

WANDERING AND WANDERING OVER LUIS CARRERA-MAUL'S HORIZONTAL PAINTINGS: A LABYRINTHINE, DIZZYING AND "SLEEPWALKING" ROUTE

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I met Luis Carrera-Maul a little less than a year ago. In our first meeting we talked about everything but art. He told me he was going to stay in Oaxaca for a while: he had been invited as an artist-in-residence at La Curtiduría to develop a still undetermined artistic project (at least unknown to me). We met again at La Curtiduría a few months later, coinciding with my seminar on "Contemporary and Post-Contemporary Art Practices". We shared many hours before and after those marathon sessions; we also looked for each other inside and outside, not only because of our common condition as official "residents" of this singular space of reflection and creation in Oaxaca. Now, every day we talked about art, invariably about our respective aesthetic interests, and also about philosophy, about projects to be shared perhaps one of these days. This is how I got to know Luis Carrera-Maul: snippets of his personal biography, his artistic trajectory, his experiences and nomadic life before Oaxaca, recognizing our affinities, discovering common friends, devoted fraternal influences, substantive references that we shared. Meanwhile, I frequented his workshop at La Curtiduría every day, I saw his processes, I attended his practices, so transparent and didactic, and I multiplied my interest in his work, that is to say, in Luis Carrera-Maul without a solution of continuity.

In the presentation of the objectives of the seminar in Oaxaca, I referred to two phrases by Nietzsche in which he encoded certain significant issues of our post-contemporary artistic reality. The first, although apocryphal, evidently expresses his Nietzschean origin: "The philosopher must know what he needs; the artist must do it. The second corresponds to a fragment of Nietzsche's Antichrist: "I do not know what to do; I am all that which does not know what to do", sighs modern man. We have been sick of that modernity, --of ambiguous peace, of cowardly compromise, of all the virtuous dirt typical of modern yes and no". (.) "We were brave enough, we had no indulgence either with ourselves or with others; but for a long time we did not know where to go with our courage. We became gloomy; we were called fatalists. Our fatum was fullness, tension, retention of strength. We were thirsty for lightning and actions, we remained as far as possible from the happiness of the weak, from resignation There was a storm in our air, the nature that we are was darkened--for we had no path. Formula of our happiness; a yes, a no, a straight line, a goal".

What to do," I repeated insistently those days. Someone came to think that I was referring to Lenin and his historic article (1902) on the need to create a party that would combine the spontaneity of the workers' movement with reflective, political, scientific, revolutionary leadership; a party that would establish the necessary correlation between class interests, the workers' movement, the party itself as political leadership and the necessary revolution. No, my stubborn question had nothing to do with any artistic revolution, nor did it call for revolutionary directions or meanings in the nonsense of our most recent artistic actuality, that autistic,

self-absorbed post-modern wanderings. My references were closer, perhaps even more perverse. It had to do with a text by Jacques Derrida: What to make of the question "What to do? -- in *Penser ce qui vient* (1994). Derrida entrusts us with the old or renewed question: what to do? Lenin answered "it is necessary to dream" -- "with interesting precautions". Dreaming? should this be the answer of art? Goya emphatically stated that "the dream of reason produces monsters? I don't think that dreaming is the solution or the problem.

So what does Derrida say about it? First he establishes his belief: "I believe that our time, that which we are talking about, that which comes perhaps through chaos, the desert, the abyss, world disorder, general deconstruction or all the figures of an apocalypse without apocalypse, etc, That imposes on us to think and think from this fragile poise and places us in this place, places us there where we think, and think (politically and poetically) what is coming (therefore the future to the present) cannot be done if not from the place of this poise at the same time sleepy and dizzying. What does Derrida mean by the word "poise", what is he trying to express with such sleepwalking? Derrida calls for a sign of aplomb, daring to "stand still", a physics based on verticality, "that is to say, on what a plumb line indicates to us with respect to the heaviness of the earth and therefore of the earth: well, let's not hide it from ourselves, the questions we address with this somnambulant aplomb today are nothing less than the questions of the earth (in bulk and in detail), in a way that is no less urgent than concrete, imaginative, immediate, immediately ethical, juridical, geopolitical". "What are we going to do with the earth? about the earth? and the question of what stands on the earth is not just an ecological question even if it remains on the horizon of the most ambitious or radical that ecology today could assume, questions of the earth, then, and questions of man (in poise or not about the earth)".

