



[Read online](#)

Starsky Brines: Painting

Juan Carlos Palenzuela · 2006

English translation for the artist's website. Original text in Spanish.

Recycling and drawing upon history are signs of the times. Starsky Brines is a painter of a new generation, the one that emerged in a salon in 2003, without a manifesto or any memorable fanfare. They simply took their places in an exhibition where dozens of young exhibitors usually crowd together, and on that occasion, among so many, a shared affinity asserted itself: figurative painting, urban iconography, an interest in recycled material and in the non-discursive.

The twentieth century has been regarded as a time that exalted chaos, aesthetic audacity and challenges to the imagination and to the meanings of art. How significant it is that, at the beginning of a new millennium, an artist should open his first solo exhibition with a painting retrieved from the rubbish. An insignificant painting, kitsch and, to top it all, enormous. A landscape—significantly—a pretentious one. Properly framed and also thoroughly daubed over. A painting of mixtures, ironies and baseness. A painting that recalls observations in Alain Severe's *L'Art modeste*. A painting that situates us within postmodernity.

This generation finds its point of convergence in the classrooms of the Instituto Reverón in Caracas. As far as I can understand, there they learned that the artist's first condition lies in individual freedom. That atmosphere can be felt while walking through its corridors, studios and classrooms. At a time of constraints and serious difficulties for art education in Venezuela—for the country, let us say—the Instituto Reverón has stood for openness, independence and daring.

A painter, and a figurative painter, Brines places an imaginary subject at the centre of the pictorial space: solitary, imposing, simple. This element might originate in comics or in certain emblematic images of mass culture, with no other affiliation than pictorial creation. His work can be recognized by its large formats and its long sequences of very small series; the imaginary face, the interest in material and colour, and a certain writing within the space of painting itself. One strand of the modern-art tradition is deformation, which in this painter mingles with a chromatic treatment through which the support seems to breathe.

With Brines comes a reaffirmation of the figurative tradition in contemporary Venezuelan painting. His image is concentrated in a scene. A figure without a repertoire. His colour tends toward the primary, and through it he establishes the sense of drawing. His is a painting upon which the name "Caracas" is written, nothing more: a somewhat undefined figure, a reclining body, a human bird-creature, a depersonalized feature clinging to its strange human condition. A painting of unsettling backgrounds and figures that might

evoke the painting-for-painting's-sake of the eighties. Its iconic reference, although partly concealed, speaks of its photographic origins.

At a time when art's prophetic vocation has all but disappeared and uniformity threatens to prevail, a number of young painters emerge who renew faith in painting, in pictorial creation and in the spirit of freedom. This is the best thing that can happen to a fractured society.

Juan Carlos Palenzuela