

THE SKIN OF SILENCE DAMIÀ DÍAZ

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The work of Damià Díaz in
the Contempera Collection

by Aramis López



For Klaus Kramer, without whom neither this book nor the Contempera Collection would exist.

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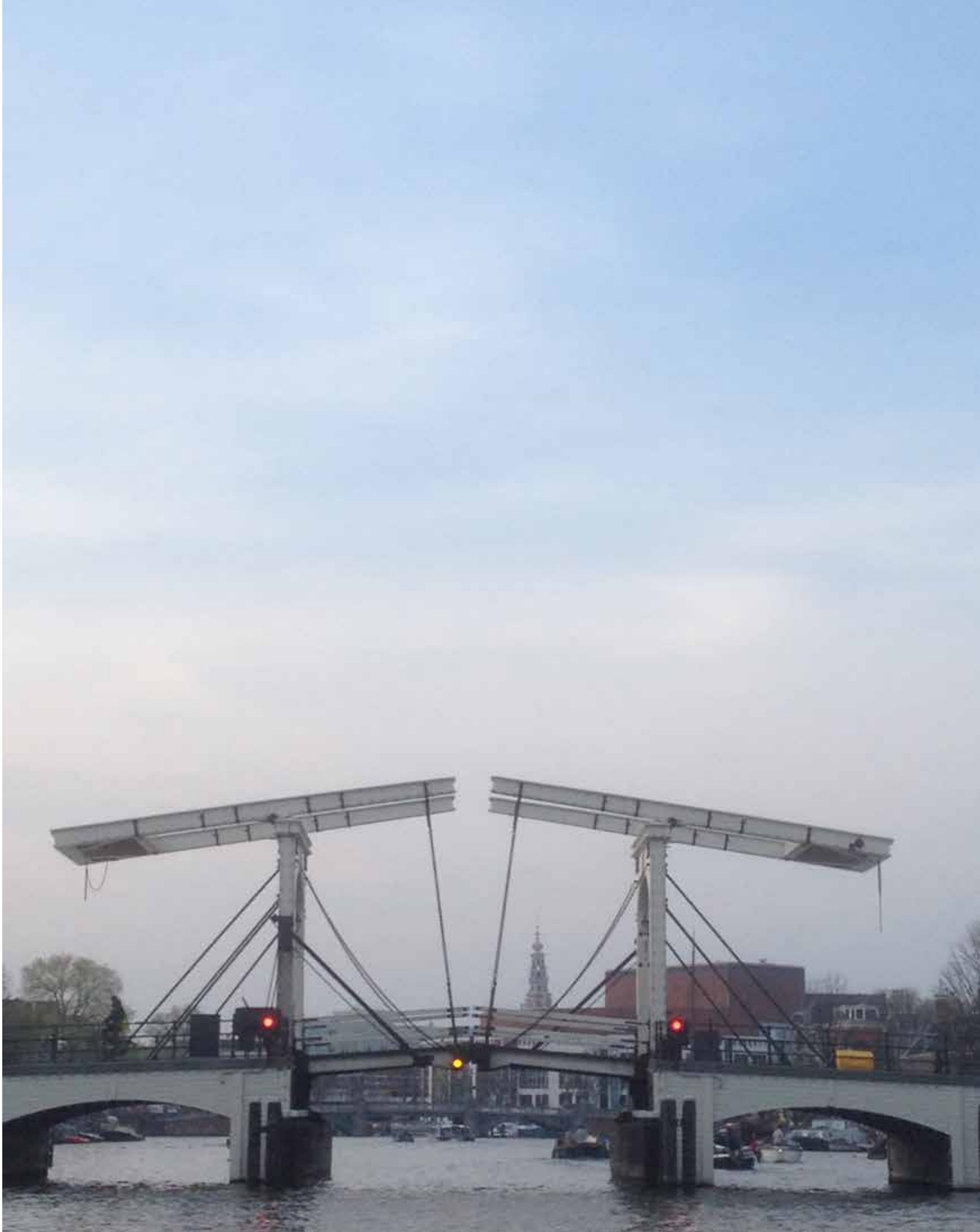
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THE CONTEMPERA COLLECTION

To put together an art collection is a fascinating enterprise that requires a large investment of time, but also a high economic and intellectual input, and above all else it is an act of generosity towards the whole community.

Collections are a key element in the basic heritage of a country's cultural structure. In fact, statistics for development ought to take into account the number and importance of a country's art collections. They are an indicator of the cultural sensibility of a country's inhabitants, but also of its future potential for economic and social development.

This collection came about thanks to a chance meeting of people interested in art, culture and philosophy. Built on the solid foundation of a collection compiled over the years by Klaus Kramer, it connected with the personal concerns of Ronald Egger and Sjaak van Vliet, directors of the company Contempera.

Klaus's collection served as the seed for the Contempera Collection. Over time it was rounded off by contributions from the personal collections of Ronald and Sjaak, thus giving rise to a common, shared aesthetic infected by the passion inoculated by art.

A-Factorij Art Project was the initial proposal to act as a driving engine for artistic production. It was to be a well-structured, innovative project that physically placed art in the environs of a business centre, and gave artists a chance to produce work in an eclectic, contemporary setting. At the same time, it is an art centre that shows the work produced in it by artists in contact with entrepreneurs and businesspeople, affording a different way of seeing the world. *A-Factorij* got underway with the work of Damià Díaz and the Contempera Collection is now giving continuity to that opening exhibition with a book of the artist's work.

Besides analysing the artworks and information on the artist and his practice, this publication also contains a series of musings on collecting art and on how a collection comes into being. Likewise, it also includes a series of conversations between Klaus Kramer and Damià Díaz on various aspects to do with art.

This collection has an interesting structure, following the work of seven artists from different generations and nationalities, mainly Spanish.

The collection also aspires to be an archive for research and reflection, overviewing the output of the artists from their beginnings right up until the current moment in time.

Art ought to be recognised as a human right by the United Nations, and should always be included as part of the overall formation of any human being. For that reason, putting together an art collection is a philanthropic act aimed at the whole of society.

Collecting is a complex intellectual act, requiring prior formation and goals, and it is a difficult choice to decide what to collect. By selecting a series of artists with which one shares an aesthetic affinity instead of a particular theme or a shared geographical space or time frame, one is making the decision that what is really of interest is the person, the artist, his work as a creative being, his cultural interests, sources and references, and one is also deciding that these artists will, at once, be references for the collectors themselves. That is why the Contempera Collection not only holds the final artworks of these artists, which is to say work usually understood as being finished and complete in itself, but also prior studies, sketches and documentation which the artists have used to prepare these definitive pieces. This makes the collection something more than a contemplative possibility, something other than simply admiring beauty and the intellectual aspect afforded by the artists. The collection contains the elements that enable present and future study and research by scholars and art lovers, thus making it much more than a simple one-dimensional collection.

The collection began to take form around the works collected by Klaus Kramer, and then later with art acquired by Ronald Egger and Sjaak van Vliet, pieces chosen following their own personal taste and their individual formation in art, a formation sustained on curiosity and a desire for personal fulfilment through art. Both collections dovetailed to perfection, enriching each other and forming a coherent body of work.

What goes on show when forming a collection is a definition, it is something that speaks about the people or groups of people that are putting the collection together. In this case, through its art collection and the team of people that are building it, the Contempera group defines itself within the society in which it develops its activity. It defines itself as a company with concerns that are not merely economic, taking on a mission to play an educational, social role and to build heritage within its surrounding environs.

As we shall see in the book, one can have many works of art and yet not undertake the task of collecting. This book however should be seen as yet another act in that task of collecting.

015

Damià Díaz. His work
as an artist

DAMIÀ DÍAZ'S ARTISTIC BIOGRAPHY

ORIGINS

He is the third in a line of artists; three generations of a family of very different artists, and he is the first to make art into his life's work, the first to become a full-time artist.

His paternal grandfather Damián Díaz Camilo, started the saga in 1911, combining arts and crafts in depiction and painting; and since 1939 his father José Díaz Azorín was a teacher and artist, a sculptor and painter, an artist with consummate technical and linguistic control.

His insight into the arts and into the language that enables representation is a transmission of classic generational learning. It is a gift from the father. Through spontaneous learning, thanks to his contact with the printing press, plates and ink, with pigments and canvases, with clay. Through the hands of his grandfather and father, "it is a question of becoming what one truly is".

EDUCATION

He studied at the Polytechnic University of Valencia and at l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre in Brussels where he furthered his training in interdisciplinary practice, video, installations and interventions, and undertook his first engagement with architecture and site-specific projects. In 1990 he moved to Brussels, where he lived for eight years, developing the first projects in his professional career.



Damià Díaz in École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre. Brussels / Belgique

As soon as he had graduated he started working professionally, and looked for a gallery to represent him. He looked for his own forms and his own concerns, technique and art. He looked. At the same time his interest in chalcography led him to collaborate with the Joan Romà studio in Barcelona where he gained a profound grasp of different printing techniques.

Between 1991 and 1998 he had several exhibitions in Europe, exploring his interest in process as a form of learning. He explored his obsessions with the workings of the mind, silence and limits in exhibitions at Mont de Marsans, Hamburg, Larh, Valencia and Maastricht, where he used painting and drawing as ways of engaging with his interest in mining the possibilities of light and space.

During the period from 1995 to 2001 he was the scenography and art director for the *Nits de la Mediterrània* festival, for which he created the graphic design and stage designs.

The truly formative aspect of his career came through ποιησις (poiesis), creating, the thing that transforms anything we turn our mind to from non-being to being.

The process of creation has at times been compared with the holy or sacred. In all cultural and religious conceptions, it is a divinity that creates the world from nothing, or nothingness. From his intellect the artist creates the work where before there was nothing. For the artist, creation in itself is the reason behind his life's endeavour. The artist works on various intellectual planes at the same time: the plane of representation, of imagination and of construction. They are proportional parts of creative activity.

In a small town everyone knows the possibilities it has to offer, the limits to which it will allow us to grow and develop within the placid, friendly and protective space of a small group. It is not usual for a small town to provide the scope for artistic or intellectual development, or indeed to undertake serious scientific research, activities which we generally associate with big towns and cities. However, Klaus Kramer appeared in Altea and turned Galería Raphael on its head, changing it from a framing shop which sold decorative work to a contemporary art gallery, Klaus Kramer Fine Arts. Damià Díaz used to buy art material in Galería Raphael, and when Klaus Kramer Fine Arts started to sell work by Josep Vallribera and by Juan Barberá, he knew that something was changing in his hometown. Juan Barberá is a teacher at the School of Fine Arts of Valencia and a person who shapes artists, a shaper of Damià, with a body of work with great visual power, a new work, inscribed in contemporary movements, and Vallribera is a conceptual painter with extraordinary intellectual finesse. And this is where a young artist in formation could make contact with a gallery owner, an art gallery in a small town that worked similarly to what one could find in any European city.

After he finished his first year at the School of Fine Art at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, he had to face up to the critical decision in the life of all artists, the decision that makes you an artist, the decision to live in order to create and to do so within the professional, economic sphere of art. He took this decision together with his mother, who is the person that is always going to be there for him, the person who makes you face up to the decisions that you would otherwise always put off for another moment, and he decided that he could not run away, because that's one thing mothers don't let you do. Running away is not a response, a response is something you take every day over a long period of time and is announced and declared when the possibility of running away is not a possibility.

Back in the eighties in Spain every young person wanted to be a designer. Design was a quasi-metaphysical word, it was the goal of all entrepreneurs, to design meant modernism,



success, getting rich quick, social recognition. Everyone was designing so that the country that was just coming out of autarchy could manufacture and export, and find its place in Europe. Designing was going to save a country from its overwhelming economic, political and social backwardness. In the eighties everything was still waiting to be done, and everyone was in a hurry to do it, in a real hurry, so much so that nobody stopped to ask the question of how we were going to do everything without the infrastructure to sustain the alleged production. In order to be able to manufacture there had to be an investment in technology, something Spaniards had always refused to do: "let them invent!" as Unamuno said. And in this decade in which the foundations for the future modern Spain were to be built, people chose the superficial, the visible and the vacuous, and the *Movida* became the paradigm of creation, abandoning the possibility of a true Cultural Transition, which is still pending today.

Against this backdrop, Damià Díaz decided not to design and opted instead for the more arduous path of intellectual creation. He decided to be an artist. At this moment, when his mother put him at a crossroads he took what was a priori the more thankless option, and he started to look on life in a way that would remain with him throughout his career, taking a risk in the belief that what is easy to obtain usually does not add any value or experience. And almost as if it were a divine sign of approval, he received an offer to work at Joan Romà's print studio, which at that time worked with Tàpies, Chillida and Barceló. Working at a print studio provided the budding artist with an incredible technical baggage, and above all else the chance to meet Antoni Tàpies and to talk with him for many hours.

A few years later, when he had to decide his speciality, he opted for technical drawing, where he learned more and more anatomy, and where he learned more and more technique, and composition, and representative possibilities.

Europe proved a turning point in his formation. He had visited Paris and become fascinated by European elegance. When he moved to Brussels to continue his formation he found a comfortable space, place, environs. He left Spain to invent like "them", like Europeans do, to concern himself with technique, to insert himself in elegance, to not forget and to forget.

Drawing up a list of influences, we find: grandparents, father, cinema, Klaus Kramer and the feminine. He learnt from his grandparents that the things that matter socially change, that one generation tries to destroy the one that goes before it and that they partly achieve their aim; he learnt from this father because he could not but learn from his father, he learned to be conscious, to be critical and independent; and the cinema was a ticket for a trip around the world, in space and also in time; he learned the profession of art from Klaus Kramer; and from the feminine he learned everything when understanding that there is another more reasonable way to reason.



CREATE AND SEARCH

TECHNIQUE AND FORMS

The Greek word for art is *τέχνη* (technē), which means both art and technique. In classical thinking, art and technique are not instruments of beauty but forms of learning. In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle describes *technē* as one of the four ways of knowing the world, and Plato considered it essential for good government; in other words, to bestow on technique and on art the ability to know and explain the universe was one of the first social functions assigned to art.

What does art do? In an ulterior simplification, one could say that it creates images, that it transfers an object, a landscape, a person or any vision to another, lasting support. The support can be of many different types, ranging from painting, sculpture, or any of the early techniques to the contemporary supports in increasingly more sophisticated technologies.

The act of creating images is to imagine, and this is a mental process involving a countless number of variables, functions and desires. But the way in which created images shift from ideas to objects requires technique. A technique or an art that applies science or learning becomes a complex system called technology. The artist, the creator of images, requires an advanced and complex control both of the mental process of the imagination as well as knowledge of the techniques of fixing lasting images on supports, but also and no less importantly, he needs to continuously experiment with the new technologies that arise as the result of human research.

Each new form or protocol for storing information or thoughts brings with it a broadening of the horizons of the human universe. It allows us to name what up until then was unnameable, to bestow meaning on what had none and thanks to this expansion of the cognitive horizon, what is distinctive of humans can evolve.

The artist is forced to experiment, and it is not his only obligation, but it is critical for his whole creative process.

Within this practice each individual artist needs to outline his own path so that the form of evolution is not the same. Damià Díaz started out on his road by distancing himself, at least in the beginning, from conventional forms. One of his first concerns was to search for more dimensions. From painting he arrived at sculpture and, while searching for more dimensions than sculpture, he arrives at time, to the use of narrative inscribed in a unique image.

The need for new dimensions is conditioned by his choice of the forms assigned to each image. An image is not usually a reference to one single thing; an image contains more than one time, it contains different semantic loads, it possesses a narrative potential. However, we ought to be clear on one point, and that is that the communicative efficacy of the images depends on their very intellectual conception but also on a masterful execution when it comes to rendering them in the physical realm.



When Damià Díaz chooses supports for his painting, these may be unconventional, like plastic or metal, and not always with regular geometric forms. His sculptures do not sit on pedestals; there is a liking for the creation of space, a surrounding intrinsic to the artistic object itself, bestowing each piece with the quality of an installation. Only in the more intimate forms of drawing and etching does he still move within the classical boundaries and even in the realm of the austere.

The need for experimentation in the realm of art leads to the use of supports that afford the image new semantic possibilities it did not have access to before, that change the rules of the composition. The sign can be learned, created, it calls for time to search. Each element that constitutes an image can be constituted in a sign or not, a hand can take on its own meaning, to always say the same thing when being used by an artist. Whether there is a face or not, whether there are colours or not, whether one copies from nature or abstracts, whether there is a landscape or a surroundings, all these elements take on meaning. How they are combined and adapted to a series of rules or regulations that allow messages to be formulated becomes in itself a type of code.

The search for signs and codes is an endless process. It is also a complex process and the success of an artist's work demands that both sign and code are clearly recognised and interpreted by the spectator.

From this standpoint, from the wealth accumulated by the fact that each artist builds his signs and creates his codes, we arrive at the need for art collections to contain a broad sample of the work of each artist represented in the collection. Enjoying an artwork must necessarily be related with the enjoyment of the overall output of the artist.

The use of new technologies in the treatment of the image leads to the need to deal with the immaterial, with the representation of the moving image, with technologies that add dimensions to the image, but at once it leads away from the more corporal senses and calls for an intellectual interpretation. They are technologies that have a cultural and temporal component. Today film is easily assimilated and has become one of the most universal systems of representation, but at its beginnings it provoked stampedes among the audience, magical assignments and lots of difficulties in decoding its messages. The new is assimilatable by contemporaries and not by everybody.

AND THE MISE EN ESPACE

In 2002 *Temps i Pensament*, a large ad hoc intervention in the chapel at Hospital de la Pitié-Salpêtrière in Paris, marked the beginning of a balanced dialogue between light and space by means of sculpture. This project was exhibited later at the Museum of the University of Alicante (MUA) at the end of the same year. It was also expanded and adapted, and brought about an evolution in the artist's codes. In this project Damià Díaz paints on transparent supports, projects light on them and thus duplicates the work. As can be seen in the image, the metal stretchers hold the image.

The perpendicular position with respect to the floor allows the light to generate a new image, the floor acting like a distorted mirror. Real and immaterial, the new image that arises is a new category, a new sign, a semantic expansion. The mirror is an element sought after by the artist, one to reflect the image, acting as a reflection of the public and, above all else, a reflection of ideas.





Recinte d'Idees was staged at the Sapiencia chapel at La Nau, the former headquarters of the University of Valencia in 2004. In this deconsecrated baroque space, he placed three large heads (methacrylate and iron) suspended in space. Through them, a spectator observing from inside strikes up a dialogue with the baroque architectural space. In this case it is a sculptural installation in which the spectator can get inside the sculpture, which, by being transparent, allows him to look outwards through the distorting material created by the artist. The element which distorts is a head, the public enters the head, a space of ideas, to observe the world from a container of ideas, foreign to him, that furthermore distorts his vision, incorporating colour, form and space. It was one of the first armours built by Damià Díaz, but this armour is not for his own personal use. It is a gift to the public who are the ones who will really use it. The artist intends for it to be useful, that it can be used to isolate, to provide new perspectives, and to protect. Once inside it, as many things happen as people who use it. Inside it, you can look out or look inwards, you can see and see yourself, you can feel protected or prisoner, there are devices that can be used without the existence of any clear set of instructions.

Invited to develop a project at *A-Factorij Art Project* in Amsterdam in 2011, he made a vast collection of welded metal bas-reliefs and large format drawings on paper, which served at once as a studio for the project *Murmullos* in which he uses drawing as a means and as an end:

"Drawing is a tool to mitigate the continuous and confusing noise of things. I use it to reevaluate the frozen sequences of my memory, I separate sounds to find the words and their motives" Damià Díaz

This project combines drawing and new technologies and interaction with the spectator. It endeavours to add a series of circumstances to the drawing: to add time and sound, new dimensions, new forms of perception, to place the spectator in another space. The result will be a three-dimensional collage, where space is the support, and the creation of invisible paths where drawing becomes an installation. The support evolves from the most basic elements to video projections, 3D techniques, augmented reality. And he is still working on this at the moment.





Again in Talking Head, 2005, the artist's tools are useful instruments, and this work enables him to speak through the mouth of another without being afraid of the repercussion of the act. The simplicity of the proposal is its greatest asset: a head hangs from a structure, a chair waits for someone to sit in it, a conversation begins. We can use a mask, or a helmet, part of a suit of armour, which modifies us, both by hiding our face and especially our gesture, but also by changing our voice so that we cannot be identified. All farce becomes mockery and all mockery becomes an act.

Another head is forced to read a given text; there is no free will, the artist creates two images, one deterministic and the other liberating, a paradox which is also a gift.





STORM OF SILENCE

Work in progress

If you uproot the individual you disarm him,
fear of the social,
we live in an abstract society,
you need distance and silence, you need an abstract construction, armour, a distancing
element, you lose invisibility, to be able to see better

Co-opting one's own image reflected in a painted, broken or black mirror.

It is not the myth of Narcissus, it is the image reflected not in a flat liquid surface but over the waves of water when disturbing it.

The usual issues of becoming for any contemporary citizen are underscored by the artist, insofar as being one of the social functions of the artist. In his *Republic*, when he spoke about which trades can find a place in a happy society, Plato excluded artists because they engage with the third plane of nature, and not with the real, not with the symbolic but with the represented, because they work with ideas and categories.

What Damià Díaz signals is what is alive. But he imagines and creates images that come about as a result of reflecting his body in distorting mirrors.

His body and his head. Metaphors. Divested of any identifying elements or fixed with prepositions, they become a generative grammar. Rules of language. Used to develop a continuous text written with corporal dyes.

"It is a question of becoming what one truly is"

The Spanish baroque, the Spanish Golden Age of literature and the artists influenced by one of the most incredible phases in human creation are a basic source both for iconography as well as narrative style.

ON THE WORK OF DAMIÀ DÍAZ

THE TASK OF THE ARTIST

Knowing that one wants to be an artist, a doctor or a journalist; knowing what you want to dedicate your life to, and what your life's project is, very often depends on having received some kind of previous impact. In life there are interactions with people, places, paintings and books that prove decisive for one's personal future. Decisions are not always premeditated. The normal thing is that, like in love, an individual starts out on a path without being aware of it, one step after another that takes you to an unknown place. And it is ultimately the decisions or the prods of destiny that stake out our space for us.

The place from which one acts can be the result of a premeditated journey or of aimless wandering, but artists and intellectuals are usually sure of the ground they wish to occupy, of the starting point for their personal voyage. That said, an unswerving determination is also hard to find, and it is stimulating to see cases in which someone is searching and finds the way of bringing their life closer to their desire.

Damià Díaz decided to be a professional artist in a complex personal and social setting, and his determination is persistent.

There was a cultural explosion in Spain during the eighties responding to the highly specific circumstances at the time. After almost forty years of dictatorship in which culture and education had been targets to destroy, people expected a cultural revolution similar to one that took place in a previous structural crisis of the country: the loss of the colonial empire at the end of the nineteenth century was a spur that led to the rise of the so-called Generation of 98 and later to the Generation of 27; during Franco's dictatorship the intellectuals and artists who did not emigrate had to survive in a very tough situation and the fall of the regime was longed for with great expectation as a new starting point for the creation of art in freedom, but those hopes were not fulfilled. Painting and the visual arts in general were not the focus of censorship by the regime, they had no influence among the public opinion and, on the other hand, the censors, with scant artistic formation, did not see or did not know how to spot any sign of rebellion, which meant that Spanish painting was able to develop with certain creative freedom. It was not necessary to wait in order to create. There were always a few highly interesting artists who dedicated themselves to creating in freedom.

In the 1980s there was an avalanche of new artists, creators, musicians and writers in Spain. There was an effort to provide institutional structures that would sustain creation, but thirty years later we are in a process of cultural desertification unacceptable for an advanced society. The trivialization of heritage, the political use of cultural infrastructures, the corruption of the public administration, cronyism and the process of conversion in a mediocre society are the result of this historical process of transition from a dictatorship to a democratic society that we have gone through.

This is the cultural backdrop against which Damià Díaz's artistic work came into being. The artist resists, and stakes out a place for himself, in this case by means of artistic techniques, to recount the hardships of a society to create new artistic heritage, to generate streams of thinking, to weave networks of cultural infrastructures that foster production, and above all else, the lack of a cast of intellectuals and artists with influence in the society that has given rise to them.





One of the social reasons of the artist is to call attention. Art brings before people's eyes things that they have overlooked until they are pointed out to them, and it is the artist who points his finger. Each artist focuses on his own personal concerns and warns society of his obsessions.

In the case of Damià Díaz, his reflections revolve around the difficulty in communicating, social autism, the individual impossibility of transmitting learning, and ultimately the personal isolation imposed by a denatured and vulgar society. The noise generated by the exponential multiplication of useless information, in line with the French philosopher Jean François Revel, produces a racket where you cannot hear anything, and where it is impossible to think, to create and to convey messages. The mass media and educational institutions are instruments of this process of non-communication through saturation.

The artist proposes his solution: silence. The silence of images, silence explained by images. To create images of silence. To create armour for silence.

Silence is the basis for thinking. Today man can only think inside armour that isolates him from social noise. To move thinking, as Wittgenstein proposed, to move the mind through the eye.

By using the image as a means of conveying thought, the artist leaps over the obstacles of noise, his message passes directly to the oldest part of the brain in human evolution, the area which processes the senses, where there is no explanation of language, and therefore there is no room for the Babel Tower in which today's world has become.

In art questions are rhetorical, they expect no answer, or have no single answer, but they do allow the possibility of addressing issues that cannot be addressed in other places. To ask questions in the knowledge that there is no reply is on the opposite pole to science, but art does not look for a single response because it knows that that is always a mistake, even in science. So, what really matters is asking the question:

How does Damià Díaz represent his thinking in images?

It seems as if experimentation in Fine Art has always been an entelechy, and that research is only scientific but this is not the case. Research, study, sketches, outlines and preparations have been part of the process of artistic creation ever since the beginning of art. The basic difference between artistic communication and its scientific and humanistic counterparts is that art has a personal language, each artist creates his or her own language, as opposed to scientific or humanistic languages which belong to the whole of a society or culture. For this reason one of the tasks of an artist throughout his whole practice and personal evolution is the creation of a language of his own that can be understood by others.

Damià Díaz uses images of the human body to situate thinking in the individual, and the social is therefore the setting, the surrounding environs of the human figure. He uses the head as a place for ideas. He uses arms to signal. He uses abstraction to engage with the subconscious. He uses colour to connect with moods. He uses tools that have been used by mankind ever since he decided for the first time to depict with images, but this use is personal and unique.