I confess that for that seminar I had thought of appropriating this Derridian text and exchanging the word "earth" for "art" perhaps infected by the philosopher's youthful enthusiasm and his claims. I didn't do it and something had to do with my first experience with Luis Carrera-Maul's works "in a trance" at La Curtiduría. Let me explain. In his workshop Luis showed me what he was doing then. It was about processes that were to some extent mechanical, obtained with plumb bobs rotating like Foucault's Pendulum, in constant and concentric movement barely induced by its "operator", a persistent pictorial drip by mere gravity more or less predictable (but not certain) opened at random and the visual paradox, liquid painting without brushes or conventional instruments other than the creative imagination and the empirical, experimental intention of its creator. What a curious coincidence, isn't it? And I had prepared some of my dissertations about Derrida's words on vertical poise. Of course, I preferred to meditate silently on such processes than to signify them aloud at first sight. I didn't even talk to Luis about it. It is not every day that one encounters such complex and yet substantial artistic experiences as those I was immersed in those days, so rich in transverse correlations, in evocations, as to waste time babbling about banalities. I decided to think, to reflect on what was happening, to speculate in silence even at the risk of appearing stupid, that is to say stupid from the same root as stupefied, happily amazed by the wonders that Luis-artist was giving me without shame or affected concealment. I did not even ask him about his intentions. I preferred to observe and analyze with curiosity the event hypnotized by the making of art in his own way. I also watched Luis with admiration, aware of the value of his discovery, discovering his more than natural intelligence, recognizing his security and poise in the face of the artistic phenomenon unfolding before our eyes, that

letting his pendulums make art, inducing his probabilities, without haste, without traps. In passing, we commented on some coincidences as a pure hobby. What about Pollock's pictorial "revolution", his emotional "drippings" and existential drips, Duchamp's rotor machines and their kaleidoscopic effects, the retinal or the mental, the pictorial or the merely visual. And what about Rebecca Horn and her painterly mechanisms, her devotion to pendulums and my experiences with her, with them. and Umberto Eco's novel *The Foucault Pendulum* -- which I have always believed was dedicated to Michel Foucault, the philosopher, and not to the French physicist Bernard Leon Foucault who in 1851 used a large pendulum in the Pantheon in Paris to test the rotation of the Earth on its axis. In short, we spent our time delightfully excited by those artistic avatars.

Those days in January, at La Curtiduría, Luis officiated his ministry as a mediator and ventriloquist before my eyes. He made the painting talk about its things, tell its secrets, and made it loquacious and eloquent. The painting spoke eloquently about his signs of identity and genealogy, the differentiated values of his heritage, and revealed to us episodes of his peculiar history -human, all too human-- truffled both of pious lies or shameful betrayals and of sincere daring and altruism at hand. On those maps, still mute at first, we discovered their wills and urgencies, their road map, their crossroads, their interstices. I believe that it is the object of art, among others, to transform and reveal the reality that happens beyond or here of the visible. Among the artist's obsessions, tasks and strategies, there are those regarding both the visible and the invisible -- "The artist makes visible what has been invisible up to now"--, and among his singular virtues is that of intuiting intermediate spaces through which such a hidden reality emerges, knowing how to "map" and "remap" its visual geography --any of these virtues and tasks in themselves guarantee the transforming capacity of art and artists.

The philosopher Merleau-Ponty reflected on the visible and the invisible in his posthumous notes. Everything visible presupposes the existence of the non-visible, but not as a philosophical or esoteric contradiction: "It must be understood that all visibility poses a non-visibility. The invisible of the visible". The invisible is there, in matter, without yet being an object. It is pure transcendence without an "ontological" mask. The invisible would therefore be contained in matter itself, but it needs an intermediary to be revealed, to become an aesthetic experience as well as an object of knowledge. The artist wishes to possess matter, but not to make it his own, but "to make it speak with his own voice". Any matter, any object, is transformed again into something else thanks to the transforming power of the artist, its "maker", endowed with the will to create. In a way, the artist is an alchemist who operates his "great work" through artistic processes, that is to say, procedures of transmutation of matter, not just mere formal or visual transformations. What better than to do it with a pendulum, for example, with poise and decision?

