

## Redoubts accessible to memory...

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*Art critic*

Dr. Luis M. de Jesús Berríos, presents a proposal that assumes characteristics of challenge. It is broadcast to all points of the planet from the television studio in Río Piedras of the Deanship of Education of the University of Puerto Rico. The aspiration is to convert his proposals into an online discussion. His starting point will be ten sketches of his authorship that will be used for future paintings and critical interpretation, and which art scholars from various disciplines will develop. The point of support of the speakers can become elusive, because the current perspectives have ups and downs from a yesteryear full of flats, which are still on our heels. The problems that our news projects and perhaps the successive ones come from the contents of memories full of values acquired in remote times. These still run on all existential levels and are housed in *lost redoubts and therefore less accessible to memory*. They exist in those privileged dendrites that thread together what they long ago called the “collective unconscious” with futuristic visions; sometimes inscrutable, plagued by hypotheses fed by referential factors investigated from pre-existing calculations, in order to point out routes to guide the future.

Those who are in the tasks listed seem to be faced with imaginary boards where some try to explore what remains incognito, although supported by chance. There are so many who wish to enter this investigative game that their possible “good intentions” irremediably pay to the “chaos of our every day”. In this table serious researchers and scientists, optimists and pessimists, alarmists and illusionists make their bets, without missing opportunists, sectarians, apocalyptic and the ill-intentioned and with which we run the risk of alienating ourselves from those realities that truly they harass us

The foregoing has become more acute, since we are on the threshold of a change of epoch; we experience a decoupling of a development that has had the functions of a nurse. Today the legacies and principles extracted from unfathomable sources of knowledge and discoveries that have given rise to an evolution, in my irreversible judgment, have made progress in techno-scientific spaces, from which a whole cybernetic flow has been forged, which serves as an agent

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accelerator of transforming processes that to a certain extent de-virtualize the customary as they have been conceived. In fact, the entry into virtual spaces can serve as training camps to face the distances of a universe that expands as the eyes, aided by specialized instruments act as optical prosthesis, allowing the sense of sight to act massively from the space exploration. It seems that we take the first steps towards the understanding of a new order and urgently need to think about the human condition, to conserve the substantial and release the insignificant ballasts that turn out to be dilatory entertainments. Otherwise, large groups of people will be lost because they do not join this torrent in time, until now unstoppable and that allows us to accommodate and rearrange everything that we can potentially use again in other vital scenarios.

If we go to the plastic expressions of Luis Miguel de Jesús, he places the thoughts of the observer towards a type of existence that rides on fluctuating intellectual horizons. In it, agendas with ambitions are outlined, and goals are anticipated that will be concretized as a trajectory in stages, with successive scales to bring to fruition, companies whose vocations of eternity, originate a sense of succession. Knowledge will become a transmission belt that takes us back to stages where objectivity and subjectivity reach collaborative levels. In a way, the collection, presented, preludes the flavors and disappointments, the anxieties and hopes of those who seek suitable directions to survive in psychic environments, where it is necessary to look for known handholds. Its purpose is to find support points, in order to adjust to a multifaceted era. In it, the “dialectic leaps” (in the best Hegelian sense), struggle to adapt to major currents coined in recent times, although at the same time, they are competing precedents to be validated. They were the ones who shook history and, in a way, paved the way to give way to contemporary trends that apparently arise as if they were part of a phenomenon of spontaneous generation.

If anything emanates from the artistic message of Luis Miguel is that it takes as a reference the vital racking, to remove from the usual metaphors that serve as nutrients to the seekers of enigmas, the legendizers, epistemologists and axiologists who extract their intangible secrets from ordinary becoming. It is that our lives, whether brief or prolonged, are subject to the avatars of time. Possibly it is so, because our transitory nature compels us to reach what seems impossible and before our fleetingness we go to compare directly or indirectly with the dimensionally opposed: the supreme infinity, which as far as we know is presented as insensitive, unfathomable and

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inflexible. Such a comparison due to its disproportionate magnitude shows the egocentric overvaluations that beset us. It is probable that this type of disparities provided Don Miguel de Unamuno with the elements of cathartic filiation that led him to write his essay in the early twentieth century: From the tragic feeling of life, a topic that I think should be revised interdisciplinarily and in comparative keys.

