geometric lines characteristic of architecture, in addition to those of animation artists such as rotoscoping and stop motion.

His artistic project arises from his experience of inhabiting the spaces that he has called home. The specific conditions of these places have left traces on his body, which in turn appear in his own work. The permanent action of drawing-dwelling reveals the geometric foundations of architectural constructions together with the distinguishing features imposed on those who inhabit them. The draftsman’s perspective allows the artist to abstract the rectilinear essence of every construction and from its base to point out the contrast between the geometric modules which are the product of reason and the organic nature of the human body. The coldness of seriality and the repetition of homogeneous forms in industrialized buildings have an impact on the daily life of their inhabitants, who lose their individuality and become mechanized reproductions of the same subject that wanders through spaces without an apparent end.

The self-portrait, a constant in the artist’s work, loses its subjective essence due to the reiteration of his image. This body multiplies and repeats incessantly the movement provided by the rational dimension of space. The scenarios are unvarying but absurd and are no longer a home, but rather simply places visited by men, without any sense of temporality or orientation. Calderón’s reflection begins with the anecdotic and vanishes in the perpetuity of geometry. If the existence of man finds support in his own constructions, both in space and in time, and these are essentially geometric, the draftsman who deals in geometric shapes would be responsible for a primitive design which has served as basis for the construction of every contemporary interior. Thus, in the artist’s metaphor, draftsmen would be able unravel the structure that would allow a reconstruction to allow diversity to coexist, a fluctuating structure, conscious of the contingency of time, utopia.

Manuel Calderón’s work is the portrait of a dystopian world, and his drawings point out the impossibility of overcoming those rigid and unquestionable limits, the fundamental structures of order. His work insists on the impossibility of
transcendence while living in that "box", a whole ordered by orthogonal geometry, a space full of objects and at the same time empty, lacking in meaning