Let's remember Umberto Eco's novel *El Péndulo de Foucault* for a few lines. Belbo, Casaubon and Diotallevi set out to reconstruct the history of the world through fiction: "We are rewriting the book," Diotallevi said. Belbo himself, at first skeptical and then enthusiastic, was ambitious to produce a definitive, unquestionable Plan: "If the Plan exists, it must involve everything. Either it is global or it doesn't explain anything". But so many things had to be invented, that is, recognized and connected under a new gaze, a new meaning, which seemed impossible without

falling into contradictions. What Plan? With what objective? Why had it not been put into practice until then? What events interrupted the planned sequence of events? Who were the protagonists of that history through the centuries? Where were the meetings and disagreements? And the sanctuaries, the treasure? What was the main instrument that ensured both the secret and its very decipherment? For more than a hundred pages of Foucault's *Pendulum* we witnessed this fictional intrigue under hypnosis.

The problem was to find hidden relationships: "Any data becomes important when it is connected to another. The connection modifies the perspective. It induces us to think that every aspect of the world, every voice, every written or spoken word does not have the meaning we perceive, but speaks to us of a Secret". From almost the beginning it was clear to them that the Secret had to do with a map: "a treasure map" in the strict sense. Yes, the Secret had to be related to a map, but a map that would tell them which Secret? What secret did the Templars and their successors discover before finding or composing the map that would lead them to it? Was it the "lapis exillis" that Ardeni had conjectured before he disappeared? "The Earth is a great magnet and the force and directions of its currents also depend on the influence of the celestial spheres, on the seasonal cycles, on the precision of the equinoxes, on the cosmic cycles. That is why the system of currents is changing. But they have to move like the hair that, in spite of growing on the whole surface of the skull, seems to originate in a spiral from a point placed on the nape of the neck, where it is more rebellious to the comb. If that point were detected, if the most powerful station were installed there, all the telluric flows of the planet could be mastered, directed, controlled. The Templars had understood that the secret was not only to have the global map, but also to know the critical point, the Omphalos, the Umbilicus Telluris, the Center of the World, the Origin of Power.

Surely there must have been a map that marked that telluric place. But only one map, even if it was fragmented and needed to be recomposed, only one point to mark it? If the Umbilicus was marked with a point, whoever had the marked fragment would already know everything without the need to look for the other fragments. No, the thing had to be more complex. After a few days, they thought they had the solution: they needed a pendulum, an instrument already used by the builders of cathedrals, for example in Chartres, from which they used, among other functions, to deduce the rotation of the Earth. --Let us suppose that the Templars used the Pendulum to indicate the position of the Umbilicus. Instead of the labyrinth, which is only an abstract scheme, a world map is extended on the ground and it is decided, for example, that the point marked by the peak of the Pendulum at a certain time is the one where the Umbilicus is located. -But where on the ground? -When?

Derrida spoke of the earth and the force of gravity, of the questions of the earth and our necessary poise in the face of these questions. And if it were art that asks and questions us? What answers for what questions? What art for what post-contemporary situation, beyond history and even art itself? What to say after the death of art certified by Arthur Danto and his henchmen? And what to say and do with seriousness and responsibility that does not seem provocative in the territory of the Oaxacan painters and Mexican painting par excellence? Luis responds with aplomb through his plume-painters, he does it with the conviction of a sleepwalker absorbed in his artistic dreams, sure of his reflective truth, aware of his heroic task,

trained in both knowledge and artistic doing. Luis responds in his own way, intelligent and sensitive. He makes it vertical, human, on the horizontal landscape of a territory to be colored. But the map is not the territory it represents, the Polish wise man Alfred Korzybski taught us, as the word is not the object it represents. And a painting, a painting?