His work is an ongoing study. The concern with defining concepts calls for a repeated rapprochement, an obsessive concern with concepts. Movement is the main concept in his work, to achieve a representation it has been represented hundreds and thousands of times by the artist. Deleuze's idea of an image-time and an image-movement is materialised in his work. While the philosopher uses the word so that we understand how image-based thinking works, the artist uses the image to explain itself.

In Damià Díaz's work we can find images in which beauty is present and is possible. The artist does not eschew the use of beauty. But beauty is not an end in itself, art is not only a search for beauty, art is also in itself a search for movement and for thought; time is the dimension that articulates, it is the new articulation that enables a movement in the body of the artist, time enables thinking through movement.

Three is the perfect number for building with; any theory or thesis is based on three pillars, and Damià Díaz's are: time, thinking and movement.

SILENCE

Enjoy the Silence – Depeche Mode (song)

Words like violence
Break the silence
Come crashing in

Painful to me
Pierce right through me
Can't you understand?
Oh my little girl

All I ever wanted
All I ever needed
Is here in my arms
Words are very unnecessary
They can only do harm

Vows are spoken
To be broken
Feelings are intense
Words are trivial
Pleasures remain
So does the pain
Words are meaningless
And forgettable

This song says in lyrics what Damià Díaz speaks with images.



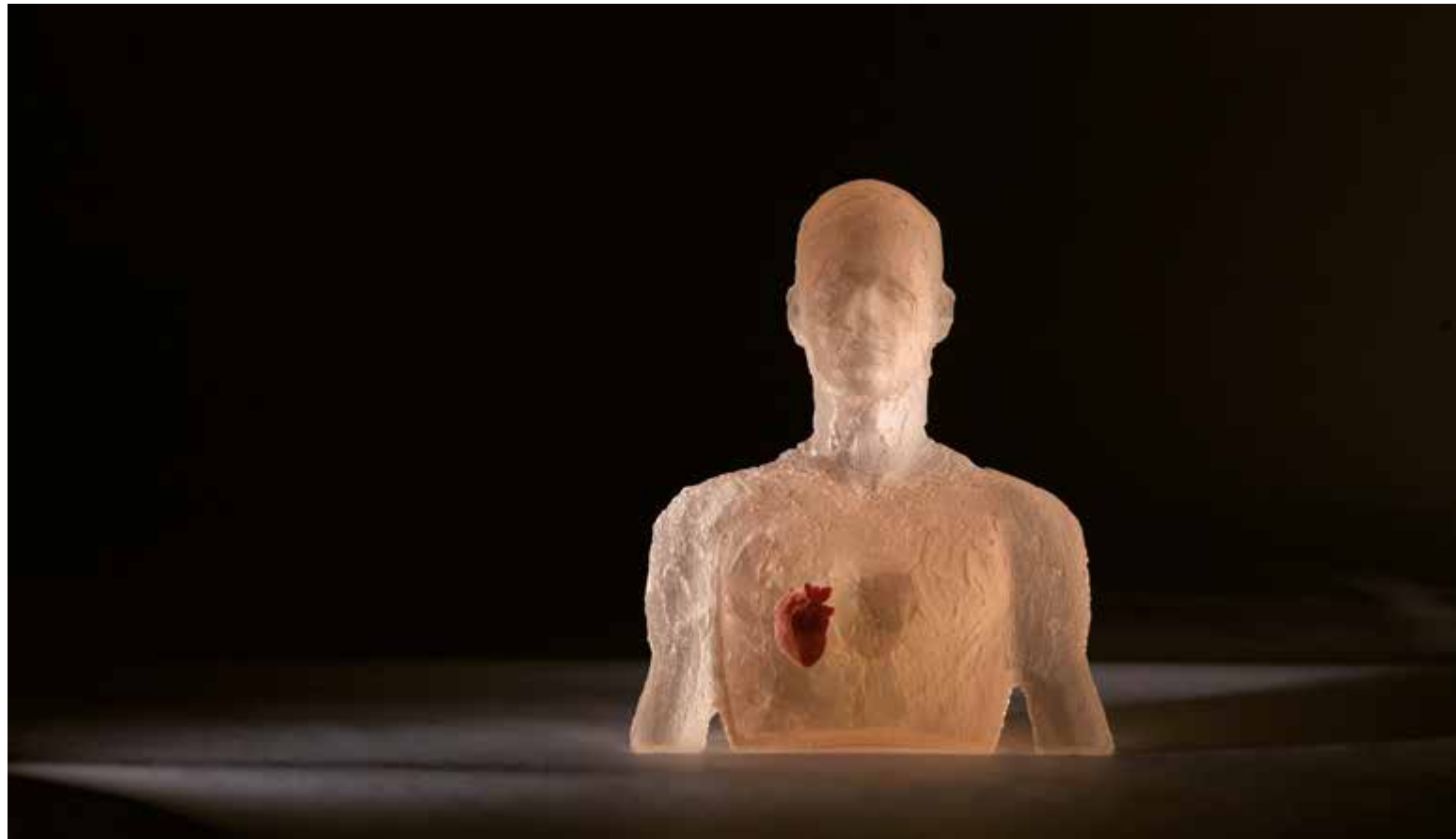


In 2012 he presented *The Space Between Words* at the Erasmus House Museum in Brussels. Three installations that contrast with the interior of the sixteenth century house museum and in which the human figure is still the core axis of the discourse, exploring realities created with reflections, elements of perspective and mirrors, producing dreamlike and inclusive pieces. *The Space Between Words* was in ways a stepping stone towards *Storm of Silences*, in which the artist is currently working, taking the natural process of life as a narrative, a starting point to unify his new projects associated with virtual reality and other technological elements to enhance classical disciplines in contemporary contexts.

The 1980s witnessed a complete rupture in cultural paradigms, a process still waiting to be studied. It saw the rise of cultural movements removed from traditional centres of production: universities, museums, publishing houses, documentation centres and conservatories. The interesting movements moved away from convention, new information technologies fostered a democratization of the possibilities of cultural production and then the following decade saw the appearance of Internet, this new universe of information, a universal agora still waiting to be unexplored. And a continuation of all this: the twenty-first century, in which students drop out of universities in the USA, journalists become bloggers, filmmakers become youtubers and everything started in the eighties, when we began to take seriously what young artists and poets had to say.

“All I ever wanted, All I ever needed, Is here in my arms”, in your head and in your body. Damia Díaz uses the distorted image of his body, he uses the idea adapted to his head, and his arms as signifying elements. And the silence of images as words, and he moves away from academicist movements, or fashions, or traditional art circuits; his interests have to do with his environment, with a search for new values for a world which is aggressive towards people, and as an artist he is committed to the individual's fight for his dignity, a dignity he situates in the most non-transferable element of the human being, his own body.





049

Works in the
Contempera
Collection

1986

PERSONAJE EN OCRE / CHARACTER IN OCHRE

Oil on canvas

149x117x4,5 cm

Though dated in the same year as the two previous works, this oil on canvas has a highly different aesthetic solution. Here, figuration is dispensed with and the investigation and experimentation with technique, in this case oil, strikes one as much more personal, more artistic. It speaks to a highly Spanish approach to chromatic solutions, largely based on black, red and ochre. The artist borrows chromatic and compositional elements and themes very much to the liking of Spanish tradition. He experiments, asking the question “what happens if?” This attitude is the driving engine of change, enabling growth but at once keeping one eye on the future. At this moment in time, Spanish painting was looking back to its sources; the innovations ushered in during the sixties and seventies had by now been assimilated, and the eighties were a kind of reaction. And this reaction took the form of active individualism as opposed to the collectiveness of previous decades. There is a rediscovery of the individualist artist, who steers clear of any movement or group, seeking to define himself and a distinctly personal authorship.

This work showcases the artist's mastery in classic composition and innovative definition, using a restricted palette and liberal textures. As opposed to other works in which the artist renders a temporal dimension, which is to say he shows the passing of time, in this work he puts it on hold and captures a frozen scene, showing a character trapped in a fraction of his life, functioning as a kind of mirror held up to the spectator.

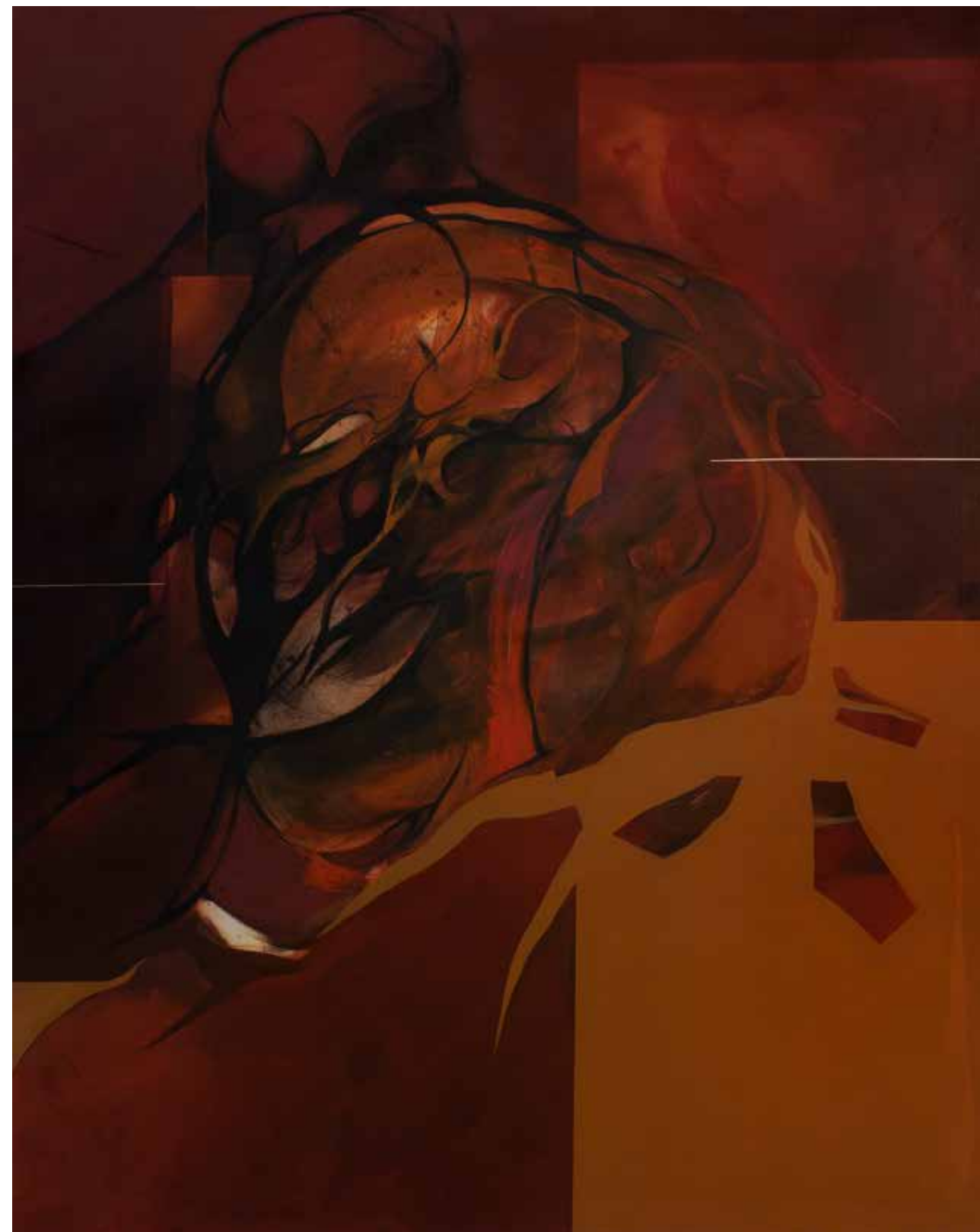


1987
FIGURA EN ROJO / FIGURE IN RED

Oil on canvas
162,5x130x2,5 cm

This is the oldest piece of those dated in the collection and comes from the artist's formative period. It is a vertical composition in which the drawing is very much to the fore. Divided almost geometrically into four parts, the background is unbalanced both in tone and in complexity, being much denser on the top and more chromatically diverse on the bottom. The main figure appears in the centre, and although it is not a figurative representation it brings to mind the top part of a head, distorted by motion and turning anti-clockwise.

There is greater representative complexity in the top part, while the bottom half suggests the disintegration of the intuited figure with flat colours and broken lines.



1987

DIBUJO ESTUDIO FIGURA / DRAWING STUDY FIGURE

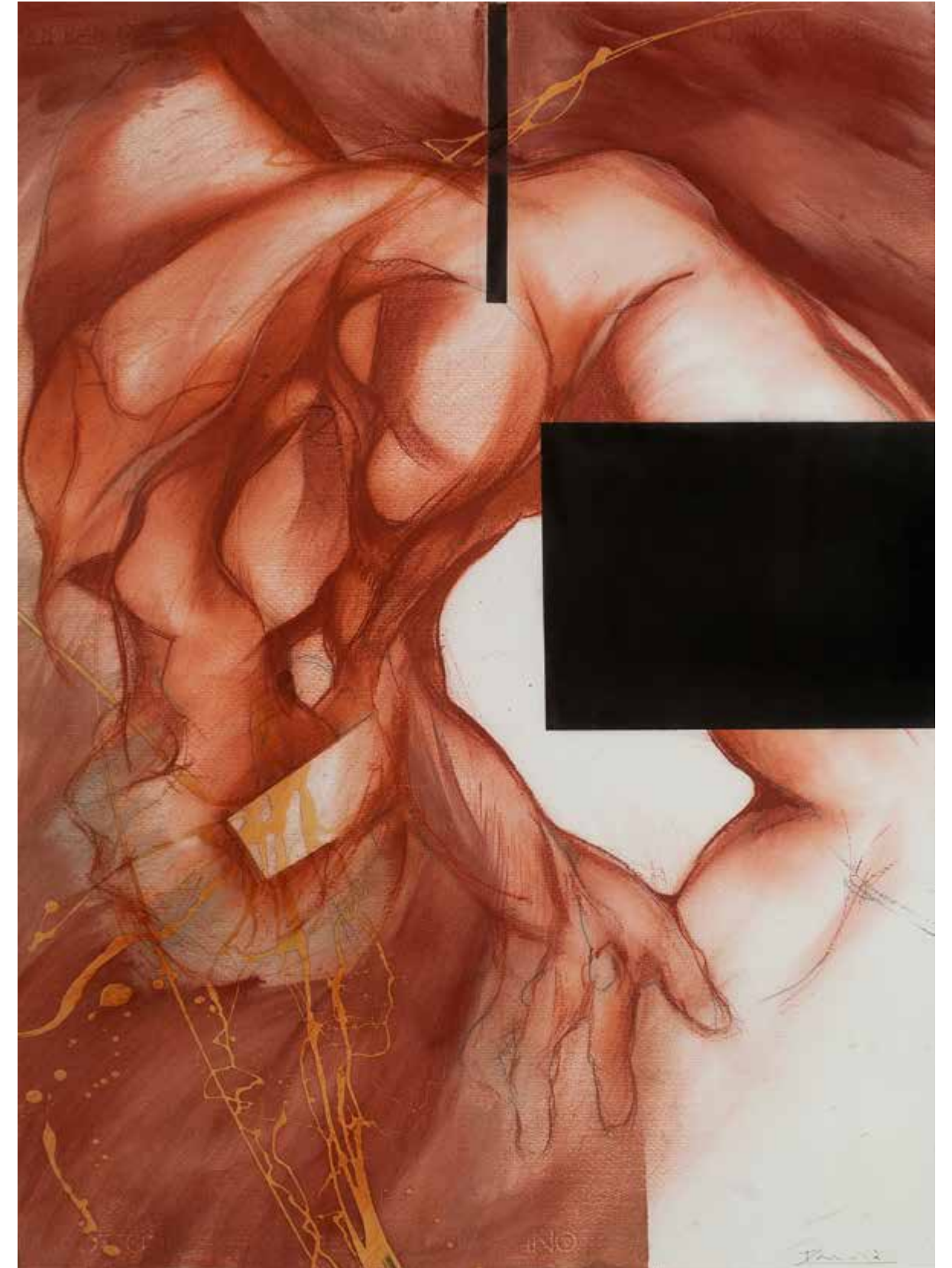
Crayon on paper

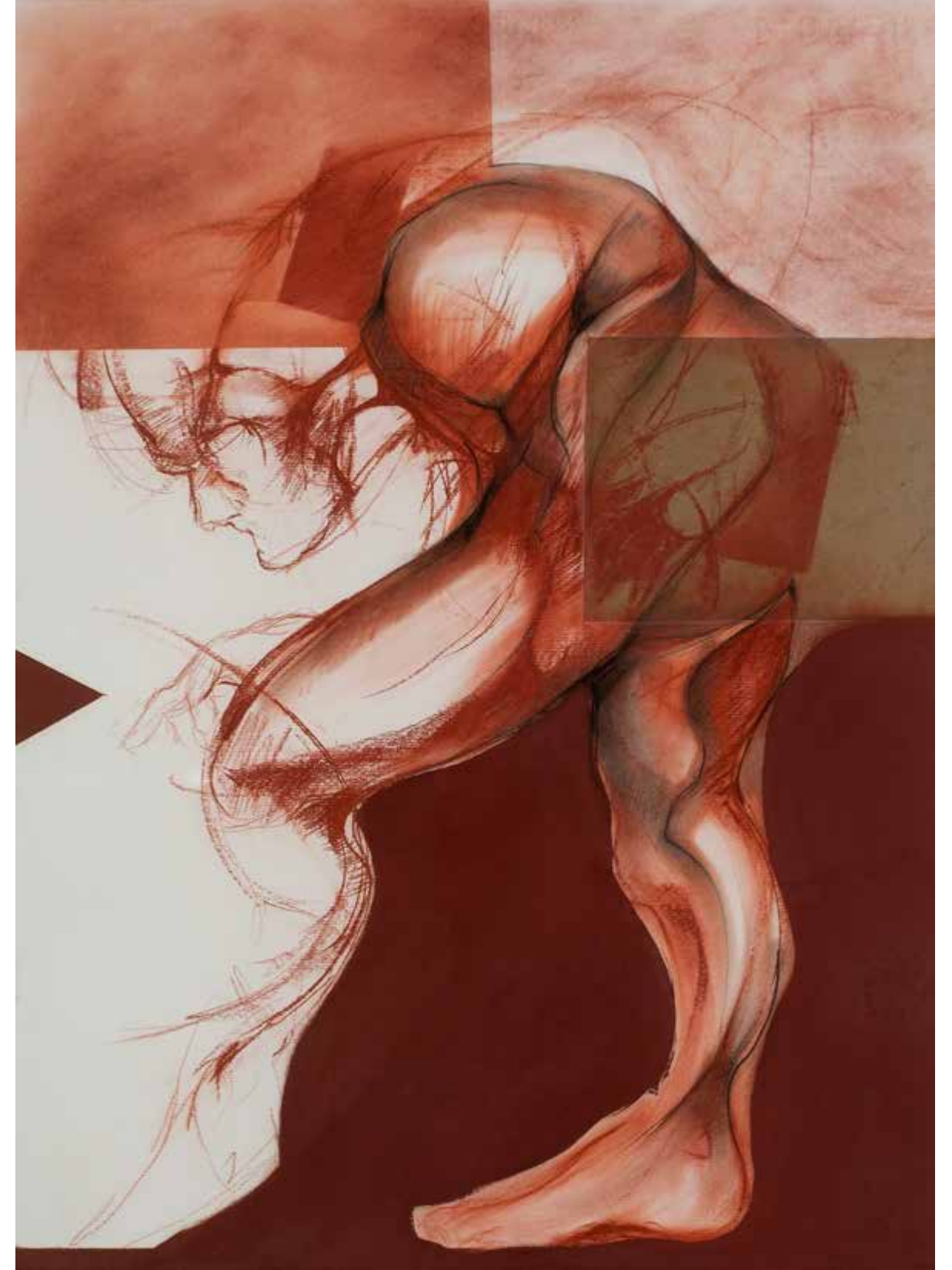
01- 70x50 cm

02- 70x50 cm

This consists of two drawings inserted in a highly academic deformed figuration, characteristic of the artist's formative period in which he foreshadows some of the concerns which he would deal with throughout his whole output. At this early moment, when he is just twenty-one years old, he is concerned with defining the body, the body as container and as syntagm. The posture does not convey a message. Rather it signals motion, unease and transition. However, the information conveyed to the observer is not yet coded, and is still more expressive and less intellectualised, though at the same time more sensual. The geometrical elements, the changing outline of the composition that frames the figures, are circumstantial. In other words, they transmit some information, which can be added to that already conveyed by the body. In some of his later works, the body is placed in increasingly more neutral spaces. It is interesting to note how the more sophisticated elements, profusely developed in his more mature works, are already adumbrated in these early drawings.

01





1989

TORSO EN MOVIMIENTO / TORSO IN MOTION

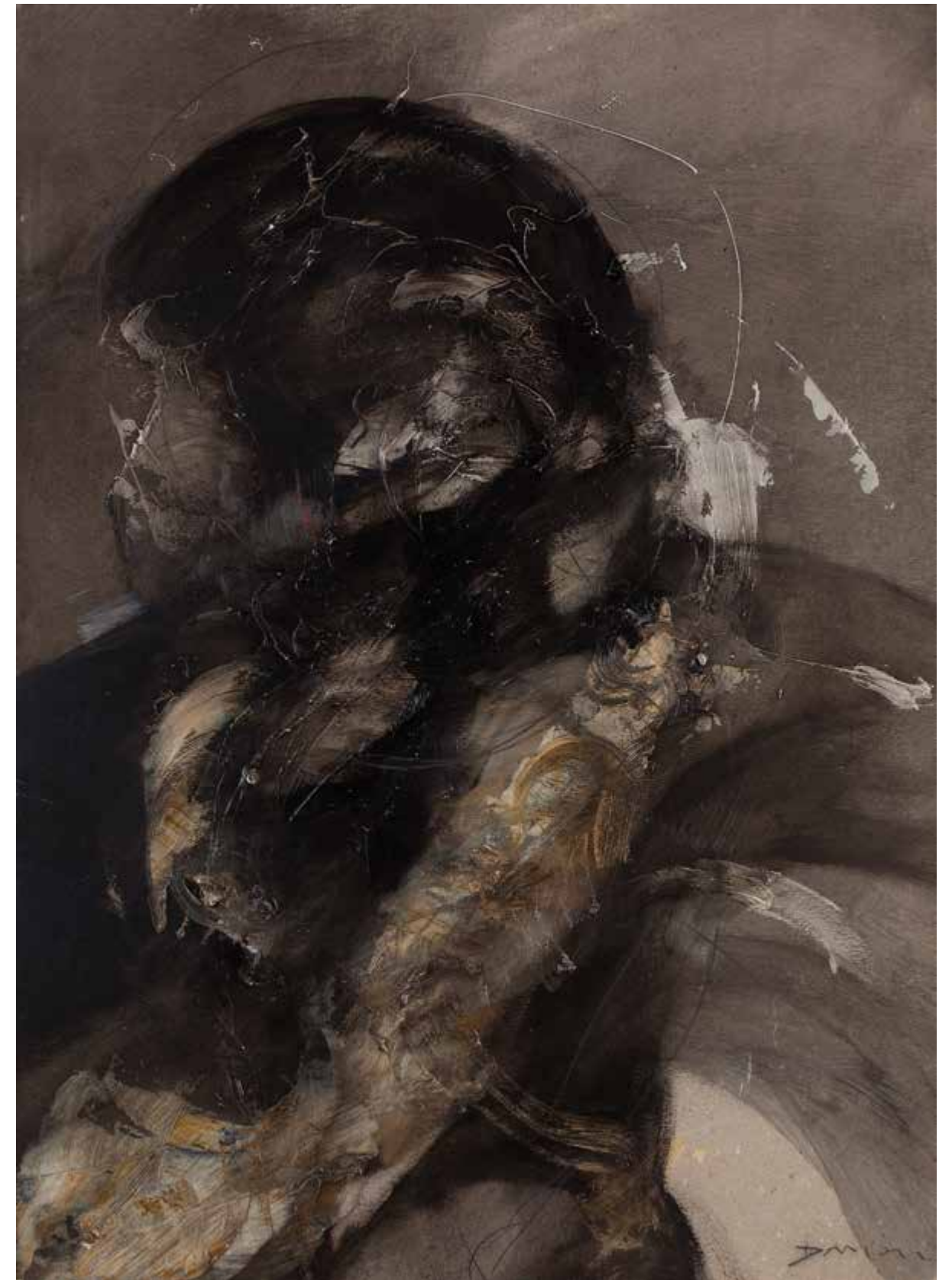
Wax and mixed media on kraft cardboard

107x77x7 cm

At this juncture in his production the artist portrays more than self-portrays. This is a period of consolidation of the signs with which he would construct his pictorial vocabulary; showing and at once hiding.

What is depicted is a torso that is turning, showing us its back, which can be read as a kind of flight, leaving or moving away. The unforced yet twisted foreshortening, the relaxed torsion, the gaze to one side, not backwards, implies that what really matters is what is around him and not what is being left behind.

The narrative potential of art accrues when the spectator is allowed to bring his own experience to the narration. The artist creates a place, a character, he provides a skin, or perhaps armour, to step into and the observer is given a chance to try on the proffered costume and live the proposed experience. A chance to put oneself inside a torso in motion.



1989
POLÍPTICO DE UN MOVIMIENTO / POLYPTYCH IN MOTION
Mixed media on cardboard
107x308x5,5 cm

The movement-image.
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Henri Bergson wrote about the image, memory, consciousness, matter and motion: “What exists are movement-images (in continuous change) as units of experience”. Movement-images are the universe. “The image is what appears”, it is a kind of shuddering motion, a vibration.

The time-image.
Gilles Deleuze introduces the concept of time-image as a reflection on what can and cannot be represented, on the load of thinking that contains the image; there is a fraught relationship between time and movement.

Cinema would seem to be the ideal art form to address this exposition on the elements of representation, but painting, baroque painting, the painting of stories, already contained the posited unease.

This work by Damià Díaz is a study, a revision, a challenge by the artist on this issue. In painting, the temporal decomposition of movement is not produced by fractioning the image into portions which the eye then uses to simulate continuous movement; the painterly image captures time and movement by engaging the human faculty of memory and learning.

