

Ramiro Quesada Pons

En modo goblin o los intercesores 4.0

The Intercessors 4.0

Notes on the Work of Ramiro Quesada Pons

By Martín Craciun

I am a patient boy
 I wait, I wait, I wait, I wait
 My time, water down a drain
 Everybody's moving
 Everybody's moving
 Everybody's moving, moving, moving, moving
 Please don't leave me to remain
 In the waiting room

I don't want the news
 I cannot use it
 I don't want the news
 I won't live by it...

Waiting Room, Fugazi (1989)

Ramiro Quesada Pons (Mendoza, 1987) has chosen sculpture as his primary medium for the work he has been developing for more than a decade. Possessing enormous illustrative capacity, his work includes just as many references to universal art history as it does to popular culture: comics, science fiction series and films, videogames, cartoons, videoclips and quotes of all kinds are taken from a global culture whose initial push came with the advent of cable television,¹ and was then consolidated with internet service. His sculptures are plastic in nature, with forms that are as imperfect as they are eloquent, seeking to bring us closer to a real experience where nothing is what it seems to be. Or rather where everything is too fictional for it to be real. "Even Better than the Real Thing", U2 *dixit* 1992.²

Above and beyond his formal elaborations, with which he undoubtedly achieves detailed, eloquent resolutions, Quesada Pons pertains to a generation of artists who are committed to the world they happen to live in. In his work, concerns emerge that are central to discussions about the spirit of the age, and they only feed our capacity to be astonished and driven to distraction. Accordingly, anxiety and frustration seem to be key words in a world where capitalism accelerates without pause.

All this happens on floor level: several of the sculptures-objects-furniture are for resting or laying down, because we are, effectively, tired.

We live in an era that denies the body all respite. Those of us who work on computers have seen how our bodies have been shaped by an unsatisfactory relationship with ergonomics. There is no time for exercise or to improve posture. We are a generation of hunched backs and necks. How long will our bodies hold up, before we will have to work lying down?

His sculptures also seem to be tired. They are part of the *Los intercesores* (The Intercessors) series, and "they have an air of self-portraits in different moods", as the artist comments. They are representations done in a cynical, humorous tone of contemporary hedonism, or of what emerged in 2022 as the word of the year: the goblin mode,³ a mix of nihilism, laziness and an aspirational manner of navigating through this world while lost in fantasy. Because tedium has clearly become a big part of our lives, instrumentalized by our incessant consuming..

Ramiro Quesada Pons' work is a fresh, incisive response to a current condition. Psychoanalyst Adam Phillips developed the notion that boredom is "that state of suspended anticipation in which things are started and nothing begins, the mood of diffuse restlessness which contains that most absurd and paradoxical wish, the wish for a desire".⁴

The thing is that boredom also has its history, a group of determining social factors and a particularly strong association with Modernity. In order for boredom to occur, leisure is a necessary condition, that is, it is essential to have free time and to be removed from the preoccupations of subsistence. Nevertheless, modern capitalism multiplies diversions and possibilities for consuming while accelerating these processes at the same time, so that we are more easily bored: we entertain ourselves, but we become bored again more quickly.

Seneca the Younger (Corduba 4 BC - Rome 65 AD) defined the idea of *taedium vitae* as "A feeling we sink into when thinking that nothing I do or see is new: sometimes one gets sick even of this. How long the same old things? I shall wake up and go to sleep, I shall eat and be hungry, I shall be cold and hot. There's no end to anything, but all things are in a fixed cycle, fleeing and pursuing each other. [...] All things pass on only to return."⁵

This way, boredom occurs when we are trapped within an enigma of desire, wanting to do something but not wanting to do anything.

However, if we stop understanding tedium as a malignant condition to be fought against, we can grasp it as an experience, or explore it as a place of resistance. Here we have the perfect scenario for reflecting on this in a relaxed manner. The opportunity for creativity that was once offered by boredom has, in the same way, been captured by incessant scrolling on our mobile devices. Surfing cable TV channels by zapping has been replaced by the continual movement of the thumb, an acquired reflex that accomplishes scrolling, liking, entering, leaving and messaging in the blink of an eye.

Quesada Pons' anthropomorphized sculptures aim to compose an imaginary that advances equally in iconic representations of indigenous civilizations and extraterrestrial forms. They are *intraterrestrial extraterrestrials* that emphasize behaviors and ways of being that often seem to be unrelated to human comprehension, whereas today, they actually are. These are imaginative representations that blur the lines between what is familiar and what is strange.

In popular culture, extraterrestrials are frequently represented with features that recall cats: the large eyes, for example, which can contribute to them being perceived as familiar beings but from another world. This relationship between cats and extraterrestrials serves as a lens that enables us to better comprehend our interactions with non-human entities, and the complexities of the conscience beyond our own experience.

Ramiro Quesada Pons' family history enriches his work. There are recurring references to his ancestors in his work, and his practice is permeated by design and shared concerns. Both his father and grandfather were profusely passionate art practitioners: art and design are conjugated in a family lineage strongly rooted in modern traditions in his native Mendoza. His sculptures seem to be the result of a plastic process of experimentation with materials that examines the surroundings, searching to compose this overlap of objects and references. Everything functions as if on a stage: the dialog between the sculpture-objects, the color of the ground, their forms and their arrangement.

Thinking about the open relationship that we maintain with the objects around us may help us to rethink our place in the world, by fomenting a redefinition of the relationships with them and their effects on us and others.

Everything takes place on a blue surface: this is a representation of the vertigo of the void when inserting the virgin VHS tape in the videocassette

player. The blue screen, the deep blue, the infinite ocean of possibilities, analog video's blank canvas, or also the blue screen of the moment of death in Windows 95.

We have already survived numerous updates, and we will continue to do so, although we will understand less and less of what it is that goes on in our devices each time. Without wanting to, we have recognized the *incredible intimacy* between humans and non-humans. We are deeply interconnected, and we are interdependent. It wouldn't be strange, from the standpoint of art, to think, at least for a short while, of humanity—as Timothy Morton says—as an “inexhaustible reservoir of existential alienation, in which the human and the non-human must coexist in the strangest of places”.⁶



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