A lover of mysteries, a blind believer in destiny, in necessary encounters as well as inevitable misunderstandings, all of which are decisive and unavoidable, I am seduced to think that our meeting and shared experience in Oaxaca was not a mere coincidence, a whim of life and its alleged vagaries. What if the place of the secret of art, of painting, was Oaxaca, and more specifically, that temple of Oaxacan painting which is its Museum of Oaxacan Painters? What better and more opportune than an exhibition? And even more so if it is titled and advertised almost esoterically as an exhibition of "Horizontal Painting". Besides, Luis Carrera-Maul is neither a painter -he is much more- nor a Oaxacan, but a "chilango" with a pure silver heart from Zacatecas, of course. What secrets will this exhibition against nature in Oaxaca reveal to us? Oh, that trail of mystery.

Before going through Luis Carrera-Maul's exhibition narrating its milestones I can't help but return to Derrida and his double question: What to do? Derrida points out that although it seems a daily necessity to ask such a question, and let us recognize its relevance in all ages and cultures, this question has a much more recent critical history: "it is a modern history". The philosopher ventures that the seriousness of what is coming - surely new, absolutely unprecedented, with no example to refer to and refractory to any possible repetition - is "that we no longer know what to make of the question 'what to do' today, either in its form or in its content". What if this is the critical situation of art today, of painting in particular?

Kant and Lenin asked themselves this almost theological question at the gates of their respective revolutions. In recent times, surely our most immediate revolution was the fall of the Berlin Wall; and its most terrible replication was the collapse of the World Trade Center's twin towers with their collateral damage -- including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the financial crisis to this day. "In any case, whatever we do about this synchrony or this coincidence, the question "what to do" will always have resonated on the edge of the abyss or chaos, in front of the most indeterminate, most distressing horizon, when one would say that everything must be rethought, re-decided, re-founded, from top to bottom, and there where perhaps the bottom, the foundation and the foundation are missing. Derrida points out that by asking ourselves what to do, we are actually linking three other implicit questions: what can I know? -a speculative question, typical of our scientific curiosity-, what do I have to do? --and what am I allowed to expect? --a double question that is both practical and speculative. And yet another, apparently captious and impertinent question: what is man? --What is the artist, I would say?

It takes courage and aplomb to ask such questions now, again, in the desolate landscape after the catastrophe, the announced defeat of the armies of undifferentiated images and objects of our consumer and wholesale advertising society, its fantastic spam. Courage and aplomb that the "incompetents" who think they know lack, because they are in a position to know, and "are incapable of articulating such questions and learning how to form them", in the words of Derrida. And also a good dose of utopia, that "letting oneself be" dreamed which Derrida attributes to

Lenin, who was dedicated to the task of his revolutionary work -a dream which "goes faster than the natural course of events" and comes to "anticipate the present".

Art can no longer be considered a game or a diversion of dilettante aesthetes. Nor is it a decorative, even functional, residue of what it once was, and some remember it with melancholy, in any case unsustainable given its growing banality, over-supply as speculative as it is inconsequential, and promiscuity. I dare to hope for a fair, therapeutic, pedagogical art, for seers and optimists above all. Why not? The works of Luis Carrera-Maul have that sense, they are differentiated and advance along that road just traveled, they propose new perspectives. His exhibition "Horizontal Painting" in Oaxaca is a complete success, an unforgettable experience, a delight for the eyes and the hypothalamus, for example, as unsatisfied as they are hopeful, still. In Oaxaca there is as much to see as to rethink. I also believe, like John Berger, that "one looks at the paintings in the hope of discovering a secret. Not a secret about art, but about life. And if you discover it, it will remain a secret, because, after all, it cannot be translated into words. The only thing you can do with words is to draw, by hand, a rough map to get to the secret". I trust that Luis' intention with this exhibition is to reveal to us and make us participants in a secret, perhaps a fiction where he has codified essential, disturbing questions that concern him and occupy his time as an artist and intellectual -- which he is without shame or false modesty -- something more than simple riddles. I confess that I have enjoyed much more than I expected with my experience in the midst of his works, and remembering them now, which is no small thing. Now it is my turn to make participants and accomplices of our experience to those who read us, also hopeful, with words. If only I knew how to draw that rough map to the secret that John Berger refers to.