And this work arises precisely from these questions.

TIME IS THOUGHT



1989

RETRATO-CARA / PORTRAIT-FACE

Graphite, mixed media and collage, carborundum on kraft cardboard
107x77x7 cm

Here technique is put at the service of language. This work is an example of how building an effective image sometimes calls for technical excellence.

Some lines provide a frame yet are at once overstepped, with unfinished spiralling blotches, layered matter that interrupts the dynamics of movement which do not seem to respond to the artist's consciousness but instead arrive from the hidden recesses of his dreams. And with the sum of these elements we have a portrait.

But the portrait, while always a self-portrait, is the countenance, yet the countenance is not the face. It is a mask, it is a form of protection or construction of armour or exoskeleton. The countenance is an invitation to enter the head, and this image which claims to be a face and claims to be a portrait is not only surface, it is an invitation to enter into the container of ideas.



1989

DIBUJO ESTUDIO FIGURA / DRAWING STUDY FIGURE

Graphite, mixed media and collage, carborundum on cardboard

42x55x1,5 cm

This drawing, a preparatory study for a later work or indeed for all his later work, poses a series of paradoxes. On one hand it is an abstraction that wishes to engage with figuration. One cannot tell for sure if what is to be seen is indeed recognisable, or whether this actually matters, whether we see parts of the body or sequences of time. However, we can clearly see a play of dimensions, which includes the fantasy of a volume created with broken brushwork, while the monochrome scale of greys creates impossible or non-existing figures. What you see is not there and furthermore it cannot be, and yet it is there and is depicted through blotches and clear patches, by accumulation and a divestment of matter. It is a work to glance at and also to return to a thousand times. It is a study that requires study. Art allows fascination and obsession to escape from the world of distortion, and turns them into virtues which can be used to create and also to perceive.



1989
PERFIL DEL SILENCIO / THE PROFILE OF SILENCE
Collage and ink on paper
45,5x40,5x3,5 cm

There are many ways to approach something. An artist is able to look from many different angles at the same time, and art allows us to be omnipresent and to position ourselves in impossible places from which to look. This ability is what is exploited here in this image. The title (the profile of silence) is deceptive, suggesting that the figure is showing us his profile but it is shown to us in a foreshortening of the back, slightly turning its head to reveal the profile, but this movement is usually one made by somebody who is looking backwards to see what he has left behind him, something that cannot be seen if we do not make the effort to see it. But the figure executing the action is the object of observation. We are looking at the looker. And the person who looks in an autistic attitude, of rejection, only offers the profile of his silence, and not even his whole face.

A complex image is built with pared-down colouring but with a lot of stains. Here we can see elements painted with a looseness and fluency that extracts them, taking them from their original place, outlining them and fitting them once again in order to assemble the human figure as if it were the accumulation of a series of pieces.



1990
TRÍPTICO PERFIL DEL SILENCIO / THE PROFILE OF SILENCE TRIPTYCH
Mixed media on wood
22x120x6 cm

Three stills taken from a story that has no story to tell. Like in the cartoon strips of silent comic books, a character, two characters, one character.

The silence of a person is meditation, it is a form of relaxation; it is a certain form of comfort and a synonym of tranquillity. Silence between two people is non-communication, lack of affection, lack of understanding, it is instability and fear. That said, silence does have numbers, it is countable, it is not the same between one and many. Silence speaks in function of who executes it, and of how many people execute it.

And to count it, and to give it an image, an ochre backdrop, reminiscent of the walls of old houses, marked by all that has taken place in them. It is to enter into a crumbling mansion, thinking only about what happened there, about what will never take place there again, in what once was. Black circles, with contrasting touches, surrounded by white touches, by empty words.



1990

RETRATOS DEL SILENCIO / PORTRAITS OF SILENCE

Oil and mixed media on canvas

81x100x4 cm

This is a finished work, as we can readily tell from the technique, the execution and the choice of title. It is not an exploratory, experimental work. It is a work that makes a statement and reveals. It takes nerve to portray silence. Because it means portraying what is not there, absence, what perhaps is longed for but is no more than an entelechy, something that only exists when it is named, when it is painted, when it is revealed and is accepted by someone. To a certain extent this work is an exercise in meditation, a Zen poem.

Is silence an accumulation of colour and forms? Is the form that appears in the centre silence? Or is it the ochre and brown backdrop? Or perhaps the rectangular forms? But, by the way, what is silence?



1993
ESTUDIOS EN AZUL / STUDIES IN BLUE

Oil on cardboard

01- 45,5x40,5 cm

02- 45,5x40,5 cm

Blue is the favourite colour of a large number of people. It is a cold colour. Its wavelength, which is closer to ultraviolet than to infrared, tells us so. In the interpretation of dreams in classic psychology it is attributed, on one hand, with the quality of tranquillity, which is what the colour transmits but, on the other hand, it also signals a need to overcome obstacles and the impossibility of fulfilling desires. The impossibility of achieving tranquillity which is the desire appealed to when invoking blue.

In this work a form that suggests fragments of a body that burst in from the diagonals of the canvas to the centre of the picture, bursting in to refute the nothingness of the blank canvas. The movement and the loose energetic brushwork in the lower part of the work disturb the calm blue dream, reminding us that there is something still waiting to be done.

01





1997

VENT / WIND

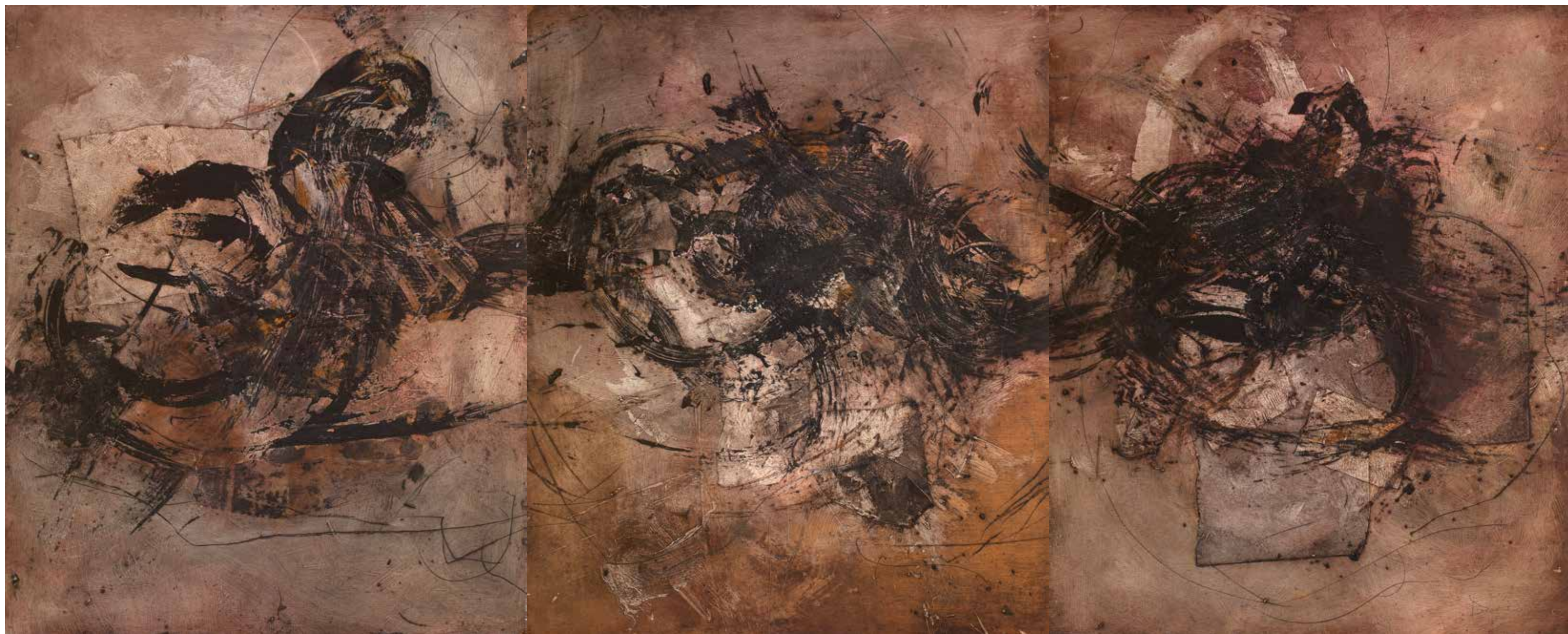
Carborundum and oil on wood

120x300x8,5 cm

The speed of the wind, referenced in the title, changes both the character of what it transmits as well as its very name: hurricane, cyclone or tornado. Speed is the starting point for Paul Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, and here he speaks to us of *picnolepsy*, which is an illness in which a person temporarily vanishes from spaces in a state of pathological abstraction.

A wind that envelops can also become a kind of armour that encapsulates the individual in a state of limbo, in a present absence. In Virilio we discover the approach through which newness in society creates a state of collective anxiety, given that the social travels at a greater speed than the individual and that each one of us is lost in a desert of uncertainties.

This piece represents the intangible, or in other words, the unembraceable, what eludes us and travels faster than us. Here the wind becomes a storm and torment, an unresolvable knot, impossible brushstrokes, matter. The wind is a whirlpool, and takes the forms of heads, and when materializing itself the wind does so like heads.



1998

TRÍPTICO ROTURA DEL TIEMPO / BREAK IN TIME TRIPTYCH

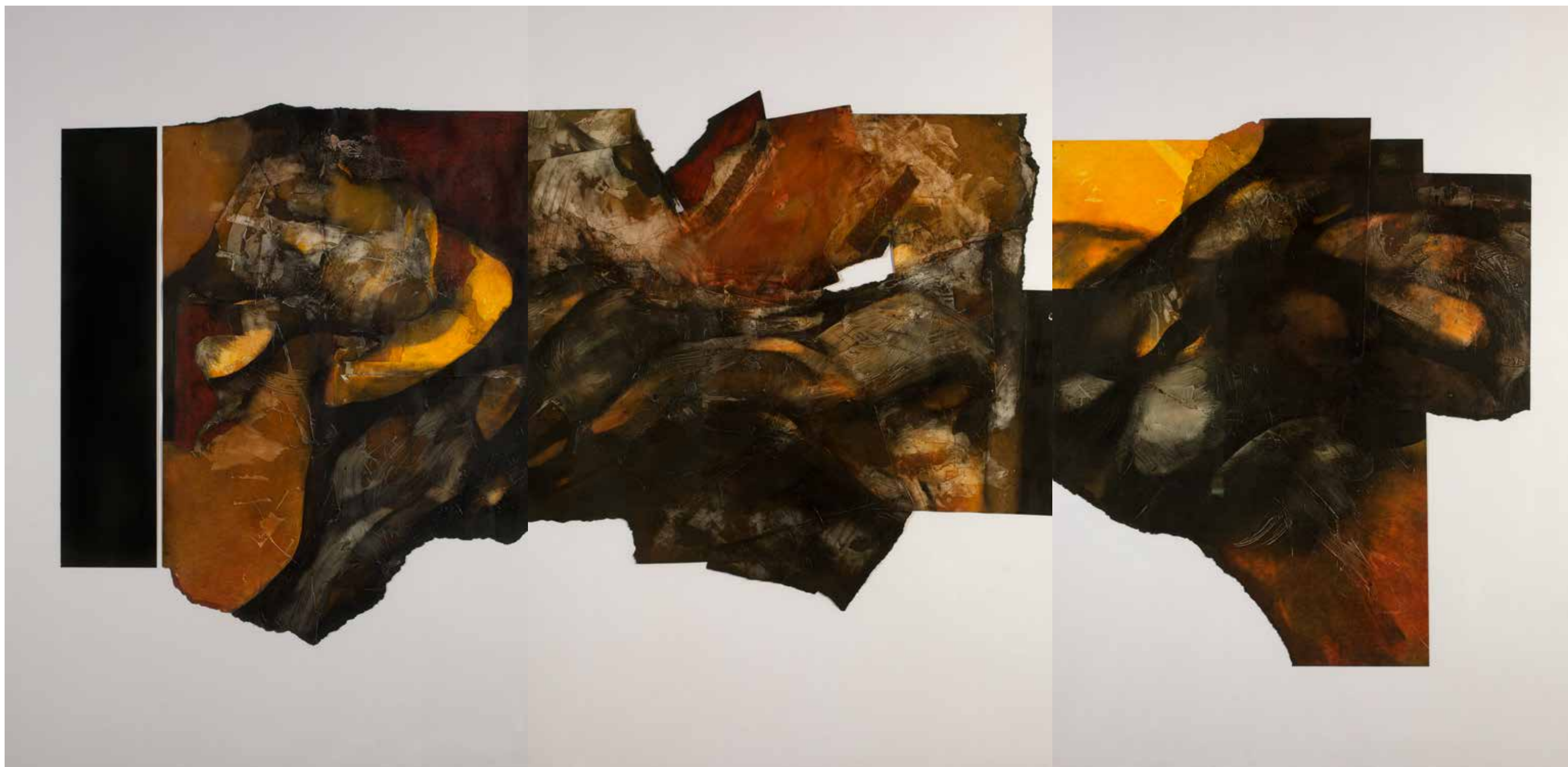
Mixed media on cardboard

153x309 cm

I have worked for some time in search of artistic pieces that would provide images of non-Euclidian mathematics. Whenever I find a piece that speaks of the rupture of time it is like a gift. For thousands of years the Euclidian was the foundations of mathematics, based on irrefutable axioms, which is to say, on rules that are always complied with. The Euclidian posits that space is governed by a series of rules associated with the plane of three dimensions (width, length and height), a universe where one can find a fourth dimension: time. The non-Euclidian is related with the Theory of Relativity; with the influence of gravity, a force that exists but which we cannot explain; with quantum multiverses (parallel universes); with the eight theoretical dimensions proposed up until now, and especially, with the space-time variable and its curvature.

Representing space-time not only curved but also broken introduces the possibility that we can provide images for everything, by imagining we are able to name everything.

In this triptych parallel universes coexist in the space that arises when time is twisted until its breaks.



1998

**COLECCIÓN SUITE - BOCETOS DE UNA SECUENCIA /
SUITE COLLECTION - SKETCHES OF A SEQUENCE**

24 pieces

Ink on paper

01- 4 pieces 22x14,5 cm

02- 4 pieces 21x15,5 cm

03- 4 pieces 22x14,5 cm

04- 14x10 cm

05- 22,5x17 cm

06- 20,5x14,5 cm

07- 22,6x17 cm

08- 13,5x12 cm

09- 20,5x14,5 cm

10- 15,5x11,5 cm

11- 23x16 cm

12- 23x11 cm

13- 24,3x17,7 cm

14- 22x11 cm

15- 20,5x14,5 cm

A suite is a musical composition, and usually covers heterogeneous material; a sketch alludes to something that is unfinished, to a premonitory state of something that is yet to arrive, something that is being prepared, that will unquestionably be distinct to how it was conceived in the first place, it is as it is, given that when something is clear it requires no prior study or preparation, it is just done. The sketch is a path, a meandering road that starts out from an idea, an imprecise idea, an idea that has to be assembled. It is an uncertain way, and therefore seductive; a sequence is an attempt to understand, it means fractioning something into more intelligible elements, to break down in order to be able to digest them.

This series of twenty sketches explores the representation of the body. They are phases in the elaboration of a canon of the body, a personal but intelligible canon. Bodies with more extremities, that evoke movement, heads without faces, faces without bodies. In Damià Díaz's later production there is an incursion into the body without body exemplified by Italo Calvino's character, The Nonexistent Knight, a knight without a body that is materialised in his armour, a perfect knight who owes his perfection to the fact of not having a body and an artist who searches for his perfect armour through the representation of the body.







04



05



06



10



11



12



07



08



09



13



14



15



1998

ESTUDIO FIGURA POSICIÓN / STUDY FIGURE POSITION

Ink on paper

84x64x4 cm

A suite is a musical composition, and usually covers heterogeneous material; a sketch alludes to something that is unfinished, to a premonitory state of something that is yet to arrive, something that is being prepared, that will unquestionably be distinct to how it was conceived in the first place, it is as it is, given that when something is clear it requires no prior study or preparation, it is just done. The sketch is a path, a meandering road that starts out from an idea, an imprecise idea, an idea that has to be assembled. It is an uncertain way, and therefore seductive; a sequence is an attempt to understand, it means fractioning something into more intelligible elements, to break down in order to be able to digest them.

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1998

CRUZ Y TORSO / CROSS AND TORSO

Carborundum, collage and oil on wood

42x40x7 cm

An absolutely present wooden cross and an unnamed and equally present Christ. This is a baroque work, immersed in all the features of the baroque. A melancholic piece, a composition with an overwhelming charge. Here the cross is not an external element to which the suffering body is attached. Here the cross is the body itself. Pain, torment, penitence are imposed by the suffering body itself.

A simplification of the sign, just a body and its cross, which is the body itself, against an empty impenetrable background, there is nothing else for the spectator than the body-cross, you cannot see the pain, you can only turn your head.



1999

ESTUDIO FIGURA EN MOVIMIENTO / STUDY FOR FIGURE IN MOTION

Carborundum and oil on wood

82x40x9 cm

Countless layerings, several images that comprise a whole in motion.

In the background a human figure turns his back on us, a foreshortening that brings to mind classic figures of painting, but this figure does not exist, it is not painted, it is a construction of the beholder, we see because we believe.

And there is something surprising in the centre of the picture: some flowers, a small bunch of flowers, painted in a way that recalls children's form of painting flowers, as if a child were painting them, as if a child were painting the flowers he is going to take to his mother. They are in the centre and yet are almost hidden.

There is a black frame, some brushstrokes that anchor the figure in motion which, despite being static, manage to achieve through contrast that everything that is not black, the ochre and red, is pure movement.



1999

TORSO Y PENSAMIENTO CÁLIDO / TORSO AND WARM THOUGHT

Carborundum, collage and oil on wood

70x56x7 cm

This work belongs to a series of pictures that connect with the Spanish tradition of classic painting.

A dark ground for a warm thought.

In this composition the brushstrokes and the palette or the incrustated matter operate like musical notes. They must all be heard together if we wish to hear the melody. There must be a melodic perception. We are not looking at a warm composition, and yet it is, at least in its harshest meaning, one that speaks of warmth and heat as a burning in organisms.

Collage inasmuch as a constructive technique or as an aesthetic method is very difficult to resolve given that it deals with an accumulation of material, layering one element on another, without any prior rules other than to generate harmony in the composition.

Similarly to other works in Damià Díaz's production this shares a lot in common with music.



1999

ESTUDIO SOBRE EL PENSAMIENTO / STUDY FOR THOUGHT Carborundum, Collage
and oil on wood
70x56x7,5 cm

In the seventeenth century, Thomas Willis broached the idea for the first time that thoughts and emotions were storms of atoms in the brain. Until that moment in time, the thought process was believed to be a quality of the soul and the soul was believed to be an immaterial entity that did not dwell in any specific place. The brain had no known function; it was just a gelatinous organ and no more.

Painting a storm of atoms in the brain, the ones that appear in this work, atoms that swarm around the outside of the skull, that surround the container of ideas.

Against a neutral background, brushstrokes and forms, and colours that are layers of many colours, brushstrokes that pile up one on top of the other, and elements in circular motion that imitate the idea that we might have of atoms without ever having seen them.

Where do thoughts reside?



1999

TRAZAS DEL TIEMPO / TRACES OF TIME

Oil on cardboard

81x56x5,5 cm

Here we have layers, strata or moments of painting that do not appear to be arranged in any particular order; sediments that one cannot know whether they are on top or on the bottom, colours that overstep something else that is in turn on top of another thing that appears to be on top of the first thing even though this is physically impossible. Though with an evidently very distinct aesthetic solution, it alludes to Escher's impossible worlds.

These are twisted times, folded dimensions, which are normally linear in human perception. Time for most Western people is linear; first one thing happens and then another in an ordered succession. However, in quantum theory it is physically formulated as a curve. Time is a curve for theoretical physics, and time is a spiral for the majority of Eastern conceptions of the universe.

What we see in these strokes of time is the twisting of the perceptions of the artist on the various different layers that make up his personal time.

Time for each individual can be represented as an infinite layering or intersection of layers of colours and forms.



1999

SILENCIO / SILENCE

Mixed media on wood

38x30x7 cm

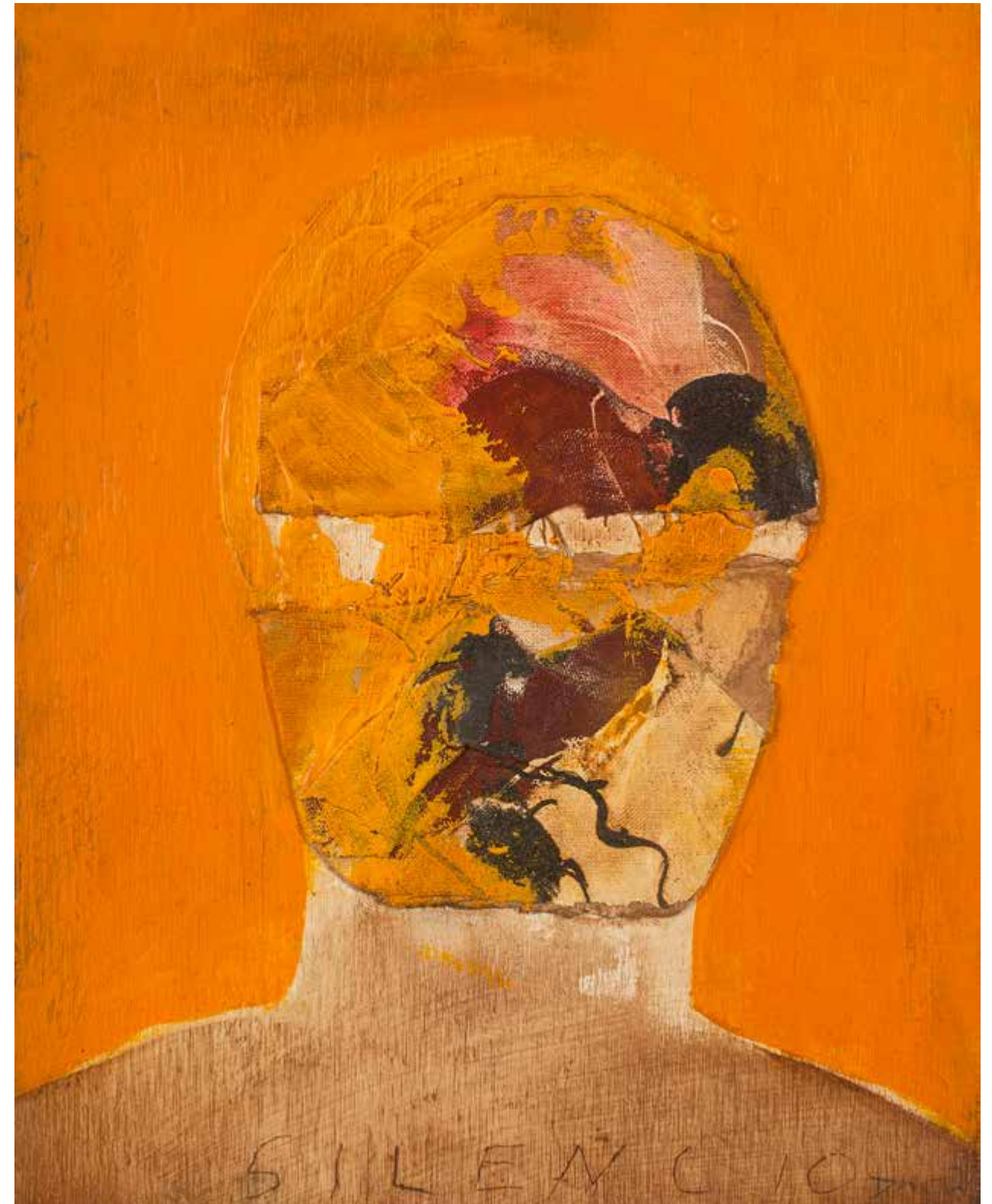
Abandonment of the word is silence. The written word appears when its pronunciation disappears. On the untreated part of the canvas, the scratched wood provides room for graphic signs, for non-painting; the virginal is scratched with letters, and what had nothing now has silence.

In the beginning was the word.

But the written word is not the exclusive form of communication. Here the image and the graphic sign compete to show the effectiveness of the message. What demonstrates silence better, the written word or the image of a face without a face?

Here there is a happy background with bright colours, the unmistakeable silhouette of a bust, but in the place where the features of the face should be we find brushstrokes of red, blue, green, pink and maroon. Instead of eyes there is a stripe of raw wood and one third, the right side, is an inverted shadow.

In the lower part the word silence competes in effectiveness with the image.



