

Cat. Exp. Turbulence 3rd Auckland Triennial 2007 – p. 74 – Mónica Giron – Argentina

The word that most commonly comes to mind when approaching the work of Mónica Giron is disturbance. There is a quiet, discreet but constant turbulence that flows beneath the calm visual aspect of the work, a sensation of discomfort, evidence of a need for protection from the unknown or the unexpected. Giron was born in Bariloche, Patagonia, the southernmost region of Argentina, known for its enormous extensions of land. Although many of her pieces, particularly her earlier works, are directly related to her childhood and her Patagonian origins, there is a process of decanting in the way this is represented, and the initial nostalgic feeling becomes more and more an existential condition of insecurity. It would seem her relation to this early period of her life is not only a relation to place, but particularly to experience and specifically to the experience of loss. Her famous Trousseau for a Conqueror, presented at the 5th Bienal de la Habana in 1994, was a set of knitted garments for some of the rare species of birds from Patagonia. Hung on the wall side by side, the clothes appeared as the result of a tender but contradictory gesture of protection towards birds that are not only identified with an infinite energy for flight, but that have historically survived extreme climatic conditions. They have now become endangered within the imbalance created by humanity and excessive sheep farming. In this piece, strength and powerlessness live side by side in a precarious equilibrium, which also reflects in some way the atmosphere in the post-dictatorship Argentina that Giron has lived and worked in.

Corner pieces, 1999 - cut blankets stacked in rounds, accompanied by organic shaped ceramic pieces –also reflected a complex sensibility in relation to protection, stability and meaning. This is a strange and disquiet-

ing piece, and like most of her subsequent works, it is an enigmatic one that has no particular sense to the organisation or the display of the objects, but features a very strong attachment to the physicality of textures, colours and shapes. When not seen as a whole, Giron's work, whether painting, drawing or sculpture, is difficult to grasp as it never really allows the viewer to enter completely into an individual piece.

Recent work, such as the alien-like drawings presented for the Prague Biennale in 2005 or the ones for Estrecho Dudoso in San José in 2006 – with their concentric graphite fines, enclosed in coloured squares, or positioned side-by-side with geometric colour studies – resemble doodles and scribbles done as automatic movements in a state of idleness, but here they stem from a permanent state of anxiety.

MED “Miedo Existencial Democrático” (Democratic Existential Fear), selected for the 3rd Auckland Triennial, represents a contradiction once more. The world has created a situation in which it is insecurity, instead of stability for its citizens, that has become democratic, much like a turbulent stream that everyone is subject to, and that touches everyone and floods everything.... Nostalgia is now absent from this body of work in which alien-like figures composed of intersecting round fines, float in the otherwise empty space of the paper. It is no longer about past loss, rather it has become an eerie announcement of a durable state of fearful expectation that has overcome the world.

Virginia Pérez-Ratton, 2007