Derrida was very cautious when referring to the visual arts, rejecting on numerous occasions the possibility of talking about them. For example, in *La vérité en peinture* --in the text titled +R (par-dessus le marché)-- he expressed himself with hostility to this possibility: "As for painting, on it, beside it or above it, the discourse always seems to me to be foolish, at the same time instructive and charming (...) in a situation of chatter, unequal and unproductive with respect to that which, in one stroke, passes (of) that language which continues to be heterogeneous or which impedes any progress". Nevertheless, Derrida wrote on many occasions about painting and painters, for example about Valerio and Camilla Adami, the drawings of Artaud, etc.; he was even the "curator" of an exhibition of drawings at the Louvre, which he used to illustrate his particular reflection on the paradoxes of sight, which has to do with invisibility. Perhaps it was the beginning of a "revision"; Derrida confessed shortly after having realized that the traditional privilege of the visible was constantly sustained, founded, himself overflowed, by the privilege of touch-suggestive Derridian intuition that I have been dealing with for some years now and that infects a good part of my recent aesthetic experiences.

Well, that's enough. I think that with these previous reflections we can already begin our itinerary of "horizontal paintings. Let's see what secrets await us, what intuitions awaken from their lethargy, what intuitions guide us. In any case, this is a didactic exhibition like few others, one of the most complete I have seen in these last years of artistic skepticism of which I accuse myself. Any teacher of contemporary artistic practices will find here fortunate examples with which to narrate the evolution of art in recent decades, to relate them to its fundamental

concepts, to recognize some of its most significant authors. These are not simple formal quotations, no, nor are they mere interested appropriations. It has more to do with the genealogy of post-contemporary art, with its DNA, a memory that is revealed to be more essential than photographic. Luis Carrera-Maul is part of the most cosmopolitan art family, not the one that is advertised as the result of undifferentiated globalization. His artistic identity has been selectively constituted, but not only by generational affinities but coherent with his biography, his scientific formation - Luis has university studies in engineering -, with his hybrid Mexican and European genealogy, his long stays in Barcelona and Berlin, his post-academic artistic formation in Europe, his convictions and philosophical studies. Also a professor of philosophy can find in this exhibition numerous examples with which to represent complex ideas, to illustrate them, in Luis' works: for example notions of space and time in Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Derrida, aspects of time and movement in Deleuze. I have not asked Luis about this. He has done what he had to do: art. Now it is my turn to wander and rethink the distance.

As soon as I enter the exhibition, in the first room, I am struck by a painting done directly on the wall. I remember seeing something similar in Luis' workshop at La Curtiduría, also in the Luis Carrera-Maul brochure. Open Studio published on the occasion of the public presentation of his work during months there. I suppose it is a testimonial work, perhaps a visual manifesto of Luis' will to art, of his convictions, the representation of some of his most disturbing ideas. It is a seminal work --I am sure. Few works I have seen and felt with such aesthetic and intellectual emotion in years as this "Untitled". --it is a living image of art-being. The most exact formula of the artistic artifact. As precise, simple and beautiful as the formula of Albert Einstein's theory of relativity: . How could something so unequivocally metaphysical be named, be titled!