1999

BOCETO EN MOVIMIENTO / SKETCH IN MOTION

Varnish, graphite, ink on cardboard

01- 30,5x20,5 cm

02- 30,5x20,5 cm

03- 30,5x20,5 cm

04- 43x34x4 cm

05- 46x36x3,5 cm

06- 43x33,5x3,5 cm

07- 30,5x20,5 cm

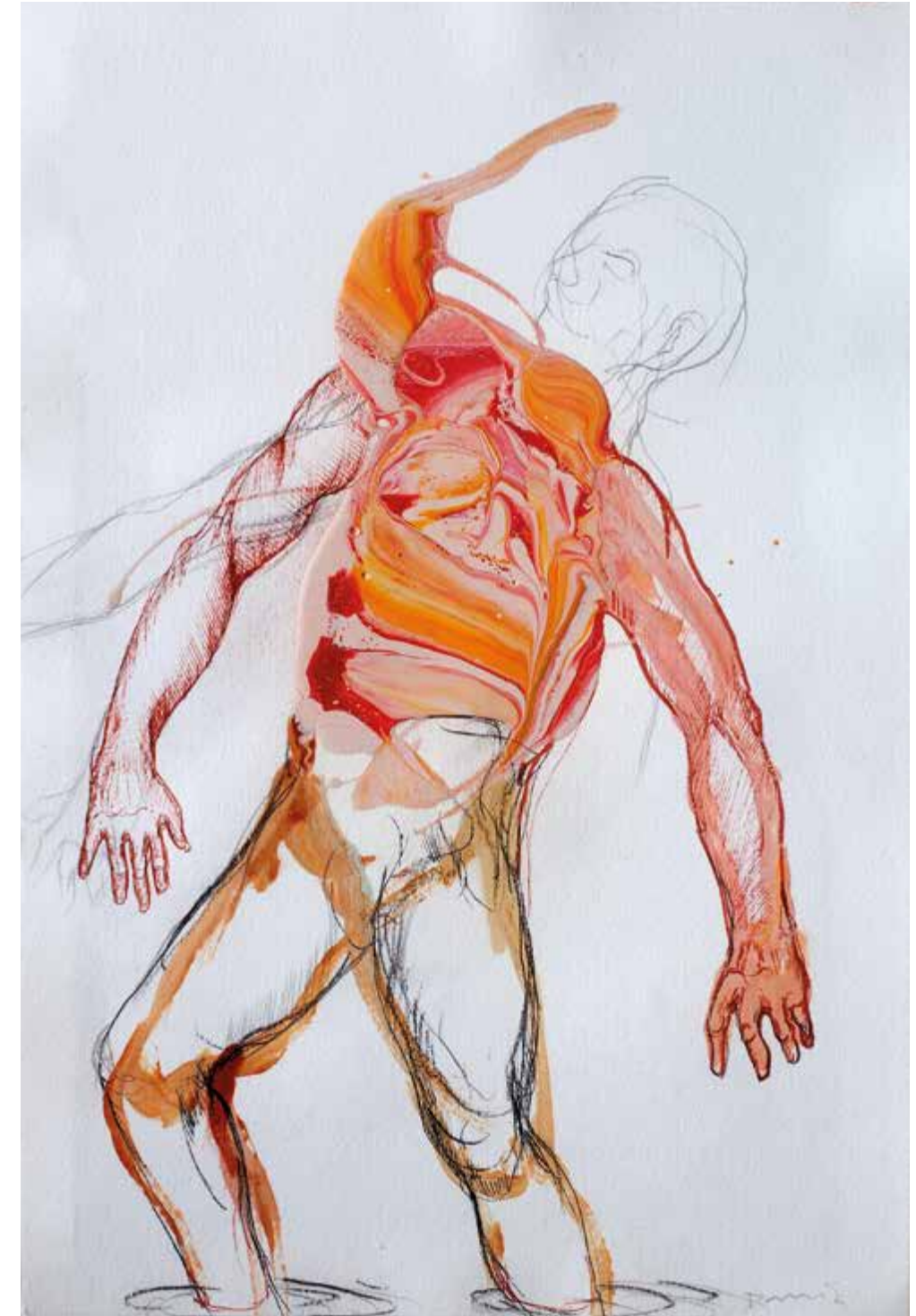
Here we have a series of preparatory sketches exploring forms of handling the movement image.

For Damià Díaz movement is the movement of the body, the body as both container and content. Movement is a faculty of the body, and the movement of the body is also what takes the measure of the universe; the position of bodies in space marks the frontiers of the known, of the nameable and of the ideas that we can have.

In these sketches, movement is repetition or duplication of members: three heads, five legs, four hands or two torsos. Repetition of a scene on the same plane stands for movement. Time inasmuch as the fourth dimension is represented in a flat two dimensional space, which calls for the creation of an artifice, a way of representing the intangible.

In these sketches the blotches of colour, the brushwork, the strokes are precise in motion, they are the dimension that explains the dimensions that are not there. The colour, applied mainly on the torso, and also on the head or legs but less profusely, underscores the entrails, the internal organs, the formless organs, but with a function, organs that move the body.

01



02



03



04



05



06



07



1999

RETAL DE UN TIEMPO / REMAINS OF A TIME

Graphite and oil on cardboard

106,5x77x5 cm

In very few of Damià Díaz's works does the painting look at the spectator, with the face seen whole and neatly outlined, a face with defined features, a face that can be recognised, the face of a living existing individual. In this case it is a metaphor, it is a being that breathes, looks and hates; someone ready to follow what he is looking at with his gaze, a gaze that is not returned; there is no mirror in this picture, there are just questions.

The being in the painting questions the spectator, he challenges him, examines him, asks him not to shy away from the gaze and not to shy away from answering the questions. What questions? And this is where the mirror comes in.

Formally speaking, the artist uses graphic resources borrowed from cinematography like dramatic lighting, close ups, the camera that waits for the character that moves towards the audience: the frozen shot. The twentieth century spectator has learnt to decode the cinematographic image better than any other, and the artist has learned from cinema.



2000

SERIGRAFÍA DEL PENSAMIENTO / SILKSCREEN OF THOUGHT

Silkscreen on paper

69x49x4,5 cm

The complexity of simplification. The palette of colours is highly similar to the usual one, but here the colour is distributed flat across the surface, the black generously so, the line of the drawing extended.

The exterior presence of the brain contains a square with straight lines on two of its sides and next to the cranial geometry on the others; the geometric figure adapts to the container, the square, here standing as a sign of the idea, which has to adapt to the morphology of its container.

A torso in profile, slightly twisted towards the opposite side to the spectator, aloof from the surrounding environs, and in the centre of the image, a band that goes from the back of the neck to the face; the band that contains language, and therefore the word, is represented as the addition of small shapeless forms, of gaps and lumps, of contradiction and paradox.



2000
INDIGITACIÓN / INDICATION
Oil, mixed media on aluminium
300x300 cm

A complex work, not only for its composition but also for its concept, its making and its narrative. We are not looking at an experimental piece, but a piece that is the result of experimentation. It is difficult to understand the process of research in the arts, as the concept seems to be more confined to the field of humanities, but here a hypothesis is translated into thesis.

Studies for the depiction of movement, silence and anatomies are combined to represent—or to imagine—the social function of the artist: to underscore. The artist must underscore, that is his role. He is commissioned with the task of lending visibility to what is invisible, to giving an image to an idea, to make the shift from the mental world to the world of physical presence.

Indigitar is a verb in Portuguese without any direct translation into Spanish which means: to nominate or attribute a quality to a person. The work shows various individuals, or perhaps the same individual multiplied various times, indicating, and even arms without bodies are pointing.

Anatomies are represented by black contours and by a filling of movement, colour, complex layering of brushwork and colour; full bodies are contained by a line that delimits their expansion, that indicate, do what the artist must do, they accept the commitment inherent to his trade.

The artist expelled from Plato's Republic for working with the dangerous image accepts his fate.



2001

RETABLO DE UNA SECUENCIA / ALTARPIECE OF A SEQUENCE

Mixed media on methacrylate

204x100x9,5 cm

The result of studying movement is to locate it in more neutral spaces that have less influence on the possibility of looking at movement. Looking at movement without hindrance. A man walks from left to right, like writing, and his skull leaves a little trace. In a proportioned body and only the head is hyperbolised, the head contains what the body transports.

Drawing, the outline is made in red, it is a light armour, it is protection for a body that contains chaos, a dynamic outside the laws of thermodynamics of bodies, an internal body subject to the laws of aesthetics, with scant colour: black, brown and red; warmth, darkness and passion.

The face, identity, is framed by a right angle just like the visor of the armour closes the outside world but does not foreclose the vision, thus suggesting an opening.





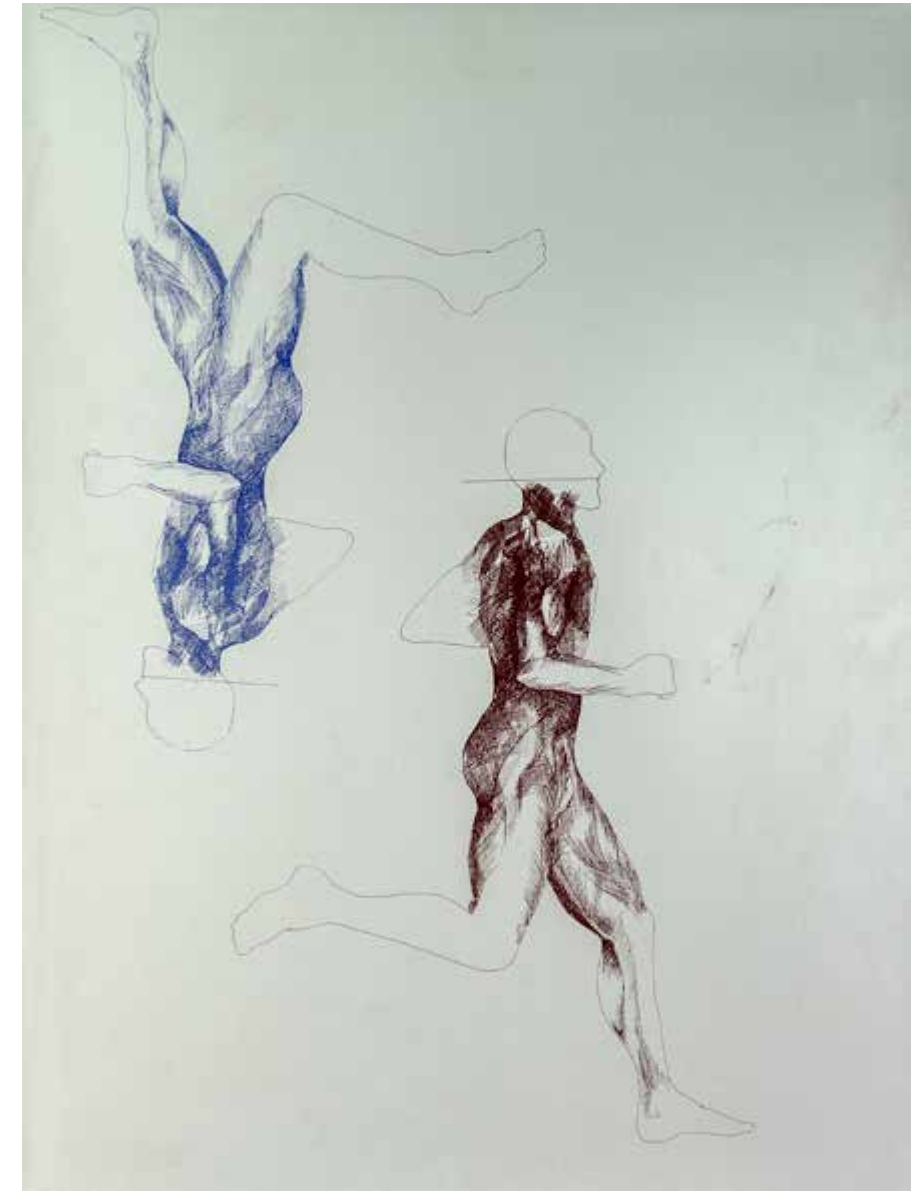
2002
CORREDOR / CORRIDOR

Silkscreen on aluminium
60x45x3 cm

Corridor in Uniform Circular Motion (UCM), a cinematic concept of classic mechanics alludes to the infinite and the complex: a body is displaced in a circular trajectory at a constant speed but variable velocity.

In the conception of the universe in the Orient, the circular is omnipresent, while in the West we view all movement and passage as rectilinear. It has a different origin and destination; alpha is not the same as omega. In this work there is a strange mix of these two conceptions, they are two identical bodies coming from a single drawing that is materialised in two ink prints with different colours: blue and black, alpha (origin) has a different colour to omega (end); that revolve around an axis behind them, individually, they are not yin and yang, they are not a fragment of one in the other, they are bodies of the West, individual, travelling a path of the East.

The corridor, subject to a movement from which it cannot escape, changes colour, changes thought, evolves, but it returns thanks to the obligation imposed by the uniform circular motion.



2002

COMPOSICIÓN DE UNA ABSTRACCIÓN / COMPOSITION OF AN ABSTRACTION

Mixed media on paper

98x87 cm

This diptych seems impossible at first sight, but we always have to look a little more. Two different images, one monochrome that enhances the geometric forms: squares, rectangles and semi-circumferences; they seem to be the frame for a missing form, a lack that is somewhere else. This is the place of the other part of the diptych, a compact form, in which some angle seems to fit into the other, the irregular edges could be matched in the other piece, immediately suggesting a game of searching for coincidences.

The work brings to mind the philosophy of Plato's The Myth of the Androgyne, the discourse on love, and on the search for the complementary, what makes a being complete. As he describes in *The Banquet*, in antiquity, humanity was divided into three genders; male, female and androgyne. Androgynes were round, with four arms, four legs, two faces in the head and of course two sexual organs, and Zeus punished them for their arrogance by splitting them in two.

Love strives to unite them.



2003
ESTUDIO PARA EL PERFIL DE UN SILENCIO / STUDY FOR A PROFILE OF SILENCE
Oil, mixed media on wood and aluminium
43x49x6,5 cm

Words like violence
Break the silence
Come crashing in
Into my little world
Painful to me
Pierce right through me

These are the opening lyrics to Enjoy the Silence, a song composed by Martin Gore (Depeche Mode) in 1990. This was the time when Damià Díaz began his studies on silence.

In music, silence is as important as sound. In between the sounds it is silence that bestows the composition with a sense of harmony. In art silence is a quest, an endeavour to find the image that represents it.

This trilogy explores the relationship of the face and the attack of words and noise in an individual that turns around and shows its profile. There are three possible aesthetic solutions, or three complementary visions, all three or just one are possible. Two on wood and one on aluminium, one on a dark, melancholic dramatic background; the other two unsettling and violent, like the words of the song. The three are coherent with the artist's imaginary, and each one of them shows a possible image for a state of pain.



2003

ESTUDIO PARA LA NOCHE / STUDY FOR NIGHT

Mixed media on cardboard

41x49,5x3 cm

This is not a prior study but a finished work in itself. Having said that, it is a study of the night. Night can be a time of solitude, silence, escape or encounter. If we were to focus on the themes proper to the artist, we could believe that night is a place, but what is in this study for the night is something else, night in this case stands for the feminine. The moon, darkness, calm and subjectivity are feminine.

We are facing a sexual act. In calm, in silence and empowered. The feminine is a night, the feminine as sex is the origin of the world.

The feminine is not present in Damià Díaz's work in bodily representations, but it is omnipresent on the conceptual level; the feminine is equivalent to the mental, structure, order, the reflexive. The feminine is a value to be attained, it is a structure for thinking and learning that puts order on a chaotic universe.



2003

RETRATO OCULTO / HIDDEN PORTRAIT

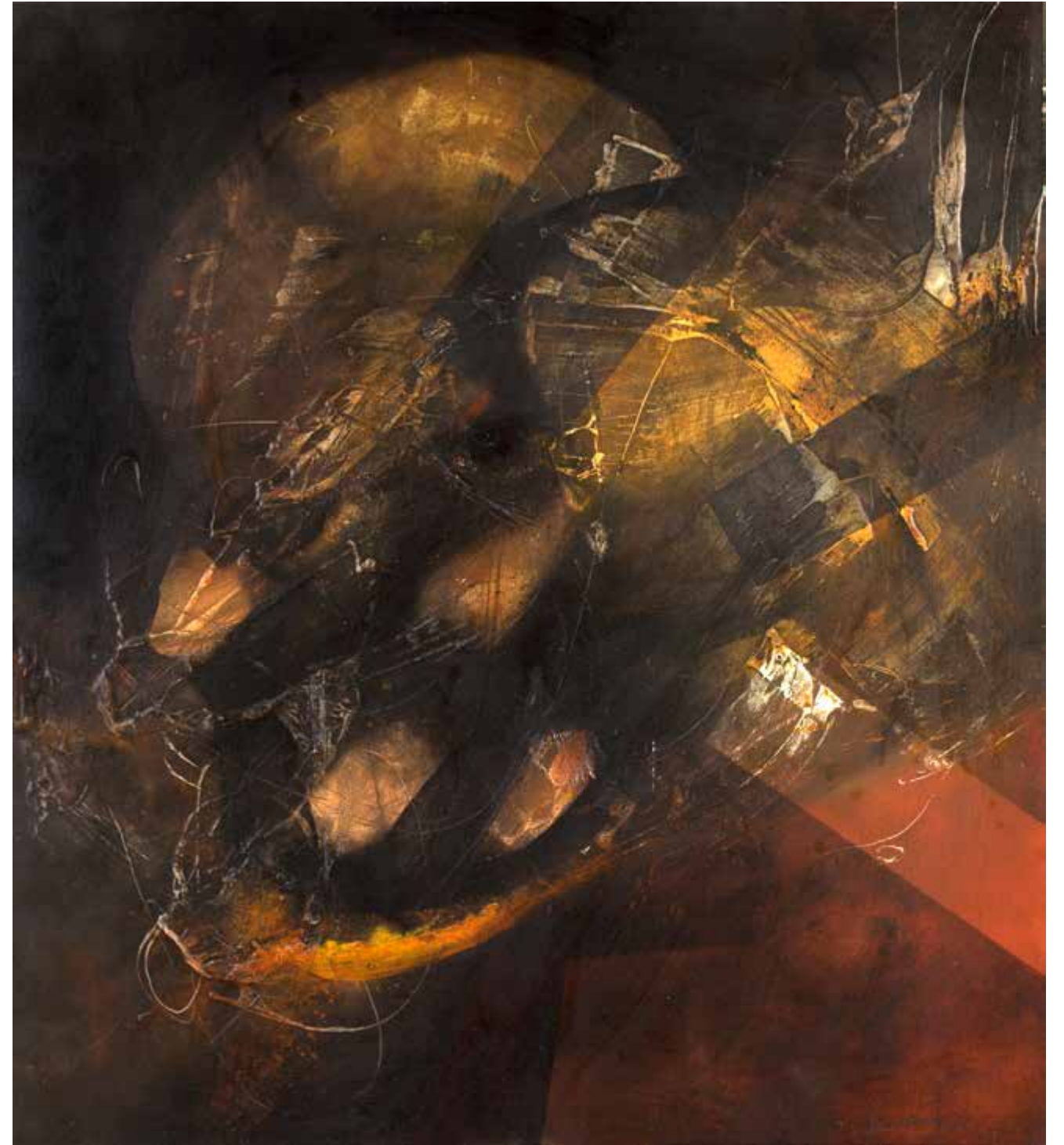
Oil on wood

100x100x6 cm

The direct relationship with Spanish baroque in Damià Díaz's work from this period is evident and palpable.

The idiosyncrasy of Spanish society has not varied in many centuries; an aggressive uncultured aristocracy keenly aware of its power has imposed on the masses a set of conditions of unbearable inequality, and in the face of this situation one is forced to opt for rebellion or melancholy. Spanish artists have not always addressed the country's social issues, but many who do so from a committed stance, make use of the Baroque iconography of melancholia. The man who suffers is faced with reality. The artist tackles the shadow, contrast, force and violence, distortion and exaggeration.

In this work in which many elements are accumulated and arranged in a small space, the presence of bright brushstrokes marks the anatomy: chin, nose and skull; the position suggests withdrawal, in a dark chaotic setting, a melancholic portrait that confronts man with his position in an overturned shrill world.



2003

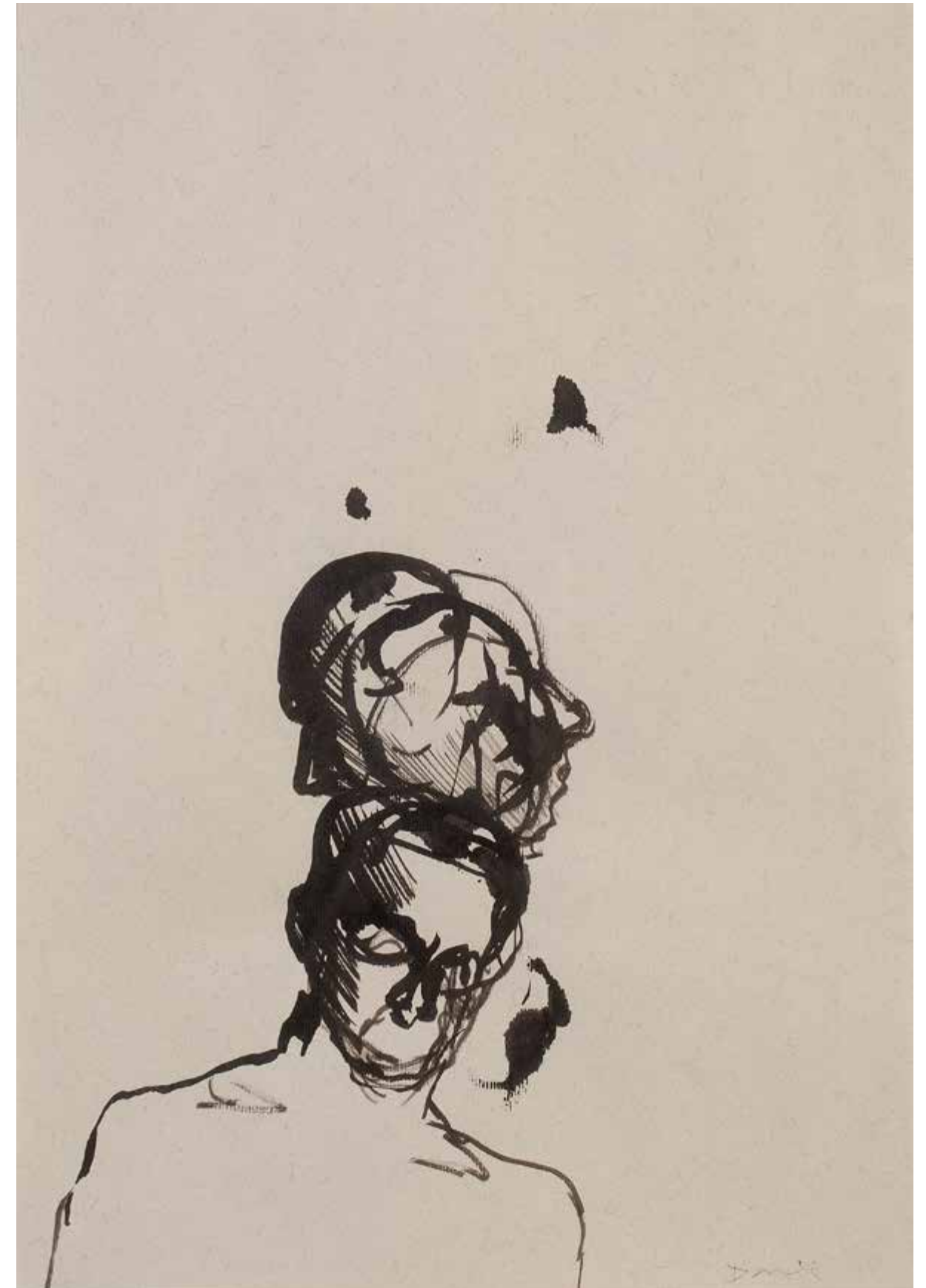
ESTUDIO PARA EXPOSICIÓN / STUDY FOR EXHIBITION

Ink on paper

47x39x3,5 cm

Several heads on a head. A simple, redolent image. Suffused with a feeling of strange tranquillity, on one hand the torso that sustains the head looks at the floor to its left in silence, conveying an odd sensation; the head in the top part, by means of duplicating it, seems to begin a movement.

An intimate, inexpressive and simple drawing with scant strokes and the odd stain, it outlines a rising path of thought. In an empty space, a melancholic figure cannot prevent his thoughts from escaping his head towards a higher plane. Faces with their eyes closed, a head that aims its gaze at the ground, an artist suffering from black bile, a black ink which is the dark fluid the artist himself uses to paint a melancholic self-portrait.



2004

ESTUDIO DE CABEZA PARA RECINTO DE IDEAS / STUDY OF A HEAD AS A PLACE FOR IDEAS

Oil on aluminium

25x25x6,5 cm

This is a seminal work in the artist's production.

It brings together all the processes learned from sculpture and painting in order to create a hybrid. He makes a three-dimensional almost sculptural canvas on which he paints his reflection on the place of ideas. Stored in his head, ideas move, change, get passionate, undergo a metamorphosis of colour, they try to escape. This is an endeavour to try to stop the world of ideas from escaping, a kind of autistic need, an imposition of thinking itself, the recreation of hermeticism. It is like a need to find in oneself the road towards the world. The most certain imperative in life, the passing of time, our path towards our common, shared destiny, captured in a hieratic, difficult, painful, blind and mute image, whose ears have been blocked.

These three heads partake in the double condition of container and content. They find a continuation in a series of small pieces, though for all that no less interesting, of three-dimensional layered and repetitive objects that take over the space, in search of a conversation engaged with its environs.

The scale now is everything, the heads that can contain the greatest and the tiniest of the universe, and heads that can contain the individual and locate him in the intelligence of his position and size in the face of the world.



