

El centro del jardín, show and catalogue

at Zavaletalab Contemporary Art Gallery, year 2009. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Mónica Giron

When used in conceptual discussion, the word “energy” refers to the vital consequences of the meaning. The place of its production is the subject’s organism: the compact set of impressions effected by the object resonates in the specific structure of the viewer and is manifest as a vital perception. An object has a set of formal, semiotic and sensorial characteristics, and its energy is the resulting vector, the sum of all its attendant tensions. As an artist, Mónica Giron’s practice entails directly handling this subtle matter.

Over the years, Giron’s extensive academic and conceptual training has allowed her to organically incorporate tools from theoretical frameworks foreign to the Western discursive canon. Thus, her source of inspiration combines psychoanalysis, astrology, philosophy, art history, Taoism and categories of formalism. The basis of her work lies in the unknowns that emerge from the ceaseless layering and activating of structures with heterogeneous cultural origins.

Giron’s resources are frugal and open. The mark of a pencil bares the inner state of the one who drew it. The resulting line is part of both a representation and an abstraction of itself. In the color grids, the subtle yet complex prism of hues and tones distills a specific shade within broad spectra, like the one that goes from the strident to the placid. A series of sculptures that are like floating lagoons. The edges of their outlines betray the existence of a rigid and geometrical inner structure, while the wax surface freezes a certain agitation. This material contrast bares both the drive to permanence in the sculptural object’s inner time and an awareness of the fleeting nature of all forms.

This frugality reflects the impulse to include elements only when they are necessary in terms of function. Each work is a machine built to experience in the

body the functioning of abstract unions. Many of the works are built dually: pairs of eyes, diptychs, complementary colors. Giron systematically denies the gaze a center or resting place. From this dynamic duality, tension and its attendant vitality are born and rendered palpable. The pairs of eyes that abound in the works in this exhibition do not aim to give rise to empathic complicity. These eyes are round and flat; they have no cosmetic or expressive power. Like the words superimposed on the figures, they are read as sign, though the mirror effect resulting from their gaze involves first the physical body and then the mental plane. Peter Sloterdijk says that “The eyes are the organic prototype of philosophy... ..not only can they see, but they are also able to see themselves seeing. This gives them a prominence among the body’s cognitive organs.” In Giron’s energetic machines, the eyes are the interface by which the work operates on the viewer. In the wall pieces, these eyes look out flat and frontally. In the sculptures, they point everywhere to facilitate a connection from any point on their periphery. If the works in this exhibition have any one thing in common, it is their insistence on not establishing a casual relationship.

In the works connected to architectural forms and their interpretation, the artist auscultates first to then describe the formal problems in public buildings. Using her theoretical arsenal and profound pragmatic sensibility, she examines walls and passageways as molds of the human. And she reveals something crucial about her ideological stance: instead of finger pointing, her critical attitude includes the possibility of proposal. Rather than deploying a terrifying darkness, she reveals the mechanisms of light and shadow. Whether physical or social, the space that we inhabit is a field of tensions and meanings whose influence is continuous, explicit and subliminal. In a global art scene populated by productions entrenched in a tautological cynicism, Giron explores

the battlefield in the most subversive spirit imaginable: that of one who believes in the possibility of improvement.

Carlos Huffmann
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Translation from Spanish by Jane Brodie.