

ON DRAWING AS THE CREATION OF URBAN TERRITORY

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1.

Democracy. As we know, the most striking images after the attack on the Twin Towers, were those in which unknown people jumped into the void, remaining frozen in the air. One of the best known, by the photographer Richard Drew was called *The falling man* and was immediately censored by the United States government, so most of the American press decided to withdraw those images. The fact is that the reasons given were not due to its impact on the collective imagination, but to the rawness of those facts. It showed a man falling head first from the minimalist building, an image that speaks of the insecurity and lack of foresight in a situation which we know was produced in a concise and knowing manner: these are acts allowed in a democracy turned into a *democracy*. Bombardments from the air are common in any war situation conducted by the U.S. military and are not given the same importance. We see mutilated bodies, massive bombings, people fleeing through ruined streets, and we are getting used to seeing violent events occurring in front of the television cameras. Such is the case in the latest episode of the Israeli army in international waters against humanitarian aid to Gaza. There were times, as we said, when we were able to know what a war was from live coverage, thanks to television cameras and satellite broadcasting. In the end, we know that more important than the collapse of buildings, are those dead and missing people who were at that time living or working in that place. Therefore, the symbolic importance of the attack to the heart of capitalism was a kind of nihilism inherent to the existing urban space. We are referring to the leap in the dark and the representation of death before the television cameras. Cinema has always been a matter of violence and revenge [1].

2.

Graffiti and cities. We can affirm that drawing on the city walls goes back to the Romans. Judging by the charcoal drawings, called *graffiti*, on the ruins, Pompei housed a large number of drawings devoted to civic life. This was evidenced by the sentences dedicated to eroticism by gladiators and soldiers in their leisure time, to which we must add those of political content before elections or various advertisement among which stood out those dedicated to prostitution. Judging by their contents, the difference of the rates offered by men and women at that time should be noted. Also to be noted, the amorous impulse that led to the writing of various messages on the walls, among which phallic representations are prominent. There were also other types of street wall drawings, but painted, called *dipinti*, used to communicate news and witticisms, similar to the so-called *graffiti* visible in any modern city. Their specialty was insults and allegations of vices of friends and enemies. We can, therefore, consider these writings to be very important when one wants to know what happened in those days in the Roman cities, which is not so different from what happens today: "I wonder very much why, oh wall, you do not fall into pieces, crushed by the weight of so many idle scribblers " [2].

3.

Birds, big birds and little birds. It is not difficult to imagine that the symbolic interest in the representation of birds is linked not only to creative, religious or mystical aspects, but also to the expression of erotic desires. The classic case is the appearance of crows in poetry, but also in the recuperation of religious passages, as in the case of the Velasquez painting of Anthony the Abbot, the patron saint of animals, in his fateful visit to Paul of Tarsus.

The bird is a bird of omen and its presence clearly indicates that something will happen, even an accident, something unforeseen, similar to the fall in the void. As we know, there is a clear interest in the world of birds linked to the presence of carrion, namely food for birds that carry our bodies to the mountains. Therefore, it should be finally noted that we are as interested in the bird's flight as its reversal in the realm of imagination. There are birds that can imitate and steal, and that are capable of invading urban areas by reproducing. This is the case of starlings in the city of Rome, whose imitative powers lead them to reproduce, in the manner of an eighteenth-century automaton, what they heard [3].

4.

A Dead body. The reversal of values would turn these birds into animals able to seek food even on the ground, allowing hunters to follow their flight to find the hidden prey. In the particular case of the important corpse painted by Santiago Morilla on the roof of the Spanish Academy in Rome, there are three spaces that makes one assume that *graffiti* may represent more than simple actions on street walls. What we actually mean is that this interest in the global situation of the cities, the appearance of the drawings on its walls and the impact of a corpse whose body is meant to be eaten by birds, are important keys to understand this action that Santiago Morilla is presenting in Rome. On the other hand, it must be stressed that the plastic action retrieves the current interest in addressing contemporary issues with painting and drawing. At the same time it adds a deep sense of imaginary and surreal to the mural representation of these dreamlike human figures and animals. Moreover, it must be stressed that in this reversal between land and sky, what actually appears is the importance of the accident as paint. Santiago Morilla uses classical painting practices, together with the elaboration of an imaginary self, linking this strange figure of the bird-man to a kind of symbolic drawing which refers to a reversal. It evokes the image of Papageno revived, that symbol used by Mozart in his last opera *The Magic Flute*, who had the task of feeding with birds the Queen of the Night. Half man, half bird, in this representation by Santiago Morilla we can appreciate this character of reversal of its own painting on the walls, choosing to place the blood on a rooftop, which will be visible only flying over it, as a warning to navigators [4].