2004
RECINTO DE IDEAS / PLACE FOR IDEAS

Shaped methacrylate, iron and paint
350x160x125 cm

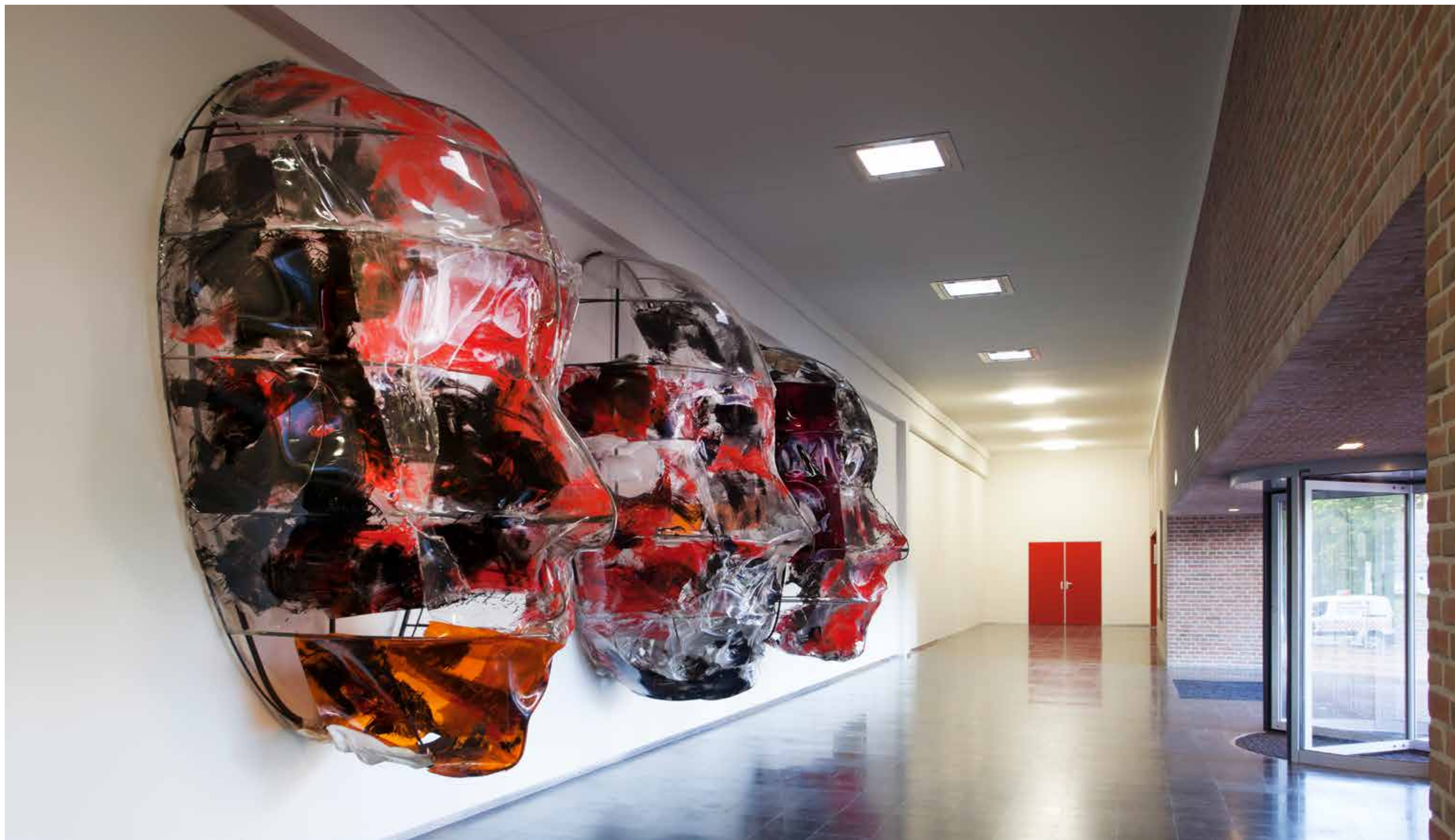
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2005

SECUENCIA DE UN TRÁNSITO / SEQUENCE OF A TRANSITION

Aluminium

100x35x40 cm

This is a fragment of time, a frozen moment in the vital sequence of a man who walks, who seems to be walking endlessly. We are looking at an image that freezes time, but which freezes many different times at once.

In the late nineteenth century Eadweard Muybridge was commissioned with the task of certifying whether, at a given point of time, a galloping horse had all four feet off the ground. A photographer specialised in new techniques, he conceived a complex system of photographic rifles that took consecutive photos in motion. This ambitious idea allowed him to fragment motion, first a trotting horse and then a man running or going up a stairs and countless shots of all kinds of motion, in sequences that still prove as fascinating today, well over one hundred years later.

An expert in anatomical depiction, Damià Díaz leaves prove of another phase in his experimentation into the representation of time.

This work freezes, or perhaps better said, it stratifies an instant or many instants, the passage from one moment to the next, a transition, an endless ongoing motion, a continuous walking, all the time and all times in one single instant that names everything.





2005

CAÍDA - CÁLCULO DE LA DISTANCIA DEL VACÍO / FALL – CALCULATION OF THE DISTANCE OF EMPTINESS

Aluminium

100x75x35 cm

In Euclidian geometry, the distance from one point to a plane is the shortest distance between that point and any other point on a surface and is measured with two different formulas.

The shortest distance between the plane of the world, the earth or the place that holds us, and our head, the place where our life happens, also has two solutions: one is the body itself, the distance between a point (our container of ideas, our head) and all possible points is what is measured by our own body; and the other solution is that this measurement is turned into an image, into a representation, in any conceptual construct that our container of ideas builds to equate body and idea.

In this case, a sculpture measuring one metre tall, reflects the calculation of the distance between our body and our place, a place that, by making the world that contains us disappear, becomes emptiness.

Various bodies, which are one body, calculate in this sculpture the distance between our head and our emptiness.





2005

CORAZAS / CUIRASSES

RESINE EPOXI

60x40x25 cm (Unit - variable measures)

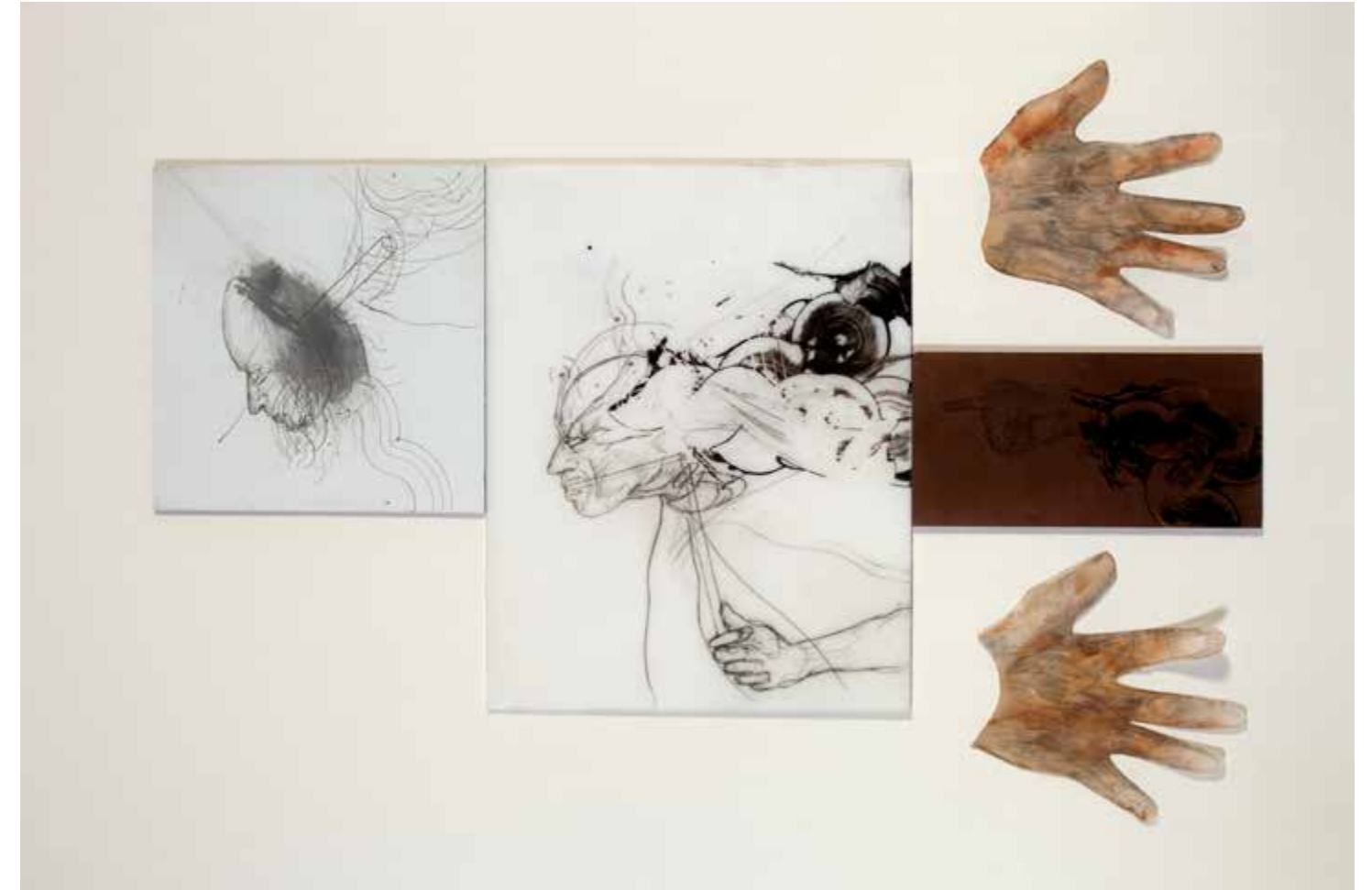
Why does the artist need armour? Damià Díaz is not the first artist to build his own armour. What meaning does armour have for artists?

Armour not only protects but it also isolates. It makes up a kind of exoskeleton able to replace the body of the artist himself. Armour is worn by knights, a caste apart, who live differently, feel differently and think differently because they lead wandering and dangerous lives. A civil servant working in the Ministry of Justice does not think about the need to build armour for himself. Each individual knight can be identified by his armour. No two are alike. The helmet not only covers the face, the helmet becomes the face.

The cuirass protects the breast and back, and in this case the artist is only interested in protecting the breast, and he uses the front part of the cuirass, which is reminiscent of a tortoise's shell.

This resin sculpture in the artist's signature palette of colours presents a repetition of cuirasses that is not an object for personal use. He has created a habitat, a small area where one can take refuge, even with other people.





2006

ESTUDIO PARA UN PROYECTO / STUDY FOR A PROJECT

Mixed media on paper, polycarbonate and metal

80x53,3 cm

In the seventies we began to get used to a type of artwork that contained more than it seemed up until that moment. We began to see documentation, plans of computer programmes, sketches, various prior or later versions to what was considered canonical, as well as documentary videos and various objects that made the work more polyorganic, more similar to the human body. Works in which the narrative came both from the meaning of each symbol used as much as from the syntax and grammar used to elaborate the visual text.

Since Noah Chomsky published Syntactic Structures in 1957, laying the foundations for the theory of Generative Grammar, artistic production has been influenced by the birth of new aesthetics, indebted to a different way of understanding language that opened up the possibility of creating a universal code in which the visual was always enlarged.

This piece combines a series of preparatory drawings for another work, hands and heads, multiplied and different. Flying heads that are stained, hands that point and open up and show their frank, waiting coloured palms. The story is proposed and it is the spectator that must read it and tell it.

2006

ESTUDIO SOBRE EL RUIDO Y EL VACÍO / STUDY ON NOISE AND EMPTINESS

Mixed media on cardboard

121,5x100 cm

Noise is something that connects with our sense of hearing, while emptiness is basically visual. Auditory emptiness would be the equivalent to silence. But the artist wishes to engage with various senses, with the concept of sensuality, with that form of understanding the world that has to do with what we do not process intellectually, with that which enters our mind through the senses, of visual and auditory images.

In this series of four images, the first three look towards the left and the last one to the right. On this occasion the figures are torsos and heads, and we see how letters enter and leave them, letters represented as emptiness in the painting, with each letter being a space stolen from colour, a reserve, something that we see because a part of the colour has been removed.

In the first, in which there is a certain movement, when the image is duplicated, one can see the exit of letters, standing for the verbal, sound and noise given that these letters do not make recognizable words or form intelligible discourses, and come out in a meaningless torrent. In the back of the brain, the oldest part of the human mind, the part inherited from reptiles, the part that looks after the most primitive aspects, the second one receives a stream of noise that it is only able to store as a container-body. In the third one a head is split at the level of the mouth, without eyes or ears to receive the torrent of letters that finds no entry and bounces off. The fourth one receives a trail of letters that enter directly to the centre of the brain and redden and define the face.



2007
SUSPENDIDO / SUSPENDED

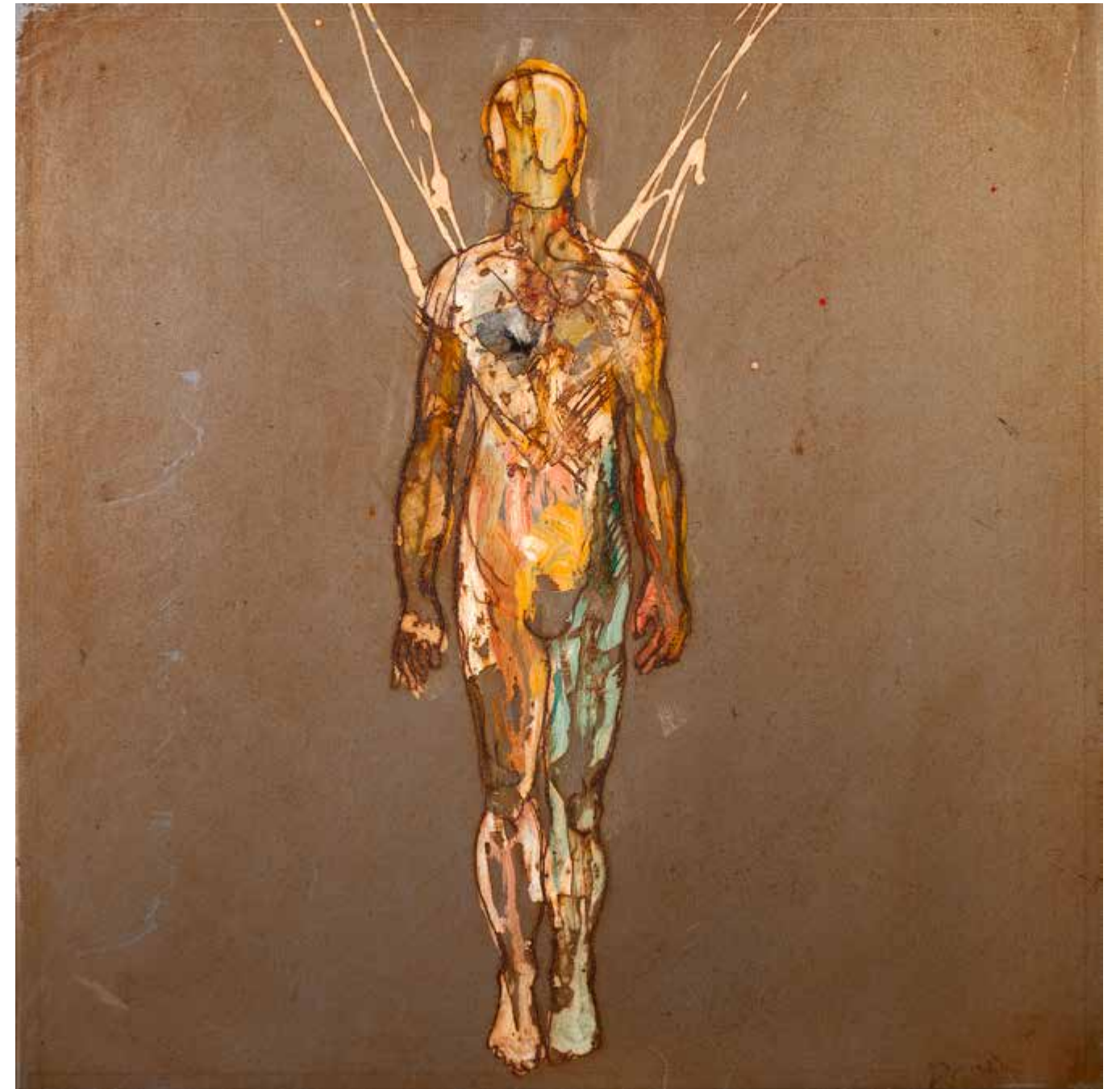
Oil on metal
40x40x5,5 cm

Stelarc hung his obsolete body and wondered if “a biped body that breathes, with binocular vision and a 1400 cc brain, is an adequate biological form?” In the second half of the last century the artist made profuse use of his own body. And in this century, what is the function of the artist’s body in a work? What does the artist do with his body? What does it serve the artist to refer his work to his body?

For Damià Díaz, using his body is depicting it, placing it in solitude, in nothingness, the body of the artist transformed into the work of the artist.

And the artist places his body in nothingness, in solitude. María Zambrano said that “only in solitude does one thirst for the truth.” The solitary man must not lie, the solitary lie is the best way of exemplifying the truth, and one lies only for others, as we all know the truth of our truth.

The effectiveness of the image-truth, the image of the artist is its complexity, and in this work Damià Díaz makes use of a resource he controls, fusing two different concepts together on the one plane: a man, a body, and nothingness, solitude.



2007

DESARRAIGO / UPROOTEDNESS

Chromed epoxy resin

84x84x4,5 cm

In ancient Greece, we can find it in Plato's *Politics*, when the first men were believed to have come from the earth, fruit borne by the earth. At a given time in history the reproductive cycle changed and they are then engendered and born from the union between the two genders. Man united with the earth, or man created from earth, like in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Man and his mystic union with the earth has been a constant in transcendental thinking, as is the way in which this union takes place, by means of what human organ can we establish osmosis with the earth: the roots.

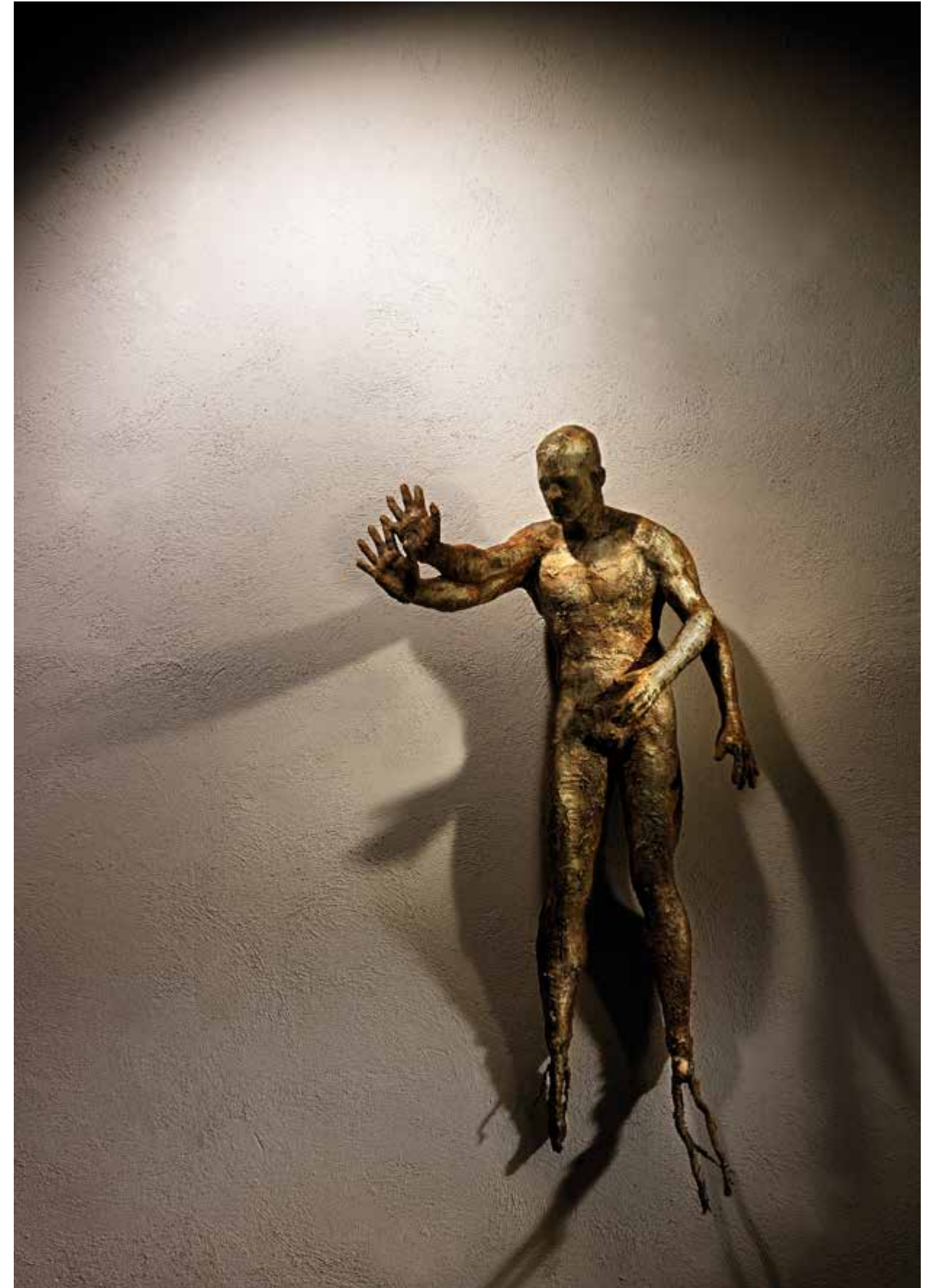
Man and his roots. Wherever our roots are is where we can find our explanations and our happiness. Our culture, language, family, love and tradition. Social and political organization is established by equals, those who share the same roots; a sense of belonging to a clan or group or a country are definitions of roots.

However, what deprives us of our most intimate roots is loss, uprootedness, which leads to the loss of our ancestors. The orphan is the epitome of rootlessness.

A sculpture of a man, hanging from a wall, without feet, with the beginnings of roots, without knowing whether they are growing or being pulled out, without knowing whether rootlessness is beginning or ending. The duplicity of the arms tells us that the figure is moving, the movement of the right arm could be the gesture of waving farewell, but the left arm seems to be about to grasp something.

An image of a body within the classic canons of beauty, a young mutilated body without feet, unable to move, with roots or losing them.

This ambivalent narration with two possibilities, ultimately decided by the beholder, is a product of the character of art, of the finished work, of an image which is the synthesis of thousands of previous images, of work, of prior study, of old obsessive sketching in an attempt to represent everything and to work with images not of nature but with images from the mind.



2007

TRES PENSAMIENTOS / THREE THOUGHTS

Oil and mixed media and cast silver on copper
100x200 cm



If in Damià Díaz's *thesaurus* the head is a place of thoughts, it is almost obligatory to represent its contents.

Idea. What meanings are hidden behind the appearances of images? Erwin Panofsky tells us in his work that every era has its own system of visual representation that enables a reading of any image that arises from within it. This was highly innovative in the early twentieth century, but it was the artists of this century that would give this statement its true meaning.

Ideas and thoughts are not the same thing. An idea is more organised, it has a cultural component, and we do not have the same ideas now as the ancient classics. But thoughts are more like fragments, they are flashes, almost sparks; thoughts are pieces of the fabric of an idea, and do not necessarily have more to do with the moment of the place where they arise. Thoughts, even the most basics ones, can be universal.

Three heads look towards the left, to the past, and assemble a common thought in a paradox of non-communication, a group that is not, a group that does not speak but, like in multiple bodies, organises its thoughts collectively.

To represent a thought, to represent a desire, to represent.

2007

SOMBRAS DE METAL / SHADOWS OF METAL

Collage, metal and methacrylate

100x200 cm

*"Toute page est un spectacle (...) toute mise en page represente et pratique un conception du langage à decouvrir"***
Henri Meschonnic

When we place a message on a lasting support and we present it to the world, we are pushing back the frontiers of the known universe. New images are always language discovered and are therefore a new universe.

On sheets of methacrylate and iron with precise edges, a man looks, looks into emptiness, he is concerned with what is full of nothingness, with what is different, with what can be looked at. Looking at emptiness is placing yourself in front of the possibility that your thought returns your own face to you. The profiles of a single face multiplied in various different materials, transparent profiles that add colour to the iron profiles. Colourful shadows that qualify the harshness but which do not open what is closed.

Designing the void is putting into practice a strategy to be discovered.

***"Every page is a spectacle (...) every design of a page represents and puts into practice a conception of language to be discovered".*



2008

ESTUDIO DE UN MOVIMIENTO / STUDY OF A MOVEMENT

Oil on metal

90x80 cm

Sisyphus was condemned by the gods of Olympus to roll a stone up a mountain side and when he was about to reach the top the stone would roll back down and he would have to start all over again. Albert Camus turned him into a hero of the absurd, the man who always repeats the same absurd meaningless task and to be the paradigm of the working man played by Chaplin in *Modern Times*.

The artist is the antagonist of Sisyphus, his repetition is creative obsession and while Sisyphus is caught in a repetitive circular motion, the artist moves in a spiral that advances. The artist repeats and repeats with an end, in search of the sought-after image.

This work is a step further, but in this case a consolidated step that advances. It is a representation on a noble metal support; it is a study that makes the shift from hypothesis to thesis, to end result. The four arms on one single plane, the arrangement of the fingers and the palms of the hands, the face, the position of the profile, the chromatic range tell us that we are dealing with a consolidated symbol and with the whole semantic content.



2008

APROXIMACIÓN AL CABALLERO INEXISTENTE / APPROXIMATION TO THE NONEXISTENT KNIGHT

Polycarbonate, silver and iron

52x48x40 cm

I have been able to witness the creation of many artists' armour. In some cases, the armour fulfils the original function of all armour, which is to protect the body in battle, but it is not the normal use. Armour is almost always used as a metaphor, or as a replacement for the body, or of some other thing, because the artist needs protection and needs to delimit his body. To delimit his body and his functions, his organs, his limitations. Each artist has a solution which is not only aesthetic but also conceptual for the construction of his suit of armour. But there are many, and proportionally much higher than the general public, who build their own armour.

One of the most interesting options I have seen is to bestow each part of the armour with the organic function in an imaginary artist's body. Evolution has prepared bodies for physiological functions, but the bodies of artists have creative needs for which they are never prepared. To build armour as a reinforcement for these lacks is an option.

In these drawings the armour is conceived as a removal of the outer skin, the complete opposite to the normal conception, an armour that removes the skin, leaving the muscles on view, but at once creating an invisible but impenetrable layer.

All the conventional elements of armour are contained here: rerebrace, couter, vambrace, gauntlets and mittens; and they are replaced by the paradoxical non-existent armour of *The Nonexistent Knight*, also reflected by the artist.



2008

**ESTUDIO PARA UN CASCO DEL CABALLERO INEXISTENTE / STUDY FOR A HELMET
OF THE NONEXISTENT KNIGHT**

Polycarbonate, silver and iron

107x36x56 cm

Helmets are still in use today. They are used by riot police, in various kinds of sports, and especially by the army, even though the medieval military suit of armour has all but disappeared except for the helmet, the element that protects the head.

The helmet that protects the head of *The Nonexistent Knight* is not a hard or impermeable helmet; it is a beautiful helmet, made from metal and precious metal (silver); it is a helmet that does not hide everything, but does reinterpret the face, leaving the ears free, allowing the knight to listen, but not to see.

A helmet as a second skin, a thin helmet that does not offer basic protection, a helmet that hides but does not isolate. It is a helmet to use only on special occasions, when the artist transformed into the non-existent knight admits that what he really wants is to be invisible.



2008
EDICIÓN DESARRAIGO / UPROOTEDNESS EDITION

Silkscreen and oil on aluminium
84x84 cm (Unit)

A change of support, shifting from sculpture to silkscreen opens up potential for playing with simultaneous gazes on various works. He took a photo of the sculpture made the previous year and then used this to transfer it to an aluminium plate, many times, and then he painted it, not unlike those pads children use for colouring drawings.

