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América Latina 1960-2013

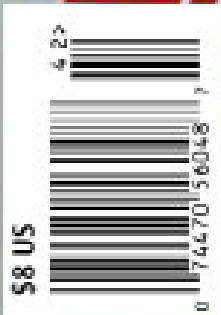
BIACI - Cartagena Biennial

A Biennial in Cuenca

The 2014 Whitney Biennial

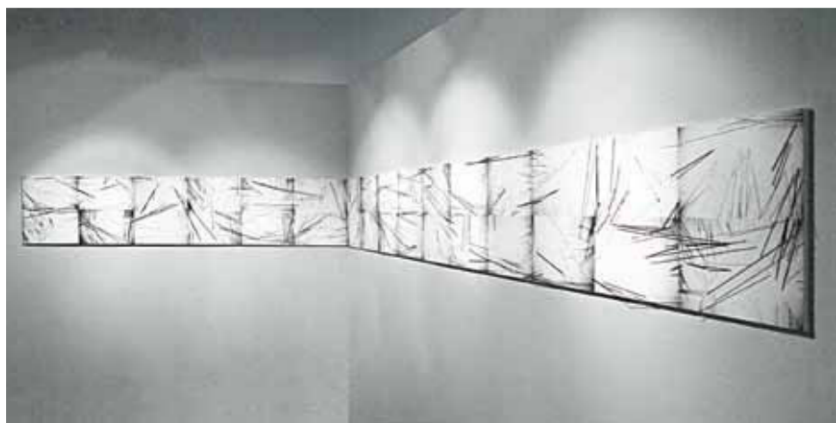
Fabián Marcaccio

Liliana Porter





Marina Font. *Royal*, 2014. Found objects on poly-cotton archival print, gesso. 20 x 20 in (50 x 50 cm.).



Patricia Van Dalen. *Wire Garden*, 2013. Inkjet print, cotton paper, vinyl strings, pins, compact polyethylene. Installation. 20 1/2 x 20 1/2 in. (52 x 600 cm.).

essential condition of what defines being a woman. Some of these are more obvious than others—like the one in which the body is embroidered (imprisoned) in a bird cage—or more suggestively, as in the case of *Royal* (2013), in which crochet appliques completely cover the face of the model. These works precisely suggest this creative freedom that is set in contrast to the rigidity of the pose and that represents the intricate mysteries of the body and the mind, clearly the other unknown continents which constitute femininity.

From the perspective of domestic and manual labor, Font speaks of what women “should” be and do. She poetically confronts a question about the roles imposed on gender, as she reflects on the collective unconscious that records the experiences that mark the life of a woman.

A key aspect of the exhibition is the willingness to symbolically connect all the pieces with fertility, motherhood and the woman-mother-goddess archetypes. This is exemplified most clearly in the second body of work: a suggestive installation of twenty-six color photographs—not intervened—that depict groups of eggs illuminated on a concrete floor, representing Font’s own fertility cycles. It is thanks to this installation that the artist manages to create a dynamic reading among the entire group of works in the exhibition, where not only the partially or totally covered faces and bodies, in anatomical positions, speak of individual female etymologies, but where the entire group also relates to processes that are rather universal; the widespread subtleties of the inner body.

It is precisely based on this rupture of formats and strategies that the artist succeeds in establishing a gap between body and memory, between biological complexity and manual craftsmanship, the vivid remembrance of what is not remembered in detail: hormonal changes, cells, ovulation cycles, and the darkness which, although not easily perceived, clearly exalts the polyphony of being a woman.

Amalia Caputo

Patricia Van Dalen

ArtMedia Gallery

Patricia Van Dalen (Maracaibo, Venezuela, 1955) is one of the most recognized artists in Venezuela, where she has successfully solidified an artistic trajectory that expands around thirty years of creation. Her work has been developed primarily as a constant and dense exploration of color in the abstract field, expressed through the execution of two-dimensional works, installation, and pieces integrated to architecture and the urban environment. Her latest proposals include the mural *Jardin Luminoso* (Bright Garden) that measures 1200 m2, located in one of the busiest highways of the Venezuelan capital. Since its installation in 2005, the mural has become an aesthetic icon east of the city.

Trained as a graphic designer, Van Dalen contributed to the strengthening of a thorough understanding of the elements of visual expression and the infinite artistic possibilities that each of these has, as they are studied and worked in depth within the plane and

the space. It would not be unreasonable also to think that being born and raised in bright Maracaibo has so far influenced the choice of color as the element of exploration in her work.

The artistic trajectory of Patricia Van Dalen has reached the thirty-year mark. The country in which she developed her work has changed and she is part of that group of artists seeking new horizons before a political and moral crisis of enormous dimensions. This is definitely a decisive moment for Venezuelans, and for Van Dalen, it represents a crucial time in which revisions acquire existential density; it is a period of evolution and experimentation, of change and reinvention of her life and work.

The exhibition *High Voltage* illustrates this process. In it we find an unknown Van Dalen, both mature and new. The show consisted of two installations and two photographic series, mostly in black and white. The images, taken with an old film camera Leica M3, are from the play of lines provided by the electrical wiring of the city as the sky background. This time Van Dalen drops color to rely on the line, as he takes the expressiveness of the graphic-representative element to its limits.