5.

Hunting. It is not the first time in which Santiago Morilla has included the figure of birds in his great drawings. In another intervention Rome, he drew *Papa Estornino* (2010), showing a strange figure out of which eggs dropped out from a kind of a nest in human form, accompanied by a series of anthropomorphic birds. In another series of drawings titled generically *Allí donde está la caza* (2009), he added other animals such as octopuses and hominids deer, pointing to the symbolic search for food. But it is also a product of the invasion realized by Santiago Morilla in an area of public intervention that in most cases is accompanied by a limitation of his action, which turns into a simple street graffiti. On the contrary, in its appropriation of spaces, Santiago Morilla paints the street. While his track shows the incursion into domestic areas through design, we can interpret the drawing as a way to disguise many hatching eggs, hidden and left half seen, a way to present the wishes be fulfilled. Moreover, painting on the walls, hunting painting, it's been traditional since the beginning of art [5].

6.

The poison on the wall. The artist himself has considered the importance of the presence of the wall in relation to its *graffiti* and its poisoning properties. As the Romans who added lead to drinks to promote fair skin, the poison contained in the paint acts with certainty. In this splenetic position of the artist, able to stand, as recognized by Santiago Morilla, facing the wall, in an attempt to draw the wall on the wall. This ability to lead paint through drawing up to the walls as the support of his work, he is also able to reconcile his artistic incursions since the meeting of traditional and contemporary. Because it's not the perfect technique, and the means proposed, what shows some magic, but the interpretation of this dreamy ghostly and evil animal world that the artist gives to the viewer. In this plot aware of the limits, Santiago Morilla extends a wide range of characters who seem to walk bundled in a mess. On the other hand, constructing land through the distance and the invisibility of the roof itself, adding interest in the passage to death, relative to the poison on the wall, cryptically showing what it is hidden in the painting accident [6].

[1] "The artists of the twentieth century, like the anarchists and their homemade bombs, the revolutionary kamikaze or the mass killers celebrated by the press, become plastic bomb makers, visual clutters, anarchists of the colors, shapes, sounds, before becoming the occupiers of the museum of the horrors of the trade press" VIRILIO, Paul, *Lo que viene*, p. 51, Arena Libros.

[2] Some of the messages written on the walls expressed really humorous and malicious messages, "Felix sucks for a penny," "Eulalo, goodbye, fare thee well with Vera, your wife and fuck her well", "Satir, don't dedicate yourself to licking pussy outside. Do it inside", "May not be safe safe the one who wrote above", "I've been fucked here", "If you screw up here, woe to you!", "He who has visited a hustlers, what do you think has eaten for dinner?" *Amatory Pompeian Graffiti*, ed. Enrique Montero Cartelle, Gredos, 1990. Enrique Montero Cartelle, Gredos, 1990.

[3] Is the case of the famous starling Mozart adopted for some years as a pet, but also include the importance recovered by singing birds in the construction of these automatic devices. It should be mentioned the famous automaton called Vaucansson duck, able to eat, digest and expel the food that gave the viewer. In any case, when we are dealing with a bird in the art, we know their mysterious, hidden and loving powers,. This would be the case of the Walt Disney filmography, for example.

[4]"A ghost of reticular blood certainly runs the entire history of painting. In legends, mirabilia or the painters' miraculous gestures are only shown as far as suggesting ghost: a limit. Formulate the hypothesis that the emergence, or rather the transparición of blood will cause something more ludicrous as the requirement of the painting" DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges, *La pintura encarnada*, Pre-Texts, p. 12. 12.

[5] "The images of the caves have been designed to include the time in which, at the appearance of the animal, the necessary act of killing him, even if condemnable, revealed the religious ambiguity of life: of life rejected by the distraught man which, however, conducts itself in overcoming the rejection. This hypothesis rests on the fact that the atonement consecutive to the act of killing an animal is a rule among the people whose life is indeed similar to the cave painters". BATAILLE, Georges, *Eroticism*, Tusquets, p. 79.

[6] Should also note the affiliation of the bird falls and the myth of Icarus. After landing he becomes perdix, as in Brueghel's famous painting showing mythological passage, a word related to the pellet, forgiveness, loss and enduring destination of a paint left on the roof of the Academy.