The options range from situating the image over water, or in a dreamlike space, or almost erasing it or making thousands of possible images of uprootedness. Because they exist and because the possibility of their existence is reason enough to bring them out.



2008

ESTUDIO PARA UNA ARMADURA / STUDY FOR ARMOUR

Mixed media and collage on metal

01- 100x100 cm

02- 100x110 cm

*“On peut imaginer le temps où les peintres ne feront même plus étaler par d’autres la couleur, ne dessineront même plus. Le collage nous donne un avant-gôut de ce temps-là”**
Louis Aragon

From a certain point in the life of the artist, his own personal iconographies begin to contain definitive elements and, as a consequence, to become fixed on lasting or stronger supports. Metal and stone are strong materials for receiving the meaningful.

In these two works a bust of a man is seen between two stars, possibly the moon; in one case frontally and the other case in profile. It is a taking of measurements to make the helmet, the part of the armour that protects the head. Measuring a man has transcendental connotations. In certain cultures it is indispensable for curing illnesses, and in western medicine it is a fundamental element for diagnosis. The act of measuring delimits, names and signals the individual. Nobody measures the same as another.

These two identifying images are reminiscent of those taken for police files, full-face and profile. Is there nothing that escapes this form of identification? What morphological changes does man undergo when under the influence of the planets? What is outside the control of the ideas contained in a person’s mind will modify the form of the individual with the passing of time, and the armour must be sufficiently elastic to accommodate these changes.

**“One can imagine a time when painters will no longer even have their colour applied by others and will no longer draw. Collage offers us a foretaste of this time”.*

01





2008

EDICIÓN CAJA DE RUIDOS / BOX OF NOISES EDITION

Silkscreen and oil on aluminium

01- 84x84 cm

02- 84x84 cm

“Both Hebraic and Classical mythology have in them the traces of an ancient fear. The tower broken in Babel and Orpheus torn” George Steiner maintained in his essay Silence and the Poet, on one of the most frequent human terrors, the fear of non-communication. Many people are tormented by recurring dreams with scenes of madness as they try to communicate but find it impossible, with *algarabía* (hullabaloo) drowning out the possibility of communication. *Algarabía* is a wonderful word in Spanish that directly references the Arabic language (*al-arabiya*) spoken in Al-Andalus, which, because it sounded so different to the Romance languages in the Christian kingdoms in the Iberian peninsula, seemed impossible to understand to the ears of those accustomed to Latin languages.

Noise, represented by large strokes of effective gestural painting, envelops two bodies that turn their backs on each other, that cannot turn around and look each other in the face, and bound by noise they do not speak to one another.

Nowadays, noise is bothersome for some but not for many others.

01





2009

COLECCIÓN PERFILES - HIERRO / PROFILES - IRON COLLECTION

Mixed media on metal

01- 277x80x11 cm

02- 140x173x16 cm

03- 205x220x30 cm

04- 59x83x10 cm

05- 96x60x7 cm

06- 280x150x25 cm

07- 135x125x8 cm

08- 150x190x12 cm

“If a piece of newspaper can become a bottle, that gives us something to think about in connection with both newspapers and bottles, too”

Pablo Picasso

Figurative forms that contain abstract paintings. The perimeter is a work whose area contains another. The configuration as individual works is brought into question.

How does one relate with the other? The answer is that there is no relationship. They are independent works.

The form is the frontier. Each piece seems to be an island in an aesthetic archipelago.

It is a model, a creative mechanism, a form of laboratory creation. Applying a figurative form to an abstraction of a random form produces results that we can accept as good or not, that we can accept in accordance with aesthetic criteria that the artist weighs up.

At a certain moment in time, influenced by Max Bense's computational aesthetic, it was believed that computers would be able to create creative mechanisms able to replace the work of the artist. Everything was dependant on the creation of the *aesthetometer*, a machine able to measure beauty, a machine still in the experimental phase.

The works in this series embrace a thematic, morphological and chromatic variety that corresponds to the work of the artist, which in this case is double: on one hand, the creation of the mechanism and, on the other, the end results.

01



02



03





05









2009

SIMULACIÓN DE UN PERSONAJE / SIMULATION OF A CHARACTER

Mixed media on wood

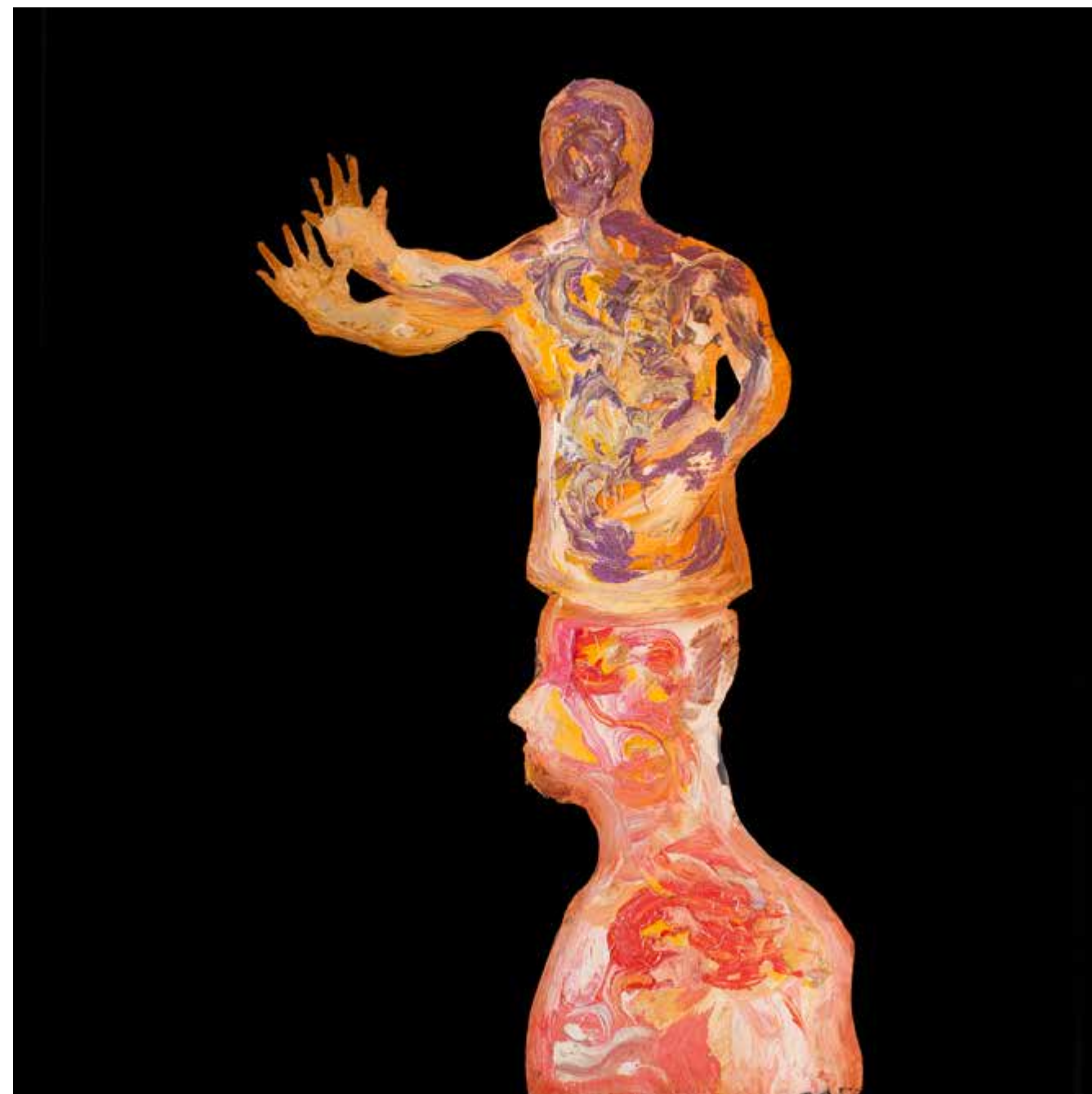
32x30 cm

Malevich said: “the gallop of a horse can be depicted with a pencil of one colour. But it is impossible to depict the movement of red, green or blue masses with a pencil”

In this work we see how the movement of the arms is conveyed. To this end, he not only uses more than one pencil but in fact uses all the materials available to him. Similarly to Malevich, sometimes art imposes impossibility on itself as a method to arrive at an impossible solution, to what does not exist, to what we do not expect. Damià Díaz shows the movement of the arm, because the arm is the limb that executes intellectual actions that end up in the work of art. The artist needs his arms as much as he needs his brain; without arms there is no art.

In this work, a body that stems from a head moves its arm, it executes the action previously thought of. In order to create it is necessary to start out from an idea, an idea that comes from the individual, and is then executed by his body. In this work an individual, the artist, is the only figure against a black ground; he is the only one able to create.

The artist speaks of himself because nobody will speak of him.



2009

ESTUDIO SOBRE EL DESARRAIGO Y MANIPULACIÓN / STUDY FOR UPROOTEDNESS AND MANIPULATION

Oil on wood

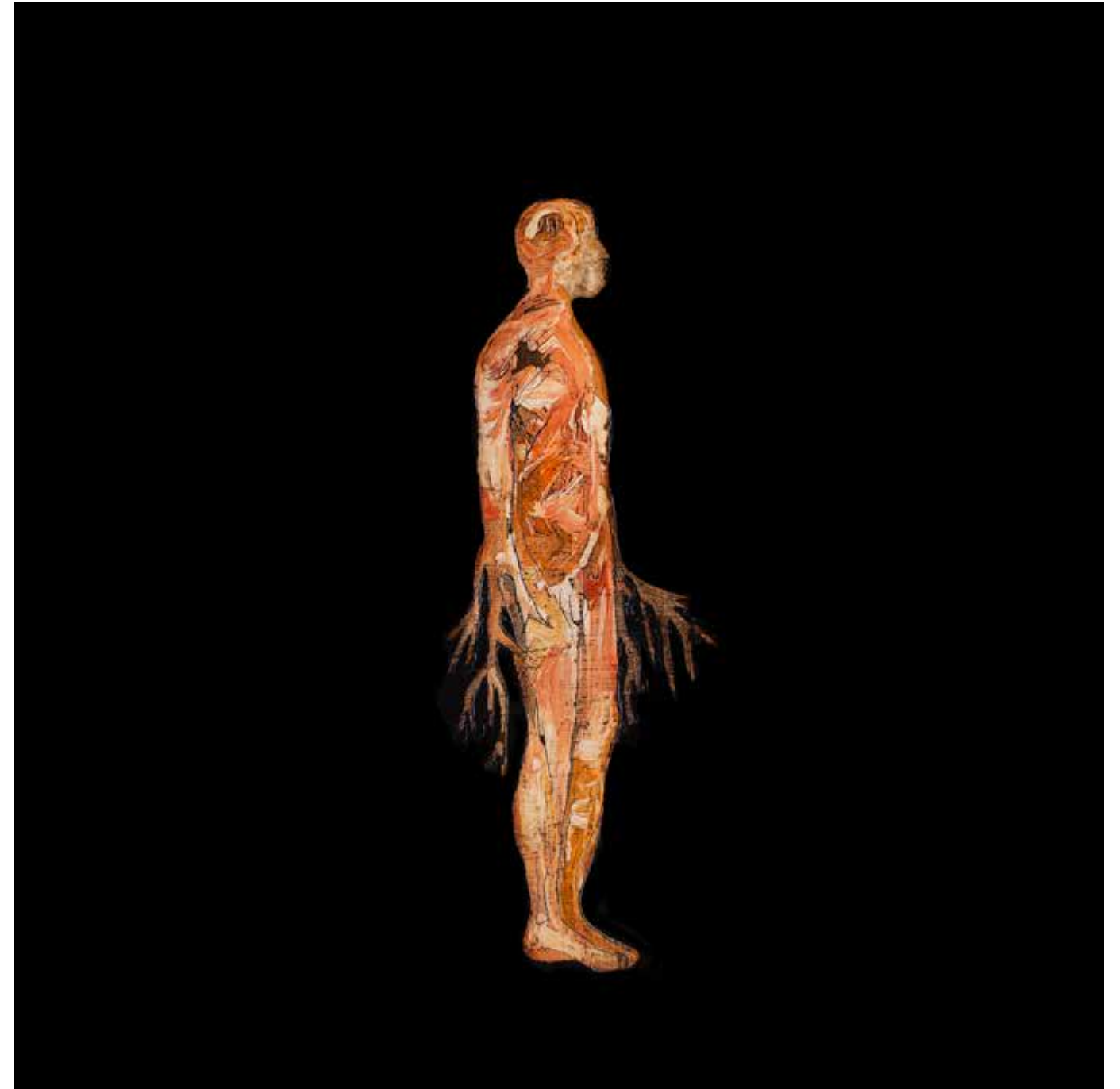
50x50 cm

During the summers at the end of the nineteenth century, Sorolla travelled to Marina Alta, especially to Xàbia, and there he painted hundreds of sketches of seascape elements like waves, rocks, sand, sea, clouds, sun, moon, children in the water, fishermen, boats and sails. Each one of these sketches experimented with the semantic possibilities of the element that would later find its way into the artist's large paintings which dazzled with narrative and sensual power. Sorolla was a tireless worker, and he was also inquisitive with a curiosity impossible to quench. Many of these sketches are wonderful abstractions, and it is extraordinary to ascertain the modernness of his brushwork when the painter was not painting but thinking about how to paint.

This work by Damià Díaz is the fruit of reflecting on how to depict uprootedness, an issue that he later addresses in more complex works with more dimensions.

But in this work there is a lot of body, a lot of definition, and a lot of self-portrait; there is a journey towards the inside of the body of the artist.

Roots sprout from the hands of the artist; roots that prevent him from painting or sculpting, but they afford him a place to inhabit, they anchor him to the earth, and this anchor has two consequences: on one hand, they give him a space to live in, a space of his own, a place to return to, a familiar space; and, on the other hand, they immobilise him in this very same place.



2009

ANCLADO / ANCHORED

Graphite and oil with collage on paper
210x132 cm

Technique and end result. With the passing of time the artist wants to take painting off the canvas. He seeks and researches and configures more effective forms, what every artist has always done in function of the technologies within his reach at any given moment.

The scene is based on a figure, on a body with its feet embedded, anchored, in a rock like roots, with a place of his own.

The image is perfectly described in the title of the work, *Anclado* (Anchored). Why does the artist transform it into an image? Is it because a mere statement is not enough? It is simple, because words have no visible forms, nor red for the colour of blood, or form or stains or lines to follow with the eyes.

And as Horace said in his *Ars Poetica*, "what has been thrust into the ears stirs the mind more slowly than those things which have appeared before reliable eyes."



2010

CROQUIS DE LA EVOLUCIÓN DE UNA ARMADURA/APPROXIMATION TO THE NONEXISTENT KNIGHT

Polycarbonate, polyester, iron and neon light
88x72,5x4 cm

I have been able to witness the creation of many artists' armour. In some cases, the armour fulfils the original function of all armour, which is to protect the body in battle, but it is not the only use. Armour is almost always used as a metaphor, or as a replacement for the body, or of some other thing, because the artist needs protection and needs to delimit his body. To delimit his body and his functions, his organs, his limitations. Each artist has a solution which is not only aesthetic but also conceptual for the construction of his suit of armour. But there are many of them, and proportionally much higher than the general public, who build their own armour.

One of the most interesting options I have seen is to bestow each part of the armour with the organic function in an imaginary artist's body. Evolution has prepared bodies for physiological functions, but the bodies of artists have creative needs for which they are never prepared. To build armour as a reinforcement for these lacks is an option.

In preparatory drawings the armour is conceived as a removal of the outer skin, the complete opposite to the normal conception; an armour that removes the skin, leaving the muscles on view, but at once creating an invisible but impenetrable layer.

In the finished work, it is only the skin that is used, what is inside does not exist, because this is what also happens with the literary work from which the artist borrows his inspiration. In it there is a skeleton that is hidden. An inner light that replaces the non-existent knight, the intangible yet measurable light, the light that belongs to another dimension of physics.

The armour conceived in the study comprises all the conventional elements: rerebrace, couter, vambrace, gauntlets and mittens; here there is no helmet as it is another work, the head has its own idiosyncrasies, and will soon make its appearance.

In the sculptures the hands are realist, they are a different kind of work and a different kind of material (in Baroque workshops, the main artist usually looked after the hands and the face, while other parts of the painting were done by unacknowledged painters); the skin covers the arms, which require wide mobility in the case of the artist; the torso is protected by iron; and a skeleton that is hidden from the spectator is moulded by the light, by *The Nonexistent Knight*.



2010

EL CABALLERO INEXISTENTE - LA LOCURA / THE NONEXISTENT KNIGHT - MADNESS

Oil, mixed media on metal

17x21 cm

Does Italo Calvino* make a suit of armour talk or does he fill the armour with the soul of the knight?

The puzzlement of the knight himself faced with his non-existence, he listens to his thoughts and listens to his voice. Others do the same, but he does not see his body. Where is his body? He never had one, nor a past; it is a present thought. He is the perfect knight because there is no support to degrade him. The story is indebted to Sophocles' Oedipus and Cervantes' Don Quixote, with a quest and madness as the central axis. The quest and madness are also the driving engines of creation.

In an oft-painted armour, what is not filled by words is filled by thoughts which are also often painted.

* *The Nonexistent Knight* is a novel by Italo Calvino from 1959 from his *Our Ancestors* trilogy.



2010
CABALLERO INEXISTENTE - ANSIEDAD / THE NONEXISTENT KNIGHT - ANXIETY

Mixed media on aluminium
100x100x5,5 cm

This is the prayer the Archpriest invoked to God at the beginning of his *The Book of Good Love*:

*Señor Dios, que a los jodíos, pueblo de perdiçión,
sacaste de cabtivo del poder de Faraón,
a Daniel sacaste del poço de Babilón:
saca a mí, coitado, d’esta mala presión.*

*Señor, tú diste gracia a Ester la reína,
ante el rey Asüero ovo tu graçia digna.
Señor, dame tu graçia e tu merçed aína,
sácame d’esta lazeria, d’esta presión.*

*Señor, tú que sacaste al profecta del lago,
de poder de gentiles sacaste a Santiago,
a santa Marina libreste del vientre del drago:
libra a mí, Dios mío, d’esta presión do yago.
Arcipreste de Hita, *El libro del buen amor* **

Release me from this evil cell.
The Archpriest of Hita pleads to God for help to save him from enslavement,
the pressure of prison.

In this work we see an agitated man, devoured by activity, exhausted and
anxious from the pressure of everything that moves around him. This is one
of the possible aesthetic representations of the pressure/prison, and the
subsequent anxiety, and another is that of the archpriest.

**Great God, who once hast even deigned the Israelites to free,
Leading them forth from Pharaoh’s hand and long captivity,
Thou Saviour of wise Daniel, that placed his trust in Thee,
Eke from this dark and evil cell release unhappy me.*

*Lord, unto gentle Esther once Thou gavest pitying grace.
So that Ahasuerus looked with favour on her face :
Even so. Lord, I pray thee grant to fue Thy saving grace,
And free me from this prison — from this foul and noisome place.*

*Thou from the fiery furnace. Lord, Thy servants hast released.
So that the three came forth unsinged, and persecution ceased;
As Peter from the roaring waves, save Thou Thy last and least,
O, rescue. Lord, from grievous teen, rescue Thine own archpriest.*



2010

CONJUNTO BURLA TRANSPARENTE / TRANSPARENT MOCKERY GROUP

Epoxi

50x35x25 cm (Unit - variable measures)

In *The Decay of Lying* Oscar Wilde spoke about the superiority of the artificial over the natural, arguing that artificial shares the same root as art.

And in *The Truth of Masks* he claimed: "For in art there is no such thing as a universal truth". Between these two works one can find the keys to understand this work.

As an author Wilde used wit as his method, mocking everything, even using it as a form of defence. His wit was the result of the coherence between his philosophy and how he lived his life. He made mockery of society for not allowing him.

Four high-reliefs of a young man's head that looks at us with repressed mockery. They are not indecent or disrespectful, and furthermore convey the sensation that they see you clearly. However, their transparency means that if you don't pay careful attention, you will see your own features and then you will discover their mocking tone.



2010

RETALES DE UN AUTORRETRATO / REMAINS OF A SELF-PORTRAIT

Mixed media on paper

122x102 cm

"The non-existent face of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, like a fright, signalling a fold in the middle of the visible, delimiting the kind of void that can never be filled"

Valentín Roma

How can you fill a self-portrait without a face? Where is identity moored? We could keep on asking the question, we could see where there is nothing to see, but we cannot invent or name what we do not know.

The artist makes his self-portrait in every work he does, he is always present, and what he does when he declares that this particular work and not another is a self-portrait is to say how he wants himself to be seen or to be remembered.

A portrait through fragments of a body created by building armour. Too hard to imagine, too hard to create from the unknown. The artist's self-portrait does not exist, and all he shows us are unrecognisable fragments.



2010

CABEZA Y MURMULLOS / HEAD AND MURMURS

Mixed media on aluminium

100x100 cm

Melancholia could seem like a synonym of sadness, a word which must be used when trying to define it, but the differences of time and movement are basic concepts in the work of Damià Díaz. Melancholia is a chronic state, while sadness is a feeling that comes and goes, and this is the way that sadness is portrayed, like a still from a melancholic film.

A face looking to the left, to the past, with its eyes and mouth closed. Three ears listening to the past, present and future. A head made with many strokes, with one single dimension and with many thoughts, able to combine inside it the whispers of thousands of moments, three ears like windows open to noise, murmurs from the past that bring melancholia with them, murmurs of the present that bring sadness with them. Murmurs of the future that bring ...

Sadness has as many faces as there are kinds of sadness. But in this case the portrait is not that of a sad face, it is the face processing the murmur that brings the sadness that brings the melancholia.



2010

**COLECCIÓN CABALLERO INEXISTENTE - INEXISTENTE EN ROJO / THE
NONEXISTENT KNIGHT - NONEXISTENT IN RED COLLECTION**

Mixed media on aluminium

200x100 cm

The profile eschews the frontal gaze. The profile situates the eyes far from the eyes of the beholder. There is no exchange. And above all else it precludes seeing the duality of the face.

Each face has two highly differentiated halves. It is the consequence of the fact that the right side of the brain manages the left side of the face and vice versa, which means that the facial features are very different if we were to draw an axis dividing the face in two.

When we see a profile we see only a part, and not just morphologically speaking, of the individual, but above all else we only see an emotional and rational part.

This work, highly complex in both execution and composition, a profile that dominates the composition, on a more dense, more intense body which becomes redder and flatter as it gets further from the head, and inside the profile is a head, which has a weak outline, seen from the front but without eyes, without an exit, that closes the gaze but also the possibility of the beholder entering the head.



2012

TORSO DORADO / GOLDEN TORSO

Terracotta and paint

44x41x28 cm

A free-standing sculpture, a fragment of a body. By exhibiting a torso but without a stand or pedestal, it is no longer a framed portrait, it is not a normal plane, and becomes an abandoned fragment. Because he did not want to make a portrait in bust form.

A fragment of a golden body, gilded like the golden ratio or divine proportion, a proportion which this torso abides by. The golden ratio came about from an attempt to solve the following geometry problem: to divide a segment in two in such a way that by dividing the total length by the larger segment, we obtain the same result as dividing the length of the larger segment by that of the smaller one.

The golden ratio is present in many examples of nature; it is an aesthetic pattern that nature uses assiduously. The body of man does not fulfil the golden ratio but his torso does, and the artist does so here by situating it in the space of aesthetic nature. To take the human torso out of the artistic, the artificial, is done by inscribing it in the opposing world of nature. Making it natural by locating it in a natural surrounding and believing that by analogy it will become natural is not artistic.

Art becomes nature using a single golden colour pencil.



2012

EL VOCERO / THE TOWN CRIER

Digital print on metal

150x150 cm / Edition 1 of 8

The voice is air, coming out of me to speak to you.

In villages in the rural era, time and the changing seasons was a matter of local knowledge, of church bells ringing on the hour, the half-hour and quarter-hour, which allowed us all to place ourselves collectively. Now the social aspect of popular and secular intelligence has been replaced by the alienation of the individual today looking at his watch or smartphone. Temporally speaking, we are no longer situated as a society, but only as isolated individuals.

Town criers speak in the name of others, they give us their voice. Initially created as a sculpture, this image is transformed into two dimensions because the artist wanted to give his point of view of it, he wanted it to be seen in profile; for the extension of the voice to be clearly seen through the instrument; to recall those voices in towns and villages which, following orders from the public authorities, used to inform all their inhabitants.

Ready access to information is the paradigm of individualization today. Town criers, who used to tell us about what was happening locally, what mattered to us as individuals or as a family, clan or group, were first replaced by the mass media that then informed us about what was going on in the region, nationwide and worldwide, which spoke to us about what affects us from the distance. And today, we have individual access to information through our phones or computers, we receive news chosen by magical algorithms, by a supranational corporation. Today we are nobody, and we are deprived of spaces of meaning and identification, we are deprived of villages, of public squares, of an agora and of friends that we can feel and touch.



2012
DESARRAIGO / UPROOTEDNESS

Digital print on metal
150x150 cm / Edition 1 of 8

When we were told that each one of us was partly an I and partly his circumstances, we were not told that we could choose these circumstances ourselves or that they could be inherited, that these circumstances were also our roots, our legacy, our genetic predisposition, the passing on of knowledge handed down to us.

Is there a paradox in this man walking with his roots, thanks to his roots, as he moves towards uprootedness?

The artist has decided to show us only one profile, the right, to give us only one part of the image. Showing one profile implies hiding the other, and concealing it behind the one being shown means just providing one part, the one that interests me from among the paradoxical whole. The person who looks has to understand that he has been situated in a specific point, that there is no possibility of seeing what is hidden, and if he wants to see it then he has to do so with the eyes of the imagination. The artist forces you to do it. The artist conditions you.

We see a highly complex image, built following many others, an image that contradicts itself, balanced in its imbalance, both light and heavy, a real body with roots, blue skin, moving forward yet frozen. It is uncomfortable to look at and yet we have to keep looking at it.