"Untitled" is the trace of a painting, the rest of something that was painted on the wall, the presence of an absence. It is an intentional painting, no doubt, by remaining beyond the act of painting the first original and then removing it. It is the evidence of both an act and an intention --that is, a simulation. The act is that of painting "vertically", with conventional paint and utensils, with colors and means typical of the general practice of painting, by means of contiguity, superimpositions and glazes that are transparent. The intentions can be guessed or reconstructed approximately by the traces left by the artist willingly or even unwillingly. In this respect I remember one of the episodes of "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco, when William of Baskerville is looking for a lost book -absent- among the shelves of the monastery's library. Looking through a book, Guillermo understands that it refers to something familiar or at least known to him, but he cannot remember what it is. "Maybe I have to read other books," he reflects aloud. -To know what a book says, you must read others," his young assistant, Adso, asks him. -Sometimes it's like that. Books often talk about other books. Often a harmless book is like a seed, which when blooming will give a dangerous book, or vice versa, it is the sweet fruit of a bitter root", Guillermo replies mysteriously. From this episode, Umberto Eco gives us one of his most fortunate reflections in the mouth of the young Adso, admired by the words of his teacher: "Until then I had believed that every book spoke of things, human or divine, that are outside of books. Suddenly I understood that books often speak of books, that is, it is almost as if they were speaking to each other. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed to me even more disturbing. So it was the realm of a long and secular murmur, of an imperceptible dialogue between scrolls, a living thing, a receptacle of powers that a human mind was unable to master,

a treasure of secrets emanating from countless minds, which had survived the death of those who had produced them, or those who had been transmitting them. No more and no less than a painting, a temporary exhibition, a permanent museum.

I interpret that Luis Carrera-Maul wants to talk about art and painting, about his way of understanding painting and art, its contiguity and antagonisms. I interpret it according to a purely abductive mode of reasoning, more or less like the one the artist follows (consciously or unconsciously) in his process of artistic creation. Abduction is a logical operation based on spontaneous conjectures of reason. Charles Sanders Peirce argues that abduction is a process that is more instinctive than rational, more about open hypotheses than closed assurances. For this it is necessary to let the mind free, to jump over what is known, to excite and let oneself be carried away by the imagination, by certain types of intuitive presentiments, to let ideas flow until the precise moment when something becomes illuminated, visible and uncontainable, and we recognize its suggestions and probabilities. It is curious that both the artistic creative process and the scientific reasoning follow similar abductive ways of proceeding. In all abductive reasoning new probable hypotheses arise, sometimes surprising, as in art no more and no less. Peirce considers abduction "as the only form of reasoning that is really capable of increasing our knowledge, or rather, by hypothesizing, creating new ideas and foreseeing". However, one must consider the original imprecision of abduction, its relative certainty, its risk of error, largely due to non-linear thinking, its reasonable catastrophes. This requires combining its virtues and probabilities with those of the other types of logical reasoning: deduction and induction.

In sum, I interpret in "Sin título" -- which is like saying "without words" -- an intelligent and not at all melancholy irony about painting and its remains in post-contemporary art -- which is much more serious than a simple joke in bad taste precisely in Oaxaca, a stronghold of modern Mexican painting, and for more signs in the museum that represents it or should represent it. In post-contemporary art, in the art of Luis Carrera-Maul, there are remains of painting, evidence of his more or less hegemonic past, his referential authority, traces of his "crimes" and exploits, but what moves us most is his central absence, his formal emptiness, his visual silence, his inability to represent what is happening and to reflect it in his images. We recognize the painting by its traces, its collectable residues in any history of art in use, in its aura that still today shines multi-chromatic adhered to any object and image pretending to be artistic. But painting is not the significant map of the territory of post-contemporary art nor the main object of Luis Carrera-Maul's artistic work in his exhibition, perhaps it is his contingent pretext.

The decision to present "Untitled" as a mural painting is neither improvised nor naive, on the contrary; in many ways it is perverse, intentional. In the first place, it refers to the origins of the painting, those handprints used as templates that some anthropologists claim as an expression of the psychomagic consciousness of its makers and their aesthetic will. But also a reference to their ultimate examples, their epigones, those stencilled murals in public spaces, the graffiti no more and no less. In any case, Luis Carrera-Maul uses them to his advantage to manifest his emptiness, his inability to represent our most complex reality, his mimetic precariousness. Of course I am not referring to classical mimesis.