The measurements taken by rules relativized by particular desires that gradually spread to large crowds, alert us to the events formulated and assembled perhaps by conjurers who are aware that they can take advantages in the short or long term, of internal plots that sometimes provoke rebels without a motivating cause. a state of resistance conducive to not confessing our limits. Hence, some proposals have been titled “Gallery of Honorables”. That title with which in Puerto Rico we label politicians and that is increased by elevating them to the symbolic walls of an immortality that vanishes once they vanish in memory. The caustic agent is that the author gives them a common appearance that homogenizes them. All are masked with paper bags where sight and breathing are confined by the material limitations of their hoods and whose only gesture is shared; it is a uniform smile that as we watch, it turns into a grimace. It seems more like a derivative of a sardonic laugh because its wide dentures tend to hold on to a labial bow that emulates a hammock. I have heard that many English speakers refer to those who outline this type of automatic expression as “...easy smile people” and characterize them with adjectives like: skillful, witty, complacent, while others impute them to be: arrogant, greedy, defiant and ruthless The piece called “Still Life” is essential to listening to the cryptic message. There is a lit “quinqué” (lantern) perhaps extracted from the “props” of Diogenes Laercio because it seems to follow long in his search in broad daylight of an honest man. Meanwhile, the “Landscape with Paper Covers” shows a panorama where there is no place for the idyllic. It is the satire of the insubstantial nature of some existences, of those who, even though they are housed in a miniature chair with a lot of space, are nothing other than the representation of “nothingness.” However, the composition has all the essential elements to set the stage for a monologue in limbo. That iconography of an unmistakable leadership seems to be exhibited in a corridor that has been crowned with the pompous epithet of “Exhibition Hall.” It is an architecturally contradictory qualifier, because it lacks the amplitude of observation that a room provides; rather, it is the place of passage and if it’s rushed enough, it could have an even more accelerated synonym: “Runner!” It is not strange, that the last one to abandon it slowly, is the dog, which we can only admire its hind legs. For the canine, the

chaos that affects the circumstances, as is logical goes unnoticed, as if there were no future, and if there is... it does not matter.

We have observed the way in which the artist tackles the situation of historical overturning, using traditional methods and techniques. I understand that the existing tools are at the same time the available resources to listen to the possibilities of the future. Meanwhile, its cast of anonymous characters, try to cling to their ancestral mores while the times demand new requirements. They seem to be clamoring loudly, while the audience they address behaves like deaf and blind people. There is in each composition the call to avoid stagnation before the new realities that rush upon us come into action causing pressing situations, to change, divert or annihilate the established. The break, by inaction or negligence, would make possible mitigating acclimatizers of a change of times, enter into disuse, hindering the infallible passage of time.

To make way for another phase of his argument, Luis uses a shocking and unexpected image, as if it were the communal personification of those carefree actors, probably referred to in that saying that "... what was yesterday is today and will always be". It appears as if it were a spell; "The Circus". It uses its nostalgic capacity to sit contemplators in the stands of the traditional tent in the style of those existing until after the mid-twentieth century. There, the hand of the magician who works "underground" monopolizes the role of the presenter in his attempt to offer a simultaneous show of juggling, trapeze, antics performed on the back of someone disguised as a horse. That jute horse in turn carries between its legs a mask from which the author reveals its facial lines because in reality its function is a fictitious witness of a certain type of action, without being able to raise the admiration of the public. In that repetitive and conformist cycle, of those who come to the function perhaps with the purpose of accelerating the wear of a history so fatigued that it may be on the verge of extinction. In the opinion of the subscriber, the "comparsa cirquense", with its master of ceremonies who must juggle narratives to outline his speech simultaneously, whose advantage lies in that having his face covered has to go to his memories to highlight the actions of those who walk on the tightrope, the bullfighter in the center of the track and the clown who will fall backwards on the steed. Everyone present, even the props-persons! they move with their heads covered, except for the clown who already does his adventures with his eyes closed. I am of the opinion, that here we can be before a self-criticism whose pronouncement is directed to those who stay in the comfort of the acclimated by centuries of practice. Thus, all rely on the

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external resources that chronologically and punctually respond to the needs of the show. That boast of security rests on certainties based on consistencies, I do not know if I can qualify it as automatic. But in reality, we detect that there are surprise factors that need attention. We do not know when the strongest of the cables can break. The trapeze can be delayed for a few milliseconds and not reach the hands of the person waiting after having challenged gravity. Nor can we make sure that a horse is held so that someone falls safely on his rump.