2012

LA BURLA / MOCKERY

Digital print on metal

150x150 cm / Edition 1 of 8

Faces are not portraits. The face as a metaphor for the body is a portrait. We can find neurons in different parts of the body, not just in the brain but also in the stomach or the spleen. Our body thinks as a whole, the body is an entity, and when a body executes an action it does so from its overall reality. Mockery is one of the acts of rebellion of the body, of the body that thinks. It is not just a gesture. It is a necessary place, a space of sentimental anarchy.

The face is the mirror of the soul, or not. The face can be just a mirror, which, in this case, the artist holds up to us as a challenge, the challenge of being free, to concentrate the whole organism just for one second in the action of moving the muscles of the face and expressing individual freedom, a second of absolute glory.

The image is that of a face in profile, from which it seems as its protecting skin has been flayed. It is the face of the artist without armour, without skin, with all the blood of the body concentrated in the facial features: mouth, eyes, nose and chin; a whole being that concentrates its energy in a single gesture, a mockery; look at my tongue.

Look at my freedom, look at yourself. Are you able to do it? Can you mock the world and mock yourself? Mockery is a risk that must be run in the few seconds of social rest we allow ourselves to take.



2013

RECORRIDOS DE UNA TORMENTA / PATHS OF A STORM

Oil on orange methacrylate

01- 76x70,5x4 cm

02- 76x70,5x4 cm

03- 76x70,5x4 cm

04- 162,5x160,5x6 cm

05- 160,5x162,5x6 cm

06- 70,5x76,5x4,5 cm

This polyptych is proposed as a kind of *A User's Manual*, similarly to the approach adopted by Perec: as a visual jigsaw puzzle, as chapters in a discordant narrative. Here, like in Perec's book, the manual is for Life. How is it possible to navigate the storm of life with a map?

Maps are one of the most complex abstractions man has ever created. Only music is more abstract. A map shows territories and also the way of going from one to another, how to navigate a storm.

Life does not come with a user's manual and, if there were one, we would not want it. Life forces us to live it, and tells us it is best to endure storms. Against the completely unexpected background of an orange universe, bodies emerge from cubes, the bodies attract storms and release storms, and similarly to lightning rods heads absorb storms.

01



02



03







2013

INDIGITACIÓN Y FIGURA / INDICATION AND FIGURE

Mixed media on aluminium

150x150 cm

In this work the narrative is framed within the cinematographic concept of the reverse shot. The shot is what we see on the flat plane, and the reverse shot is that which, while not visible, is part of the scene; it is what we do not see but what we can intuit or know, and this knowledge is personal, every person fills in what is missing, the lack of presence; this reverse shot is different for each individual, we fill in what is missing with the learning which is not ours and that makes us part of the scene and the story being told, because we put part of ourselves into what is only suggested, and so the story told is going to contain some of our story, and this personal relation makes it closer.

In these works we do not need to see the complete body. We have enough with a part, the arm that signals, the finger that points to the three faces of one body, the three heads in three different moments in the life of the body.

When looking at this work, each one of us can identify either with the signaller or the signalled, because we have all been, at some point in our lives, in one of the two roles.



2013
CAÍDA PERDIDA / LOST FALL

Oil on aluminium
150x150 cm

"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards" Sören Aabye Kierkegaard

Three heads for a single body. What does a head stand for in this work? What does it try to convey when it appears? There is never a simple answer in art, and in this case, we are talking about a practice of thirty years, in which there is an overall coherence of signs, but in which the semantic charge of each one varies with the passing of time.

In this work the palette is reduced to black, and speed makes its appearance in the execution of the brushwork of each stroke and in the meaning of the work. A head on shoulders ends up in another that is supported in another body and ends up in a third one that rests on the half of a body.

Heads are containers of ideas, metaphors in this work of time, the passing of time gives each one more body, a becoming that completes the individual. The head that in the first image is emptier, lighter, is gradually filled, growing darker and denser until almost losing all features, time.



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To have and to collect

The verb 'to have' is one of the words with the most meanings in any language, simply because it is not possible to include everything that it can say within one single definition. It is also one of the most important verbs, and without it, without its meaning, we would not be able to pronounce a discourse of any description; its semantic field engages with possession, one of the most relevant issues for human existence. Religions, philosophical theories, psychological discourses, literature and art repeatedly address the concern of man and possession, the question of *having*.

The verb 'to collect' has a simpler meaning: "to form a collection of something"; and the definitions of *collection* and *collector* are pretty much of the same kind. It doesn't seem as if the definition of collecting is the source of many headaches for linguists, or indeed for art historians, and the act of collecting has only been of occasional interest to some psychologists who view it as a possible source of pathologies, or to underscore what they believe to be the main characteristic of collectors: order, passion, exhibition and possession.

In *Le Système des objets* (The System of Objects), his doctoral thesis from 1966, Jean Baudrillard examined modern man's relationship with objects, and also with cultural, historical and artistic objects; according to him, every object has two functions: to be used and to be possessed. The passion object: as Maurice Rheims tells us, "the love of collecting is a kind of passionate game" in which the collector undertakes a process of personal affirmation because "one always collects oneself" and a process of transcendence given that through his collection he can overcome the limits of his own space-time framework and project himself in time. Baudrillard concluded that collecting is the act by which the collector elaborates a personal discourse to interrelate with his surroundings by means of objects.

A good example can be found in the Spanish sculptor and collector Frederic Marès, (Port Bou, 1893 - Barcelona, 1991). And the word collector is used here deliberately even though all his biographies describe him solely as a sculptor, thus overlooking his most prolific activity of all, the one for which he could well be remembered. His vast collection is now on view, divided between the museum of his foundation in Barcelona and the Museo de Historia in Sabadell, the Museo del Ampurdán de Figueras, and the Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. He also created new museum centres, such as Museo Frederic Marès de Montblanch, Museo de Arenys de Mar and Museo del Libro Frederic Marès at the Biblioteca de Catalunya. Likewise, in the Study-Library open to the public in the so-called Gabinete del coleccionista (Collector's Cabinet) tens of thousands of everyday objects are on show (fans, relics, photos, clocks and watches, toys, pipes, combs and automatons). Marès sought out, ordered, catalogued and exhibited pieces with which he constructed a wordless narrative, a story with objects, and he was extraordinarily generous when donating his collection to various towns and cities in Catalonia. It is also true that his insatiable drive to collect sometimes led him to plunder or pillage, and it is on these fraught limits that psychological studios into collecting with some kind of emotional disorder are located, overlooking the key intellectual task involved in ordering, locating and researching that are inseparable from any act of collecting.



Klaus Krammer in Amsterdam



Sjaak van Vliet, Ronald Egger and Damià Díaz in Altea / Spain

Every collection comes from a personal event, from a shift in the life of a person. In his *Brown Book*, Wittgenstein said that sometimes a person's mobility is reduced by the joints of his skeleton, and it is necessary to insert more joints to enable a necessary yet impossible movement. In fact, he proposes that whenever it is necessary one has to break a bone and insert a new joint, proposing a completely different, lasting and liberating skeleton. To begin a vital process like the act of collecting is like inserting a new joint in the personal intellect. It opens up a new form of inner relation, and also of relating with the world by means of interactions enabled by the collection. The collector writes, makes and creates through the relationships established between the objects in his collection.

We can find art collections whose core axis is a particular theme, geographical area or time frame, a specific medium (photography, fresco, sculpture or video) or a specific artist or art movement. These are the kinds of decisions that speak to certain affiliations; that indicate that the preferences of the collector are related with a desire centred around this core axis that is transformed into a relationship of possession (having) which evolves towards a relationship of utility (collecting). These are distinct yet complementary drives and they lead to relationships with the objects on different levels that allow the pleasure proportioned by these objects to have emotional, sensual and intellectual components.

To have is simple, to collect is complex. Building a collection is an intellectual activity.

Taxonomy is the science of classification, and collecting is impossible without it. In 1909, Aby Warburg started to organize the Warburg Archive, trying to put order on his collection of over 60,000 volumes with educational purposes. What he lent importance to was not the quantity but the ordering of his library. At the same time, he put together the *Atlas Mnemosyne*, a collection of images that would tell the story of the memory of European civilization. Little understood at the time, Warburg's task could be inscribed within the field of historiographical research, as documentarian and also, and why not, as an art project. To collect is akin to this drive to order, to lend importance to the relationships of proximity between one object and another, to forego the word and to give taxonomy a narrative quality.



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Conversation between
Klaus Kramer and
Damià Díaz



A narrative is consolidated by repetition. The more a story is told, the more it is honed to its essence. Age-old tales are so effective in conveying lore or wisdom because they have been emended with the passing of time and been tinted with different cultural and temporal nuances. In this particular case, their professional trajectory is full of many shared projects, events and moments, and their narratives on them are of special interest in understanding their conception of art production and interpretation. These are two people with a vast learning both of the history and the practice of art, with a broad-ranging culture and worldviews, and an interest in their shared concerns is necessarily of general interest.

My interest has, first of all, to do with the reasons why a collector with a certain baggage to his credit takes an interest in a young painter, still in the making, and decides that he is someone worth following. I wanted to listen to the story, one that has already been told, about how his interest in this particular painting came about.

What is the next picture going to be like?

(The answer to the question whether he remembered what the first painting by Damia he saw was like)

Klaus: the picture was vertical and black, very dark and gloomy. It was almost like a cry, as if the artist wanted to break out, trying to flee from who knows what, maybe from figuration or tradition or maybe just breaking away for its own sake.

Damia: I was in second year at Fine Arts and was fed up with drawing anatomy.

Klaus: I spotted some unfulfilled desire in the painting and I liked the fact that the intention to change, the need for change, was so intensely visible. At first, I didn't like the picture very much. What really interested me was how what I saw to be the artist's conflict with his own work would evolve.

I was intrigued to see how he would manage to break with figuration, because I was convinced that at some stage this was going to happen, and that his problem with the type of image he was working with at the time was in fact the driving engine for a change that would bring with it some really interesting results. I didn't want to add any pressure. It was a while before we saw each other again, and I was sure that he would react. I knew his father's work, but I didn't know to what extent it was a reference for him. I was never clear about the level of influence of family tradition on his work, but at that time I believed it was strong and I wanted to witness the process of how he would break away from it, from a legacy which, at that time, was very evident to me, but as Jewish tradition says: "you have to kill the father to become an adult."¹

¹ Theory argued in Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*.

Damià Díaz embodied what was still to come, the potential, the possibility of becoming something. Spain was changing like never before, and I was witnessing that change. Everything was new, everybody was doing something and everything was possible. Artists were springing up from nowhere, new things were happening overnight. It was a fascinating moment of social change and I also wanted it to be a moment of personal change.

And what I wanted to know was simply what the next work would be like.

(Question: And what was the next work like?)

It was the same.

(Question: When did you realise that the following was the definitive?)

I still haven't realised it. I still have the same interest in seeing the next.

The interest lies in the process, in his process, and in me following this process.

When I showed Damià's work to an art critic friend, he wasn't particularly interested in it. He surprised me by dismissing it as classical, and that provoked me. I had my own ideas, and I remembered a quote that more or less spoke about how a young artist shows his work: endlessly; a young artist never stops showing you what he is doing, he always believes that by showing something more that he is going to convince you better. At that moment I wasn't sure what was the exact reason why I was surprised, what attracted me. Maybe I did know but I found it hard to put into words. That work had something that touched me at that point in time, but I understood that what really attracted me about his work was the always latent promise that there was something better in the future.

At that time, I was looking at the work of a lot of young artists. I owned a gallery in the region, and wanted to know what was happening. For me the challenge was to discover artists that held my interest and made me want to know what the next painting would be like. And what I believed to be my task as a gallerist, besides selling artworks, was to help artists to produce work and to make it easier for them to keep working. I managed to pay some of my artists a monthly stipend so that they wouldn't be oppressed by just trying to get by. For me, economic freedom enables creative freedom. That way you don't have to be so concerned about producing something likeable, and one is free to create what one believes is good and not what one thinks is going to sell.

On certain occasions, there have been works that were like anchor points in Damià Díaz's output. There are some works that are seminal, that signify a turning point, and at once a new foundation in his immediate production, something on which to build a change. Something that afforded a glimpse of the new parameters of his work. These works arouse a sensation somewhere between surprise and excitement for the new path. There is one specific work that comes to mind, a large triptych which now belongs to a collector friend in Santo Domingo, an abstract landscape.

Damià: There was a series I started on silence and the sensations conveyed by silence². I started to explore the idea of horizontality, what happens in a sequence. It was really important for me, and it is something that I still believe is vital. On occasion I look for silence, because I am not able to take on everything that attracts my attention. Since then, noise and silence have been key subjects in my artistic praxis, and they come from that rupture.

At one point early on my idea was to create works that could have been fragments of a classic altarpiece, or could fit into one. These works come from my formative period, when I used to visit cathedrals with my parents. I remember that the sculptures in these cathedrals were black, covered with the patina of centuries, not like the restored and cleaned cathedrals of today where the sculptures look as if they had been freshly carved or sculpted. My family, especially my father, sought out the hidden treasures in Spanish churches. There were many works hidden away in churches, outside the reach of museums, which could be seen in the places for which they were originally created. These are the places where I have always preferred my works to be exhibited in. They are the perfect places, because of their shadows and lights, the dramatic chiaroscuro, and this is where my fascination with exhibiting in old places of worship comes from.

Aramis López

In the conversation Klaus underscores his interest in seeing how Damià develops artistically, but what we find is a parallel process of his own personal growth. Everything starts with a picture that is not in itself highly attractive, but rather in what it promises, a promise of change, a change that could be shared by several of the artists that worked with the area's foremost gallery at that time.

Around this period, Altea, Denia and Xàvia were frequented by some of the big names in Spanish contemporary art: Eusebio Sempere, Fefa Seiquer, Juan Navarro Baldeweg and Rafael Canogar, to name a few, spent a lot of time in La Marina, just as did Joaquín Sorolla in his day, but they did not exercise a major influence on local artists.

THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER STEP

(Answer to the question on how he views Damià's engagement with more technologically-based art)

Klaus: Damià, an artist must, as all artists are bound to do, explore the possibilities of his time. On my first trip to Florence to see the sculptures in its piazzas, I had the feeling of travelling back in time, yet something simultaneously transported me to the future. The sculpture is rooted in our culture but it has a new message for each new viewer; each one of us brings his experience to the message of the work of art, but the sculpture is a highly effective medium for conveying timeless messages. I believe that it has to do with the spectator's position before the work. With painting, one has to be in front of the work, while in sculpture, generally speaking, the person usually starts out in front of the piece but then starts to move around it, which involves motion and change and, above all else, looking, looking for a new perspective, a new place.

If the medium allows him to continue with the type of reflection that contains his sculptural work then perfect. But it is difficult to understand that each support has things that it allows and others it doesn't. I am interested in seeing what you are doing with Virtual Reality.

Damià: There is still nothing to see yet. I have just finished a work. We recorded four hours which have produced two minutes. I am discovering the possibilities of the medium, and up until now I have only used it to catalogue work, based on sculptural work and drawings, and what I try to do is situate the spectator in a position where he is free to look, and the device gives him the freedom to locate himself in the viewpoint he wants. This is something that interests me, both as an artist as well as a new spectator. It is all about expanding the possibilities of the classic catalogue and providing a new point of view.

² George Steiner's *Language and Silence* is a critical reference on this issue.

Klaus: Everything new is here and now. It is only normal that an artist uses it, experiments with it and decides whether to continue using it or not. But he has to engage with it, seek it out and decide.

Damià: What I am looking for in new technologies is to try to convey a shared experience, similar to my form of creation, to the spectator. I don't try to allow an object to be seen for all angles, but to create a space that can be visited. I want the visit to arouse sensations that can be taken away, and that the space can be visited as often as liked, to be revisited freely.

Aramis López

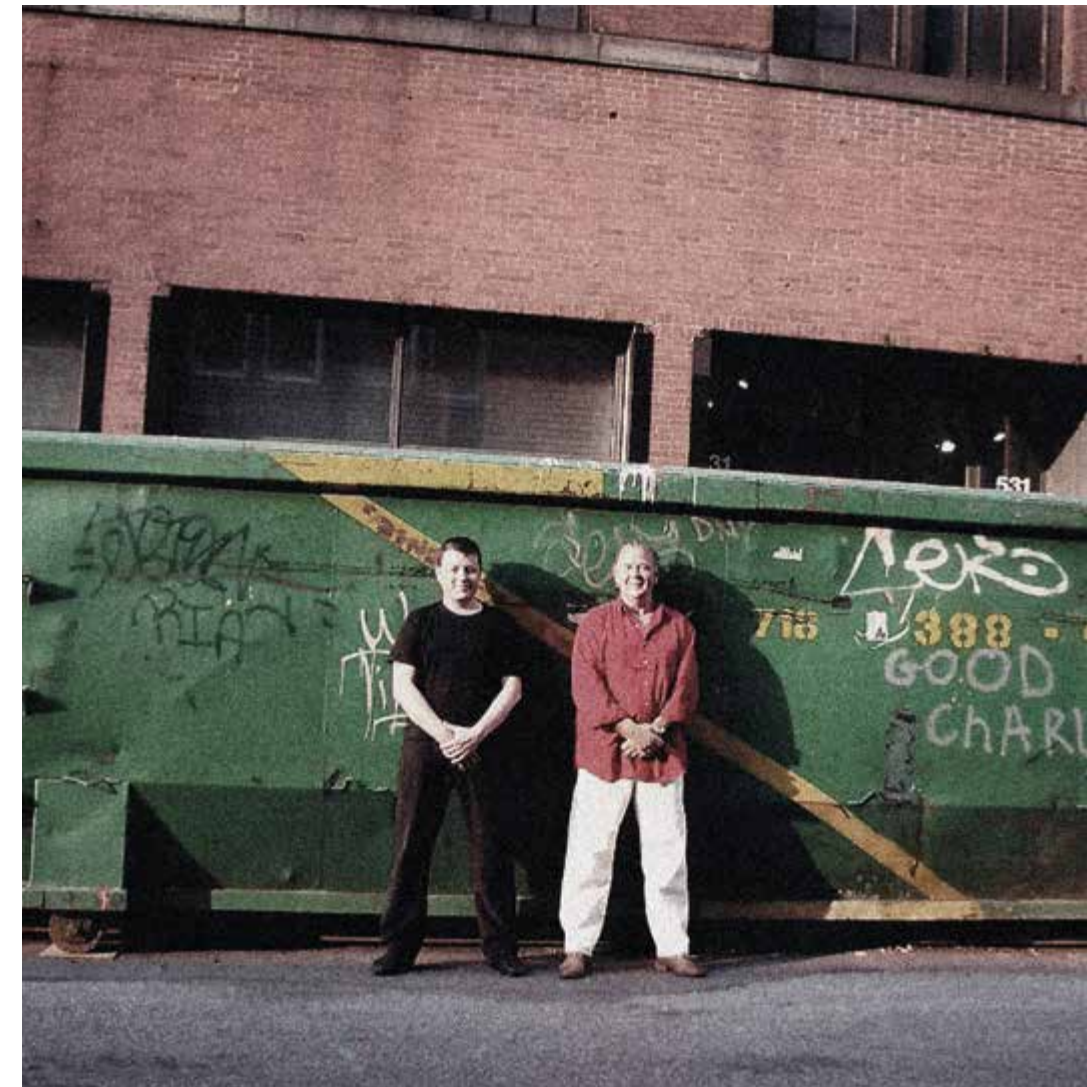
The agreement between artist and gallerist in underscoring the need for growth in the work, the shift from painting to sculpture, the prior step in printmaking, set design, the importance of materials that support the image in the conception of a painting as an artwork, are all created coincidences, disperse affinities, that arise from many dialogues, and arise freely. There is no conversation in which Klaus says to Damià that it would be interesting for him to introduce such and such a material or to engage with such and such an issue. What is there is an expectation, an intuition and, above all else, a shared interest in ensuring that the experimentation follows along paths that lead somewhere.

LOOK AT THIS! WHAT DO YOU SEE HERE?

I asked Klaus and Damià to both look at a work by Damià that Klaus had not seen before. I asked Klaus to describe it, first of all physically and to then interpret it for us. I am interested in a description without adjectives, in hearing him describe only what can be seen in the picture. I wanted to see whether it would be possible for him not to interpret, not to add something from his own gaze, whether he would be capable of setting a limit to his gaze. I wanted to know just to what extent his relationship with Damià's work allows him to see only what is there. Klaus is both collector and gallerist, he is someone who buys and sells. As a salesman he has to be able to put himself in the position of the buyer and understand what the latter sees, and as a collector he needs to fit the work he buys into the overall narrative of his collection.

Damià has brought a work that connects with a large part of his practice. There is figuration and abstraction, black and colour, a pictorial image, with an evident engagement with sculpture. It is a small painting, measuring 60 by 60 centimetres, with a black background, and a composition divided into a top part with a truncated brightly-coloured, quasi-geometric form, with reds and yellows, that pulls the gazes in, with some brushwork in white and ochre. The form in the top part could be a rectangle split, not exactly in the centre, with the edges rounded off; it is placed in the foreground, in front of the human figure that takes up the remaining three-quarters of the painting, blocking its head.

The man in the lower part of the painting is facing the spectator with his legs slightly parted and his arms held away from the body, with the palms of the hands splayed. Yet, here we come across a disconcerting element in the right hand. Despite the fact that the thumb points outwards (which would mean we are looking at the palm), it actually seems to be the back. The figure is naked with an athletic build, probably young but maybe older, there is nothing to indicate a specific age. It is a body that is painted almost automatically by someone who has painted many bodies and who has made it as indefinable as possible.



Damià: It is something I did with a subject matter that I return to frequently: the excess of noise and information. It is a study for something that was initially called Fundido a color (Fade to Colour), that speaks about how abundance or overexposure to information is leading us to a world so overloaded that it confuses us, and makes us deafer and blinder, creating a kind of shipwreck.

Klaus: (Beginning his morphological description) there is a nude figure. Like a symbol, a red cloud and a yellow one, it could be a form taken from a previous work that covers the face, and I believe that it wants to say that the colours want to cover the face to protect it from noise. I know his work so well that I cannot help but interpret what I am seeing. I know that the figure represents himself, covered, hiding himself, protecting himself, hiding behind the painting which is, like so many other works, a self-portrait. It is more usual for him in his work to hide behind something black or white, but this time he protects himself behind colours, so I believe that metaphorically what is covering his face is art. It is a shield to hide himself behind, from something in his past, his present or his future.

Damià: My intention is to situate the character in a neutral space, to paint a neutral background is to situate him in the void, and I wanted to convey that the excess of colour, the excess of information gives us the feeling of floating, of being in an empty space. And although both of you think that I want to transmit something else, I wanted to transmit my feeling of being oppressed, and my rejection of this way of being.

(A question to Damià Díaz on whether all his work is a self-portrait)

Damià: My intention is always to show or point out what concerns or disturbs me, especially whatever I feel attacks me, and I want to use beauty to create a narrative that critiques, reveals or tells something. I use the human figure as a container or as an excuse or simply as a frame for the sensation or sentiment.

Klaus: You make self-portraits, like all artists.

Damià: I use the human figure to recount what affects me.

Klaus: I believe that an artist is more of an artist the more he portrays himself. The artist will deny it, but he appears in the form, and even more so in the soul and the heart, and the latter, which cannot be separated, is always there. The expression of a good work always contains the heart and soul of the artist, which are not the same thing, even though they are inseparable. And the interpretation of his work, what the artist wishes to show there, is to understand his heart and his soul (by heart I mean the desire of the artist and by soul his condition).

And this is the born artist, one who shows through his person what he wishes to say. I see myself as one of them, even though my activity is different. I was born to do what I do. I believe that ever since childhood I have looked at art as a field in which I feel I can develop and say what I want to say. And I see like the artist who makes his sacrifice, like the composer who is born and sacrifices his life to his skill or talent.

I do not make my portrait. I take notes of my life through the art objects I collect, produce or sell. I remember every one of them, the moment they appeared, what was going on in my life at the time, the person I was with, what I need and where I was.

I define myself with what I do. From an early age I have always been committed. And how I am discovering that my life path has been a road to myself outlined by my relationship with art, but I was not always aware that this was the case. Now, while speaking with you, I am returning to parts of my life that I understand better when seeing them through the cartography that we are drawing of my life, and I understand the obstacles and difficulties that are like the meanders on the river of my life. I understand that these have been very important, they could have been bothersome or difficult, but they have marked a path that has led me here today to this conversation with artists. I understand my current life as the product of everything that has taken place until now.

Aramis López

In my intention to get Klaus to describe a work by Damià which he sees for the first time but without interpreting it, I was not thinking of Klaus himself, he is not interested in what is in the painting, but what he sees and what can be seen in it. His first questions before looking were: When is it from? and What size is it? His interest in seeing new work is key and it has been some time since he followed Damià's new work with the same intensity, and he knows that he is introducing cutting-edge technology in his practice and he wants to see it, and he didn't expect to see the image of a painting.

The morphological description of a painting doesn't interest him. He shrugs it off in a sentence and starts interpreting the work, which does say something to him.

Klaus's interpretation is incisive for the artist, because he speaks to him of something that deepens his concern: Damià's need to flee, which Klaus has been saying and thinking about for years, and which produces the same kind of upset as the revelations that only our own family can make of us. If we examine the figure in the painting, we note the odd position of the hands, both with their thumbs pointing outwards but one is the palm and the other the back of the hand; in the psychological analysis of gestures, when palms are shown it is usually interpreted as a sign of sincerity, of a desire to show. So, in this case, the artful device of seeming one thing and discovering another is highly significant.

Continuing the interpretation of the figure, the posture seems to be symmetrical and in tension, which would suggest that there is no intention of creating a relationship of empathy with the spectator, but to impose a wall between them. The position of the figure is perfectly composed to depict isolation and solitude, further enhanced by the impossibility of seeing the face.

There is a difference between what the artist declares and what Klaus sees. And although they are speaking about the same thing, they do so from different optics, and for one moment I have the feeling of watching *Rashomon* by Kurosawa³.

One can pick up on a sense of unease, that it is a self-portrait, there can be no doubt about that, and Klaus knows the artist well. It is interesting to note that, even though the figure is rendered with a certain technicity, endeavouring to divest it of any distinctive element, anything that would identify it, with a physiognomy completely unlike that of the artist, there is such an automatic assimilation between corporal representation and artist.