Mimesis or imitation was the essential purpose or main function attributed to art throughout almost all of its history (even today a large part of the public values a work of art for its "resemblance" to reality, the artist's skill in "imitating" reality). Plato applied mimesis to all the arts, even to the same things as a whole, although designating varying degrees of similarity. For Plato the plastic and visual arts, like sculpture and painting, occupied the lowest level because they are dedicated to making a copy of a copy of the world of ideas. That is why he was not interested in stopping in this world of "copies and reproductions"; besides, they were copies of "external appearances" of reality, which constituted a world opposite to that of ideas. Aristotle limited the notion of mimesis to the "poetic sciences" (among which we can place the plastic and visual arts). For the philosopher "to see what is imitated", which is the fruit of artistic mimesis, produces pleasure, which would explain the high social value and almost generalized interest that the arts have enjoyed in all cultures and times. But not only as a source of aesthetic (and/or intellectual) pleasure but also because of what they represented, our fascination with the secrets they seemed to reveal (something like revealing and "making visible the invisible" to which I referred earlier).

We are thus faced with another complex notion that has had as much to do with art as the function of mimesis, I am referring to "representation". To represent is something different from imitating: to represent is "to be in the place of another", that is to say, it is an image. What art has done above all (and that is why it was specifically valued) is to represent, and not only real life to a certain extent static - "what it is"-, but also its becoming, its temporal events, its sentimental variations, the echo of its emotions. Because let us not forget that to represent means, among other functions and conditions, "to interpret". It is from his structuralist position that Nelson Goodman denies that one can "imitate nature" in the strict sense, because any presumably mimetic vision will always be on the wave of its interpretation (interpretation on the other hand subjective and also conventional, under certain codes and conventions).

More recently, Paul Ricoeur, philosopher and anthropologist, has tried to combine phenomenology and hermeneutics, which is like saying the fact in itself and its interpretation as a "created" work, to rethink the notion of mimesis in the modern world. To this end, Ricoeur "allies" himself with Aristotle: firstly by rejecting mimesis as a mere copy or reproduction. For Aristotle, what was remarkable about mimesis was not the relationship of "likeness/copy" but the construction of its plot -of "mytos"- in the act of creating, of making. For Ricoeur, imitation does not mean the duplication of reality but the recomposition, reworking, perhaps the making more human of it. Ricoeur's interest in mimesis comes from the very fact that language has that capacity to go beyond itself and above all from its ontological-referential capacity. Art does not imitate nature but creates a referential nature, a new dimension of reality. We belong to the world - "being in the world is the horizon of all mimesis"- and this creative mimesis we are talking about reveals the capacity of the imagination to know, introduces a form of truth into poetry and art as revealing the real -perhaps a metaphorical truth; in any case, it moves us away from a mere "truth-adaptation" that is proper to the notion of representation. The "realistic" interpretation of Aristotelian mimesis is today anachronistic, of course. It is not a matter of "reproducing" things and natural objects, but rather "imitating" nature's way of doing and

producing, establishing its analogies. Art comes "to complete" nature, as Pierre Aubenque would say.

Ricoeur states: "It is necessary to restore to the beautiful word "invention" its own unfolded sense, which implies at the same time to discover and to create". If we want to understand this new, deeper sense of mimesis we must abhor any idea of art as a description of the conventional real world or a mere copy of it. But what is the world of the real for Ricoeur: "For me, the world is the set of references opened up by all kinds of descriptive or poetic texts that I have read, interpreted and liked". There are therefore two realities: one is the current, the "objective natural"; the other is recreated by artistic and literary fiction, the "transfigured". The problem is that the spectator-reader does not notice this duality, he tends to melt them, and that is why he "con-fuses" them. In reality, a painting is a "re-description" of reality, a different metaphorical world to describe a real world but one that is recreated, transformed, by the artist. This redefinition brings together both the referential (insofar as it refers to a visible or at least plausible world) and above all the imaginative-creative -this is the substantial faculty proper to the artist: to create images from his imagination (whether they have more or less referential content, which they always have, of course).

Modern and contemporary painting, especially when it stopped being exclusively figurative, assumed new mimetic functions. Its main purpose was no longer to help us recognize objects but precisely -in Ricoeur's words- "to discover dimensions of experience that did not exist before the work". What is important, then, is the "refiguring" capacity of art, of any work of creation. Its mimetic principle would be "to remake the world", but more in the sense of discovering a new (invisible) world. To then achieve a second mimetic operation: that the spectator experiences for himself, in his own way, new experiences, also "mimetic". The fact that the traditional mimetic interpretation of figurative and realistic art has focused excessively on the reality of the work -and its capacity to reproduce, reflect, gather and incorporate external reality- has neglected that second mimetic operation of our experience from the work of art. Non-figurative art has helped us to discover ourselves and rediscover reality. The more a work distances itself from immediate reality the more power it has to restructure and modify the "real" world of the viewer.

