

Gimena Macri

Espero que sí

By JOAQUÍN BARRERA

To the victims of the wait¹

For centuries, a big part of community life was organized by means of simple social technologies like a table or a kitchen, spaces for exchange, conversation and listening that encouraged face to face encounters. In this series of paintings, Gimena Macri decides to take up these traditions again, but through the filter of present day velocity. The fact is that in times of accelerated hyper-connectivity the only certainty we have is that we have never been so alienated. While digital platforms hone vertigo to perfection, the wait for what is urgent has become the necessary condition underlying a large portion of what takes place in our amorous, family and social relationships. Our emotional lives seem to hinge more and more on open conversations, procrastinated meetings and responses that never arrive exactly when they should. Far from eliminating uncertainty, the promise of constant connection foments merciless anxiety and psychological thrillers.

While art history's classic still life painting saw objects arranged on a table to speak of abundance, beauty or death, she seems to utilize the genre to portray the silences provoked by open conversations, even though no evident record of bodies in a living state can be found in these works. That said, words in the present are not what occupy the space, but rather the ones pronounced some time ago, which resonate in their posterity almost like an echo that reaches the conscience quite late. These conversations are adhered to food, tablecloths, hand-written notes and the undefined spaces that always seem ready to receive someone whose arrival is never actually confirmed.

Their large format is a determining device, elaborated especially for this exhibition. As a result of both the vanishing points in their pictorial development and the unstable architecture of the objects presented, the eye quickly loses its usual referential supports, giving way to a more erratic form of observation, more of a meandering than a contemplative gaze. At a certain distance, the tables, flowers, WhatsApp texts, receptacles, notes, bars, backgrounds, patterns and recognizable scenes with which

Gimena has been working for many years appear. There is no hierarchical order that brings them together; what does that is the certainty that they all have the same value. Nevertheless, when the body approaches the canvas, the image begins to disintegrate into layers of color, corrections, transparencies and areas where the material reclaims its own autonomy. This oscillation between recognition and dissolution in an earmark of her style in the procedures and handling of paint's plasticity. The deep blues, dense violets and the persistence of certain warm zones construct an atmosphere that seems to suspend any chronological or geographical precision, while the brushstrokes and drawing systematically shun the idea of a closed image. The thing is that what is initially presented as a representation winds up revealing itself as a surface, as an accumulation of decisions and vices, but also as an intentional superimposition of different moments in time.

The images that fill the space reunite different conversations the artist has been holding with painting for years, almost like a personal cartography of tenacious obsessions. This coexistence between time frames permeates the entire series. A dialog exists between the practically textile patience of certain patterns and the brazenness of stains. At the same time, the planimetry inherited from contemporary screens allows itself to be contaminated by oil's physical density. The fragmentary logic of digital communication coexists with a much slower temporal framework, related to conversation, permanence and visiting after meals. In contrast to her previous works, in which the *telephone view* format prevailed, these paintings seem to recover something of the old traditional pictorial window condition, in order to put it in opposition—with neither vehemence nor simple longing—to the accelerated regime of image circulation that dominates most of our mundane experience.

In these scenes there is an evident theatricality, above all due to the use of light and the contrast in palettes and textures. It has nothing to do with an oneiric tale, something which must be renounced to understand the genesis of these paintings. This symphony of random, recognizable, popular consumer objects fulfills a utilitarian role solely as a mechanism

to illustrate a wait and a state of latency, where something has either just taken place or is about to. Her painting insists on staging the drama of that interval. It is not that of the occurrence in itself, but the narrative that may derive from its before or after. Therefore, the constant sensation of asphyxia provoked by the wait is only a minor psychological game that fills the atmosphere with density and poetry, although it can, at times, allow for the addition of small but incisive quotas of humor, cynicism and mischief.

As a founding part of this cathartic melodrama, Gimena Macri blurs the boundaries between interior and exterior, making them porous. Fortunately, there are relative truths and stagings that give new value to the absurd. The kitchen and the city, the refuge and the sidewalk, intimacy and public space seem to blend together within one same melancholy. It is not nostalgia for something lost, nor for a representation of an evident absence, but for the perception that encounters of any kind are also an ongoing negotiation with distance, with time, and above all, with doubt.

1 Quote by Antonio Di Benedetto, taken from his dedication for his novel, *Zama*.



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