For the agents involved, there is an evident tension and discomfort, and Damià insists that his intention is to capture his personal stress produced by the social situation of over-information which in turn leads to a feeling of loss of natural space. And this stress caused by something that is uncontrollable (like an imposed external social situation), could be seen as a defence mechanism, and the desire not to be caught up in an uncomfortable,

³ Film by Akira Kurosawa (1950) in which he tells the same story from the viewpoint of four different characters, giving the spectator the impression that they are four different stories. The motivations of each character construct diametrically opposed stories.

strange and imposed scenario. The overall state of noise is stressful, and faced with it the concealment that is enabled by art, the way out of silence, is proposed by art and the possibilities of the parallel dimensions of art. And the artist of course tries to remove something from the social scene, his body as the artist.

With regards the difference between how art serves the vital purposes of the artist and the collector, what one can see is that while the artist makes a self-portrait the collector tells his life's story. The portrait has to do with the image and sensations, an abstraction of the reference, and the work of the artist is to create images, his activity is to imagine. They create something new starting out from something that exists, a device or mechanism that remits to an original which sometimes re-presents and other times re-creates, and if I separate the prefix re-, it is to underline how the function of the artist is to repeatedly (the meaning added by appending re-) present and create. Returning to an issue over and over again, returning obsessively, as a form of fulfilling an unfulfilled desire. Presenting over and over again, depicting as many times as possible; and also creating over and over again, starting out from an original that, while attractive, is not considered perfect, and is created as many times as the artist's imagination allows, in search of perfection by repeating its creation with slight modifications, always mistaken, because achieving a perfect object does not satisfy the desire of the artist to return and return to the object of his desire.

On the other hand, a biography is the description of a life. It consists in narrating all the events and facts of a life, of bestowing a certain order on them that will enable the reader to understand what is being recounted. To write a biography is also to build roads along which to travel and to arrange along the side of the road the objects or stories that speak of the subject, so that they can be seen and recognised and so that each reader can elaborate a narrative. This is the form used by the collector. Throughout his life he has acquired objects (of art in this case), and each object has its symbolic charge and meaning that is largely subjective, known only to the collector, and who wishes it to be known to the possible reader, but he does not speak with words for the meanings to be made explicit. He tells the story through the relationships between the different objects and through the relations between the object and people.

Each artwork has an infinite number of possible explanations or interpretations, and this is true because art appeals to the sentiments and sensual learnings (what we learn through the senses and not the intellect) and these personal sentiments and learnings are what help to know the exterior. We always relate them with what we see, our personal knowledge allows us to recognise and process what we see, in such a way that an art object contains a part of what the artist puts in it and another part of what the spectator puts in it. And this part added by the spectator can go in favour or against the artist, but it is proportional to the meaning of the artwork.

ON THE CREATION OF A COLLECTION

Aramis López

Every task needs its place, a vital professional strategy calls for the design and construction of places where the processes take place. Creating a space for art that responds to a highly personal idea of art is in itself the most complicated piece of the puzzle. If collecting speaks for itself, the space where it takes place is what shows to others, the emblem of the collector is his treasure trove, the cave, the place where his collection is put together and stored.



Klaus Kramer Gallery Altea / Spain

Klaus Kramer started out with a small framing studio with a corner set aside for selling artwork, generally leaning towards the classical. He bought it and started by learning how to frame, to make the place his own, to interiorise the trade. He did not know the crafts of art, he learned them, he acquainted himself with their workings, he then digested them, expanded and modified his learnings, he adopted them to his own requirements, and each new step led to a new need.

The creation of the Contempera Collection is closely related to the formation of this initial place of work/collecting/exhibition. With each new professional need, the place where his collection started to take shape adopted and grew. If he wants artists to produce work near where the paintings are sold, then he fits out spaces, workshops and studios and the works go from the studio to the gallery or are produced directly in the very space where they will be exhibited. The space gets bigger, it hosts commercial shows but also cultural events with which Klaus Kramer evolves, and this art space and collection are the facts that speak for Klaus.

(On how the Klaus Kramer Art Gallery came into being)

Klaus: The gallery was much more than just an art gallery. It was many things at once. What I did was to look for a space that I liked, to find a setting that was what I wanted. I wanted my own space in paradise (on the Spanish Mediterranean coast, more specifically in Altea), and to stay there I thought that I should look for a place. I looked for a house, my private setting, and I also looked for my professional setting. I started by finding a charming little frame shop. On the other hand, I had a villa in Benidorm and when I started to have a close relationship with some artists I offered it to them as a place to work. At that time I wasn't thinking in terms of an artists' residence, but a place where they could produce and focus on their work. I believed that a pleasant space with all that was needed to work properly would help to create more and better work. Artists like Josep Vallibera came in 1987. I lived on the upper floor and the artists worked on the ground floor. The house had made a big impact on me when I was young. I saw it when I was seventeen and thought that at some moment in my life I would live there. My friend Vittorio said to me that I was too young to have set goals, but some time later I managed to live there.



Klaus Kramer Gallery in Lahr / Germany

Damià: I wasn't there around that time, but I do remember that Klaus had a cafeteria. Well, a place that had once been a cafeteria, and I worked there. He gave me a space to work which was anything but conventional but for a student studying Fine Arts it was a luxury. It was a very spacious studio, big and open, with an eight-metre window through which the light entered from the left, absolutely perfect. That's when I started to work on wood.

Klaus: I arranged all the different spaces so they would be close together. I had a big place that would later turn out to be the gallery little by little, the cafeteria that Damià used as a studio and a framing shop where there was also a small exhibition hall, for more classical, intimate work. Everything was on the same street. Years later, in Paris, when I was no longer working with art, I was impressed by the studio of an artist who I met by chance in a gallery. It was a large, open-plan space with a huge window, everything painted black, and she was dressed in white, and she was a painter. What you saw from outside was somebody floating in a magical, non-existent and exhibitionist space.

Damià: I believe that is the image you were looking for in the first gallery, but also for all your installations.

Klaus: I had a Dutch friend who told me that there was a framing shop in Altea for sale. At that time I had no professional connection with art. It was simply a place that I liked a lot, it was very charming. I went there first thing the following morning, and waited for the owner. When he arrived he had that look that makes you think of early twentieth century bohemian artists, with a suede jacket with elbow patches and a bowtie. I remember thinking, what is somebody like that doing in Altea? He was a man with exquisite taste. His name was Raphael, spelt like that in the European style, Gallery Raphael. We went into the back room behind the shop and it was magical: paintbrushes, frames, paintings, mouldings and dust, lots of dust everywhere. And I immediately said to myself, I want this place. And two hours later I had bought it.

(In answer to the question whether Klaus did the framing himself by hand in the shop)

Klaus: of course. I learned to frame, to clean glass and everything else involved in the craft. All the trades involved in art are interesting. This is when I met Benjamín Palencia who was delighted to see a German working in art because he, who had lived in Europe, thought that it was a good thing for the Spaniards to have a German working in the art world. Lots of important artists of the time who used to frequent Altea came to my frame shop: Palencia, Jardiel, Gerardo Rueda, Francisco Bores from the New School of Paris. I didn't know the work of many of these artists, but around the same time I started studying the History of Art. I was self-taught but I was serious and committed, and many of my lessons were in *El bodegón de Pepe*⁴, with artists and intellectuals as my teachers.

In the framing shop we set aside a small space of around thirty square metres. It was decorated like the room in a Venetian palace. I thought that this was a place to exhibit high quality work. And almost without knowing it, without really knowing what I was doing, I was gradually turning into a dealer or gallerist and started to sell art. I sold things that I liked myself. There you could find works by Calder, Christo, Juan Muñoz, Riera, and Aragó, Tàpies, Chillida or Dalí, alongside works by artists who frequented Altea, like Eberhard Schlotter, Malte Sartorius Peter Proksch and Benjamín Palencia or Genaro Lahuerta.

In 1987 I started to invite some new artists to paint in the villa in Benidorm. I thought that although I liked the works I was selling, I was not entirely satisfied intellectually by just selling

works that could somehow be considered classical, or by artists that were consecrated, or again classic. I needed new aesthetic stimuli. And I met a whole series of painters that had a certain connection with the conceptual movement. I had seen Joseph Beuys's work, and was fascinated by it, so that was the beginning of a new phase in my formation. It was a kind of painting that struck me as being closer, and I found artists that were able to challenge my perception. I gradually educated my gaze until I had an almost insatiable desire to devour all the new aesthetic movements I came across.

Damià: The period of framing was very brief. After a short time he was dedicating himself more to promoting artists and art, and he sold the framing business to the workers. He started to dedicate himself fulltime to art, to producing it, but in a pretty unconventional way. He invited artists and put them up in his villa and provided them with all the means to produce their work. In other words, all the artist had to do was dedicate himself to his creative work, the rest was taken care of by Klaus, who was generous to a fault. He gave you a studio, he paid for the materials you were going to use for the work, he introduced you to collectors, he sold your work and immediately paid you your percentage of the sale.

Klaus: Up until the moment when I decided to dedicate myself professionally to the art world, I was an ordinary businessman. I had a highly diversified portfolio of clients and was well able to do business. When I become involved in art I continued using the same management methods as you use in any other branch of the economy. I paid my suppliers quickly and also for the work I commissioned whenever they were delivered or finished, so I did the same with the artists; my financial know-how give me the ability to run my art business like any other business I had had up until then. But the relationship with art has an enjoyable dimension that was worth much more than any other activity. Although artists don't behave like employees, the creative process entails a certain degree of anarchy and bohemia. Many, though obviously not all, had chaotic lives, which I tried to understand. There was a moment when I decided that, like in any factory, Friday was pay day, and the artists turned up at the gallery to be paid.

In 1982 I worked with Schlotter, and I created a space exclusively for his work. He was an emblematic artist in Altea. It was not a gallery. It was more of an art salon in the style of the nineteenth century rather than the spaces you normally saw in Spain at that time. It had a different atmosphere. It was a place where you could have a conversation and where people came just to pass the time and look. In a way it was like giving Altea a cultural space. I started to publish books. I began with Schlotter, of course, but the relationship with books came about from a need, like something that I had to do to keep moving along the same path. We did a lot of things to keep moving forward, so that everything we did would make sense. Schlotter and Camilo José Cela participated in the Don Quixote published by Klaus Kramer, in which one can see Art Gallery Raphael (the name at that time) with addresses in Amsterdam, Cologne and Altea, and it was true, I used to travel in my van to Germany and Holland to sell art. My headquarters were in Altea but I could be anywhere in Europe. I always moved about, and I was always thinking about how to move the art about. With the passing of time I changed the way of doing certain things, but basically I continued as before. Time teaches you about the way things work, you learn what is useful, you drop what isn't and in the end you are a professional.

And so, little by little, the time came to open a bigger space, my own space, what I was longing for. I had it in my head since 1985, but it finally materialised in 2000. To my way of thinking, the only way in which I have been an artist was when I conceived and built this space. It was a question of putting one thing after another in order to achieve a space that spoke of who I am.

⁴ A well-known bar frequented by artists and intellectuals at the end of the last century.





A-Factorij Art Project. Amsterdam / Netherlands

(It was a benchmark for all artists in the surrounding regions, many artists, critics and curators visited it and presented proposals, it was an incentive in an area otherwise impoverished in culture)

After this time, I was well known. I was proud to see how my idea, my desire to show myself through my space, was so well received. It was not always easy. Many artists did not accept that I was not a public entity, that I was running a business which I managed according to my own idea and represented the artists that I liked. I wasn't so worried about trends or recommendations. I had matured as a cultural manager and was doing a highly personal work, in which I defined myself.

Damià: The space went through several phases, reflecting his emotional state. There were events combining opposing elements, which took on meaning together because they both reflected Klaus's sentiments. He exhibited various artists in the same show, because it was one way of expressing the mood he was in and what he was going through. He did not organize exhibitions of artist groups. He spoke though the relationships he established with the artists' work. And not any artist would serve these purposes. He needed an emotional bond in order to be able to tell a story. A period of epiphany in the world of creation. The size of the hall called for increasingly large pieces, and the artists adapted to the medium. I had never painted a picture measuring 3 by 3 metres, and on aluminium. The initial idea was a white cube, and little by little it evolved and the gallery became a kind of *Portrait of Dorian Grey*, that reflected everything that was happening inside Klaus while his outer appearance remains unchanged. The mounting of a show could change several times in the space of a week, adding or removing things, it was always a box of surprises.

Klaus: It was always a discovery for me. I had a chance to become a kind of playwright, and I had my own theatre, I could tell stories, and I could make it change. I told the story of what happened between me and objects. And the best thing was that these objects were works of art, and works of art had an advantage, because they could say many things. A work could say white if it were beside one thing and then black if you changed its place, yet maintaining its integrity, and maintaining respect for the artist, his works allowed me to tell what they wanted and what you wanted.

And this is where the Klaus Kramer Collection came from. I kept the pieces I felt most identified with personally. I made connections with the artists that I liked and understood, and understanding the art of another person seemed very complicated to me. For me to arrive at this understanding was like when you open a window at a moment when you need fresh air and suddenly the whole landscape makes sense to you. For me collecting was like being able to choose all these moments in my life, each one represented by an artwork, and to arrange them in an order. I came to see a meaning to my journey towards art. As well, you understand the power of art that lets you know, understand and accept personal sentiments.

I chose my artists. I remember a moment when there was a huge sculpture by Damià in the gallery, (it was a piece of a head, made with transparent material and painted with big brushstrokes that seemed like grooves in a person's skin, but they were like scars that had been made by a sudden event, not the wrinkles left by the action of time) and also a car, a Rolls Royce, painted by Juan Barberá. The two have become the most represented artists in the collection, and my interest in them has grown as I have seen them come to life.

There was a lot of interest from the Miguel Hernández University in my space and my collection. A lot of students came here who were going to do a *catalogue raisonné*, the students got great enjoyment from being able to rummage around among all the works.

It was also a very interesting time for me too. Suddenly I saw myself as a teacher, my accumulated learning was been passed down to a new generation, and they seemed to me like an infinite offspring that was eager for art. I believed that these students not only could do the cataloguing but they could also do practice that would give them real contact with the profession, that they could take part in mounting exhibitions, in promoting them or in reviewing the shows, in short, that they could take part in any of the many facets involved in professional art practice, and thus get a better overall education. In the end it came to nothing because the university didn't know how to or didn't want to close the project.

Damià: The gallery witnessed things that had never taken place in Altea before and never even considered by official bodies. The gallery staged performances, concerts and dance. It operated like an art centre for a town that had a university art school but had no public art centre. There was no kind of place where students could have some kind of relationship with the arts outside of school. So Klaus's gallery was the place. It was a private space that provided a public service.

Klaus: Thanks to many of my connections, Altea was able to host lots of different events, there were donations, there was high quality public sculpture, but the public authorities never got involved in these acts. I don't like focusing on the negative, but it is true that we didn't have any kind of public funding, there was never anyone from the town council at our openings, even though they were always invited. And the same can be said for the university. But in the end I believe that the good thing about these drawbacks is that overcoming obstacles makes you stronger. When I closed the space many people found it hard to accept and they were really angry with the public authorities for having done nothing, but I have to say that they didn't show any respect either for Altea's architectural or gastronomic heritage, there are many examples of their lack of interest.

THE PASSAGE FROM THE KLAUS KRAMER ART GALLERY TO THE KLAUS KRAMER COLLECTION

Klaus: I was thinking about opening a gallery in Hamburg. I was still not fully decided but it was something I was seriously thinking about. But then, by pure chance, I met Ronald Egger and Sjaak van Vliet, thanks to a friend in common, a person who also had an influence on my way of looking. She thought that it would be a good idea to introduce us, because she believed that they might be interested in the type of work I dealt with. I went to her house and met Ronald Egger and Sjaak van Vliet, two Dutch entrepreneurs with whom I immediately got on and had an instant rapport. It was Sunday and they said that the gallery would be closed but I replied that my gallery was never closed. They came and what interested them was a work by Damià, which was the first contribution to the collection.

And that's how we started, and without even realising it we had started a collection. Their interest in art kept growing and I could see how similar it was to the process I had gone through years earlier. Art gets its teeth into you and never lets you go. Their intellectual interests might be different to mine, but the way of approaching them is the same. Little by little art started to take up more room in their lives, and then later in their business too. Now it is something we share, that brings us together, because art unites people. I have always believed that many people only need to stop for a moment, to think about how wonderful it is to look at a work of art so that these moments of inner reflection, and then the curiosity to seek out other similar moments, leads you to something that will stay with you all your life and is a new way of reaching happiness through art. Ronald and Sjaak reached this understanding in a natural way.

At the beginning we had a very close bond. Preconceived ideas about the art world and eccentric bohemian artists soon gave way as they met the artists I represented. And this was true to the extent that, as a present for her eleventh birthday, their daughter Cleo asked for Damià to give a painting workshop for herself and her friends.

Damià: It was a really cool experience. Around fifteen children who had no idea what to expect, or believed that they would be standing in front of an easel and canvas, all very proper and serious, adopting affected poses to create art. And what they found was the whole floor lined with huge paper canvases and music blasting at full volume. I invited them to get rid of their ideas about art and to have fun with colour, with music and with the movement of the paintbrushes. All of a sudden, these polite, well-educated children were given permission to get dirty, to let themselves go and to dance while they painted. It was wonderful to see them making art without resting, without thinking, without understanding what they were doing, but at the same time having fun doing it.

And the result of this process of formation and information, which is something I associate with Klaus, reinforces a familiar relationship with his collectors. By getting an artist to put his paintings in the spaces where the collector think, the fact that there is such a close connection, means that everybody makes the most of the moment and enjoys the work at all times.

Now Ronald and Sjaak are opening spaces for art thanks to the collection they have been putting together.

Klaus: After years of talking about art, visiting art centres, meeting artists and acquiring artworks, works that become personal objects that in turn speak of the person that collects them, and that let the person talk when words are dispensable.

We started a project called *A-Factorij Art Project*, whose mandate was to produce pieces that entail a high degree of difficulty, both in terms of cost as well as necessary infrastructure, either public art or large format pieces. An artist would be invited to create a specific work for a specific occasion, a biennial or an art event, or also for a public space.

At the same time, we kept on adding more and more artworks to Ronald and Sjaak's private and professional environs.

All these works were the genesis of the collection which, although it started as a private, family thing, eventually turned into the Contempera Collection. At a given moment in time, a lot of works were added by other artists, though the most widely represented are Damià Díaz and Juan Barberá. The idea is that the collection would mirror as completely as possible the entire evolution of every artist in the collection, in such a way that the collection not only contains finished artworks, but also sketches and prior studies for the final works. The concept is to ensure that the artist is represented by his production, that the artist speaks of his work through his work, and accompanies it. And if that means having a short roster, then so be it, because what is really interesting is that it can be properly understood and therefore one can enjoy what it has to offer.

Aramis López

In this fragment of the conversation Klaus Kramer speaks of how he does what saves his life. How he does it, how you go from potential to action, for this Spanishised German,

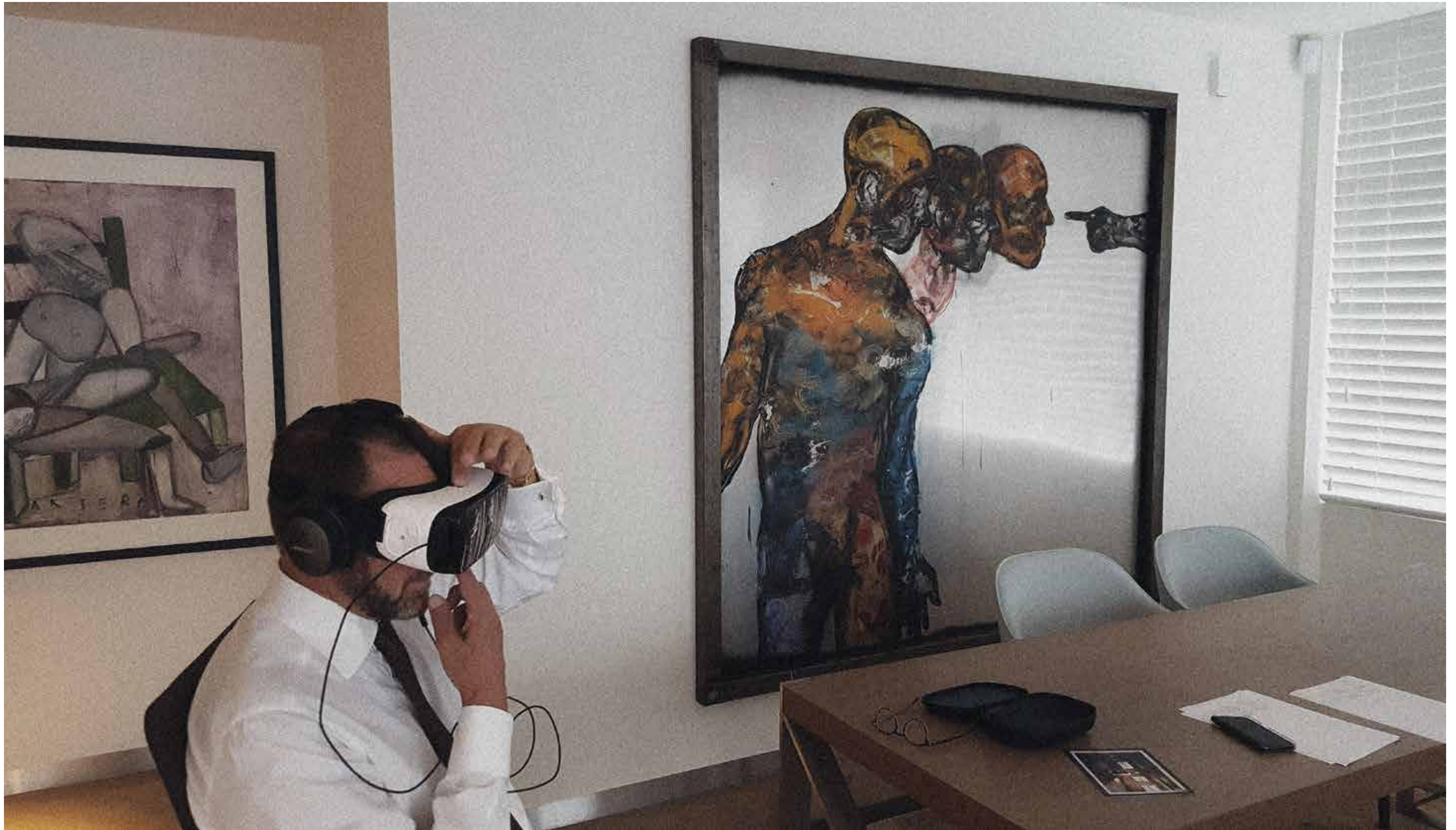
the process is first to detect the need: a confused entrepreneur in search of meaning in life, the search for meaning in life cannot be only the search; then chance brings him into contact with a possibility to reorient his professional activity towards one aspect of his life, art, until reaching that important moment, but only important; and finally the consolidation of art as the core axis of his life project, the creation of an art gallery and of a collection.

To grow through art, to have objects is not the same as collecting objects, to collect implies an endeavour to elaborate a discourse through a conceptual ordering of the objects collected. Giving meaning to life comes from the elaboration of goals and designing the necessary processes to fulfil this goal. How to manage that something that has been hovering around can finally become the axis around which your life revolves. For Klaus Kramer art emerged cyclically, it was present in conversations with his father, on his travels, in his fascination for the life of artists, in the heterodoxy of his own activity, in his flight from the rigid German social structure, finding a small art gallery for sale in a small village on the Mediterranean coast of Spain affords an opportunity to construct a personal world, in which art is a way of making a living, but, and much more importantly, art allows him to grow, it allows him to expand the limits of the personal, art saves him from a dull, demotivated and insipid life, to transform himself into an inexhaustible source of projects, activities, work, hardships, challenges and achievements.

Klaus Kramer constructs his own personal formation, he learns as he goes along, he has countless masters whose teachings and ways of looking and of doing he treasures. The difference with conventional education is in the method; with the self-taught kind being must more effective. Besides storing lessons on the history of art, the economy of culture and methods of management, these learnings came in a natural order and consistent way, the guide was necessity and possibility, and the useless knowledge described by Jean-François Revel is eradicated by the daily practice of work. According to the French philosopher today's society is more misinformed than ever, the learning that it accumulates is more useless than it ever was, given that it is based on an accumulation of information without any established relationship that goes beyond the possibilities of the human being to establish what is and is not important. In professional practice, in personal necessity, everything has its place, everything ends up finding the place that it necessary for it to be found and used.

THERE IS NO USELESS LEARNING IN ART PRACTICE.

How to make a coherent collection is the result of undertaking the personal idea of art. In the way of working as a gallerist, Klaus Kramer has always tried to ensure that selling an artwork is not just an economic transaction, but that it becomes an experience both for the buyer as well as for the artist and also for the gallerist. When the Contempera Collection is being conceived it is also personal experience, how the way of working is put in place, making connections between artist and collector, transferring knowledge in all directions, in such a way that what arises is a new facet in the life of everyone involved, this is what art permits: to share the pleasure of beauty.



"Let us pursue our dreams in this world and in all that we visit with our minds and our souls"
In memoriam Sjaak van Vliet.



CV

Aramis López

Aramis López holds a PhD in Geography and is Master in Cultural Management. He has taught, at the university, classes in Geography, History of Art, Fine Arts, History, Sociology, Museology and Art Conservation.

In the last two years he has worked on different projects with artists such as: Javier Codesal, Kaoru Katayama, Ignacio Gómez de Liaño, Lugán, Elena Asins, Alex Frances, Damià Díaz, Alexanco, Lugán, Yturralde, Miguel Espada and Javier Seguí de la Riva. Among his curated exhibitions of art and historical and artistic heritage are "El Centro de Cálculo", for the Complutense University of Madrid, the project Prova on the Misteri d'Elx for the Museum Consortium of the Valencian Community; 8 cos enganxat for the Palau de la Virreina in Barcelona and the 500th anniversary of the Complutense Polyglot Bible in the Complutense Historical Library.

In 2002 he curated the exhibition of Damià Díaz, Temps i pensament, in the Museum of the University of Alicante.

In recent years he has published articles in scientific journals (Artnodes, Zainak or Investigaciones geográficas) as well as publications of institutions such as Center de l'Imatge - Palau de la Viergeina (Barcelona), Consorci de Museus (Valencia), Maison de la Méditerranéenne (Aix en Provence - France) or the monograph From numerical calculation to open creativity edited at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

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