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As If It Were a Game...

Lorena González · 2009

Text sent by Lorena González on November 16, 2009. Original preserved in the artist's archive.
English translation for this website.

(...) if the poet appears to place himself within the realm of ordinary reality (...) he then adopts all the conditions that govern the emergence of the uncanny in real life, and whatever has that character in lived experience will also have it in fiction. (...) In a sense, he then abandons us to the superstition we thought we had overcome; he deceives us by promising everyday reality, only to step outside it. We react to his fictions as we would to our own experiences; by the time we become aware of the deception, it is already too late, for the poet has achieved his purpose (...)

Sigmund Freud

According to Sigmund Freud, in his study of the various manifestations of the uncanny through an analysis of E. T. A. Hoffmann's story *The Sandman*, this state is a kind of phenomenon that affects and renders strange things that have long been known and familiar: elements we have left behind and whose emotional impulses have been repressed over the course of our lives. Repression transforms these hidden parts of the self into anxiety, causing them to accumulate; they tend to return to us suddenly, unsettling everything we believed we had overcome.

For the psychoanalyst, the materialization or emergence of the uncanny in a work of art has to do with the poet's ability to position himself within ordinary reality and carry these traits from everyday life into fiction, setting in motion a displacement that will subsequently recur in the viewer's experience. In Starsky Brines's case, this mechanism could be said to be one of the central elements of his painting. His ambiguous characters, both in drawings and on canvas, appear before us as if they belonged to a world we all know, suddenly thrown out of alignment by the artist's intervention. Strange presences, sombre dolls, beings that are half animal and half human, ambiguous women, smiling children, subtle beasts, texts, poems, written marks and objects constantly travel along the two-way street he develops in his works: a fantastic cartography in which the strange and the familiar overlap, giving rise to figures that are as close to us as they are alien.

For Brines, this world is a highly particular, infinite population: an urban bestiary as intimate as it is collective, which he has been gathering for many years and which seems constantly to assail him. His images carry the living traces of a personal memory that moves from dolls and childhood recollections through comic-book culture and the characteristic iconography of mass media: symbols, stereotypes, moments, forms and relationships that also feel familiar to us because they constitute the everyday fabric of our compulsive contemporary lives. In his work, formats, techniques and materials intensify

these visual deviations. Each figure functions as an assembly of fragments, suggestions and gestures that will take shape in the viewer's own hidden recesses.

Through this accumulation of formal and conceptual ruptures, which not only inspire the emergence of his characters but also shape the movement of every mark across the canvas, the artist ultimately confronts us with a world in which, as Freud might say, the strange, the odd and the displaced are suddenly affirmed and celebrated. Almost as if it were a game, he opens a path for the presence of the uncanny: works that momentarily deconstruct themselves before coming alive again, pieces overflowing with public and private stories, visual fractures fluctuating among the ghostly flashes of a subterranean plot, the persistence of a lost path along which the artist, expelling and recycling his own fears, offers us a hidden truth of which we are all a part.

Lorena González