Selecting the circus as the focal point of an analytical exhibition is a success because it serves as an access route; where it makes optics require that the student, transcend to psychological levels and why not, philosophical levels. In the first place, the subject allows Luis to use his dose of caricaturization without losing the seriousness of discourse, and secondly, he converts the collection into an equation which allows him to gradually dose an imaginary where the critical eye can adopt sequences or maybe dislocate them. I am of the opinion that it responds to profane liturgy where thought can be supported by scientific reasoning or respond to the multitude of dogmatisms coming from the social spectrum of diverse origins and beliefs. For the latter, communication is a wake-up call for them to maintain states of alert around those agents who with expired ideologies, feigned goodness, and “given discourses,” conceal inexorable desires of powers of all kinds. In the background of the representation, the painter accommodates those mediators whose histrionics are aimed at motivating chimerical catharsis, which hijack the imagination. That is the case of the giant hand of the magician that emanates from a “magic box”, without presenting his face. It acts as a scammer who steals attention from the audience to pretend feign the subtleties of higher beings. The truth is that he manipulates the movements of others and his great fear is to become a Wizard of Oz who, when he discovers his insignificant identity, his alleged powers are diluted.

Once, the show ends, De Jesús transports us to a different panorama where he took an almost idyllic representative sample of *La Perla*<sup>1</sup> (“The Landscape with Flowers”). The landscape is preceded by a floral arrangement of daisies, while the formally dressed character leaves the landscape, leaving behind a building facing the sea whose presence establishes contrasts between the apparent residential decontextualization of the suburb and the serene gentleness of the

1 La Perla - a residential area that exists between the sea and the old defensive city walls that provide a distinctive touch to the redoubt of the Spanish Empire, that we call El Viejo San Juan (Old San Juan).

sea. Meanwhile, the actor who comes out of that environment seems to venture to find answers to the problems that surrounds him. Thus, the yellow flowers dismiss him with their symbolic charge because said color appeals to salvation. Next, he confronts us with a vase that occupies approximately two thirds of the space where it is located. It is crowned by the diadem of newly opened buds whose vegetal eloquence is accentuated by amber centers that assume the format similar to the atomic mushroom (cloud). It probably announces an exorcist spell in order to eradicate those types of threats. It is the vision that could maintain chimerical intentions, protected by the roof whose pillars are lost in the border of the upper line of the huge room that gives it protection. The truth is, that composition has referential pivot functions to the plot sketched by De Jesus. I think it simulates a kineticism that indicates routes to follow from preexisting data; It turns out to be the call not to reject experiences but to adapt them to new perspectives.

From then on, the actors will play their roles as if they entered into exploratory adventures and in some cases, we see how they leave their old quarters, stripped of everything that can be resized in the circumstances that crossbreed in an environment in search of definitions and redefinitions. If something is striking, it is like leaving behind long shadows that become noticeable in such contours. The cover, which carries the penumbra left, still maintains the hood, while the emitter of the contour no longer carries it. There is a secret transgression, of such a nature that leaves the face of his presence dressed as if he were such an orthodox practitioner, that even the opacity of his presence refuses to unveil the timid acceptance of the inexorable future.

Leaving behind the bedroom whose monastic solitude allows as a unique distraction a picture / window representative of the sea. Meanwhile his shadowy footprint remains hostage as if it were simultaneously the rearguard that assures him to return to his immemorial practices. Therefore, the title "Archetype and Shadow" is so convenient for the individual who abandons his home. At the end of the day, they leave the home environment, it is an example of courage. It is good to remember that even the most seasoned military man must have options to flee from an eventual need. In his case, he knows that he will have to face conditions for which he is not prepared. But the painter provides a possible solution, by taking him to make "The Record of Consciousness". There we find him

backwards, watching the ocean while his carefree dog walks. At the same time, the former has left the paper wrapper that previously covered his head laying on the sand. That act reminds him that imposed limitations produce results subject to the measure of molds that compress them, confronting us with how ridiculously fleeting life can be. Simultaneously, he seems entranced by the passing cloud that looks like a mini-storm camping in clear skies. I infer that the isolation of the cloud invites one to accept the pristine options of space, which urge one to leave behind masks and other tricks used by distracting manipulators to pretend existential stretching. Thankfully, on the beach, observers will find “The Street Circus” with its challenges to the natural laws that bind us to the ground. That kind of entertainment that serves as an “antidote” to indoctrinating principles supported by phonies. The beach acrobats become, with their challenges to gravity, the instability of the sandy ground and their jumps into the air, the ones who lead us to accept limitations seeking by our own means and without artificialities, genuine results based on effort that are presented to the spectator. The most notable aspect of the picture is that they managed to chain and put a lock on the magic hand. The gesture of the clown, whose eyes have renounced all kinds of closure, showing their genuine astonishment at human achievements, is also remarkable.

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