While this “fascination with grids” enunciated by Van Dalen is evident in the exhibition, it is perhaps the creation of formal and conceptual tensions the prevailing element in the works included in the show. The wiring compositions are somewhat the borderline between heaven and earth; This tension is also related to the visual pull exerted by the directionality

of the diagonal lines, but also with the play established between representational and the abstract elements, between those formal and narrative, concrete and elusive, and analytical and poetic.

Some precedent for this production, in which the predominant color disappears in favor of the graphic austerity of the line, can be found in the installation *Grilla* (Grid), created at the Galería GBG in Caracas in 2012, and *Grid*, an installation currently exhibited at the Coral Gables Mercantile Commercebank, in which the line is as relevant as color once was. Nonetheless, in *High Voltage* these experiences are brought to these points of tension already mentioned.

In *Electric Blue*, Van Dalen includes seven photographs of intertwined cables over the cerulean Miami sky. The textured lines of different tones and thickness set against the clear blue sky are captured by Van Dalen's camera to build abstract plans that are also charged with an urban vision.

Wire Garden is an installation in which the artist has intervened the photographic backgrounds of previous works with fragments of plastic tapes that, with their shadows, replicate the directional lines on the paper. The result is a delicate mural in which the drawing was not rendered in pencil, but with remnants from other images and their shadows.

Spatial Stations consists of three photographs that show the wiring from power plants. The lattice of directional lines that form full and empty areas, as well as the detailed views of these marvelous structures, create an abstract play in which the harsh beauty of the machines—that which repels us and draws us to the city—emerges with the strength of a landscape.

In *Power Lines* we meet again the Van Dalen who is “master” of chromaticism.

Only that in this piece the color is no longer a convincing plane. The artist uses fragments of plastic strips fixed on the plane using pins. It aims to show color as vestige, like a shadow on paper whose chromatic distinctiveness is barely perceived.

As an exhibition that showcases a significant turning point, *High Voltage* will mark a milestone in the career of this sensitive and intelligent Venezuelan artist.

Katherine Chacón

Aziz + Cucher

The Screening Room

For the second exhibition of the new space The Screening Room, dedicated exclusively to video and film, Tami Katz-Freiman, curator of the exhibition, presented the video installation *Time of the Empress* (2012), by the duo formed in 1991 by Anthony Aziz (Massachusetts, USA, 1961) and Sammy Cucher (born in Lima, Peru, and raised in Venezuela, 1958). *Time of the Empress* (septet) is an installation of seven vertical screens that originally formed part of a solo show, *Some People*, by the duo of artists, commissioned in 2012 by the Indianapolis Museum of Art and developed from a trip they took to Bosnia in 2009.

Drawing on models of architecture as metaphors, in this installation the duo reflects on the notions of creation and destruction and of peace and conflict that are inherent in human nature. On each screen, on a white background, several volumetric facades of modernist buildings with no particular identity are built in their top section while they are gradually destroyed into pieces at their base, in an infinite continuum, as emblems of power and ruin in the context of the war in the Balkans during the nineties. The title of the

exhibition is loosely inspired by a passage from Marguerite Yourcenar's novel *Memoirs of Hadrian*, in which the empress talks about the laws of chaos and order. There are a total of seven individual parts that interact with each other and that generate in viewers a meditative, reflective and hypnotic state concerning violence, life in war zones and architecture as a symbol of power. Drawn in AutoCAD and animated with sophisticated technologies, the animation of those buildings that are built and implode at the same time in a loop, is born and dies as a historic sign of violence and, on the other hand, addresses the fragility of human beings, in a choreography that, although silent, it comments on the process of disintegration in a manner that is more poetic than political.

Likewise, the audio installation *White Noise*, which consists of background murmur, becomes after a while a basic vibration of that which is human, as it enhances the hypnotic effect generated by each screen. While one understands the artists' reflections on, and interest in, the geopolitical references concerning conflict zones in the Middle East and Eastern Europe—such as Lebanon, Israel and Bosnia, areas of conflict to which Aziz + Cucher have devoted their work in recent years—one cannot deny how inevitably this installation evokes the tragedy of 9/11, which is implicitly present. In this manner, the universality of conflict zones, the connections to the landscape, the architecture, and the people who live in these areas, become evident in the continuous endeavor of destruction and reconstruction. Moreover, the regeneration and destruction of the animations are accompanied by waste and debris that, although weightless, are left in motion, simulating fundamental particles of the cosmos; where the purely human phenomenon that is architecture, achieves almost organic or biological proportions.

Virtually the entire body of work by Aziz + Cucher has revolved around reflections on ideas of progress and regression, as they critically address the exaggerated optimism generated by new technologies and their unconventional implementation, the veracity of historical representation, the notion of presence and absence, and the idolatry for the imaginative ability of mankind. In photography, they have pioneered the digital world and Photoshop. In the

Aziz + Cucher. *The Time of the Empress* (septet), 2012. Digital HD animation in seven vertical screens. Video-installation. Variable dimensions.