In what sense can Luis Carrera-Maul's works restructure our perception of post-contemporary artistic reality? What can we discover in them that will modify our behavior as hopeful, excited spectators in this unique ceremony of art? What new plots does he incorporate into the fiction of art? I would say too many, perhaps so many that we are overwhelmed by the responsibility of recognizing and interpreting them. For example, certain analogies with Derrida's hypothesis regarding the painting and the status of the frame as an ornament. In reality, visually, "Untitled" constitutes a frame that frames something simply empty. Derrida, in the first part of his already cited *La vérité en peinture*, creates the suggestive notion of "parergon" by referring to the Kantian distinction between ornament and decoration, a distinction linked to the whole discussion on the formal and disinterested character of the judgment of taste. The status of "parergon" -- something that is neither work (ergon) nor "hors oeuvre", that is not inside the work but is not completely outside it either --, according to Derrida, should not be attributed only to the frame but also to a set of things that are also "parerga": for example, the title, the signature, the museum or exhibition space that surrounds and recontextualizes the work, the

archive that documents it and determines its historical place, the critical theoretical discourse that defines its reading. For Derrida the "parergon" is a figure that emblematically summarizes his deconstructivist hypothesis: a "parergon" - like a frame - is something that exists alongside, in spite of and in addition to the work ("ergon"); it helps (touches) and cooperates from a certain "outside" and at the same time inside the operation, neither simply outside nor simply inside, on the edge of the edge, and on board. In any case, above all under a modern conception that homologates both the representation and the non-abstract representation, either as a pictorial expression or as a symbolic representation, the frame of the painting --or its spectrum, in the case of "Untitled"-- acquires a decisive function in this system of presentation and representation of the image, of the work of art, of the aesthetic object that is the painting, and of itself as a fully aesthetic object. It presents and represents itself, at the same time as it exhibits its own device and assigns to the image --transparent or opaque, transitive or reflective-- a precise place and confines, an unmistakably aesthetic territory.

I therefore interpret in "Untitled" a "parargonable" vocation just like the frame of a conventional painting. ... According to Antonio Somaini --La cornice e il problema dei margini della rappresentazione--, the frame has always exercised in relation to the painted image a series of functions capable of determining the "grammar" and the "pragmatics" of the look that is directed towards it: "emphasizing the enclosure and the confines that separate the image from the surrounding space, the frame focuses the gaze of the spectator and proposes itself as an ornament of the painted image, legitimizing it and conferring it authority; keeping the image independent of the context, it invites the spectator to assume a specific mode of vision". These functions of delimitation and decontextualization, of ornament and legitimization, which provide the framework for the painted image, profoundly determine the very status of the pictorial representation and the gaze that contemplates it. Antonio Somaini goes further in reflecting on the frame by considering also other forms of representation (such as theatrical and musical) in which he discovers also similar devices of delimitation, focusing and decontextualization analogous to those operated by the frame in a painting. It is this extension of the problem that makes me agree with Somaini that the theme of the frame of the painting becomes the key to access to the more general questions of the margins of representation and the meaning of an act of delimitation that is at the same time outwardly closed and open to interpretation; questions that have to do with the notions of limit and threshold of modern mimesis to which I referred earlier, around which other questions of an aesthetic nature revolve, including the ambiguity of the distinctions between "inside" and "outside", the "marginal" and the "constitutive", "ornament" and "complement", etc.

Paradoxically, "Untitled" gives pictorial status to the entire "Horizontal Painting" exhibition by Luis Carrera-Maul --I don't know if Luis was aware of such responsibility. Like a conventional frame, "Untitled" assumes such functions extended throughout the entire exhibition, including the characterization of the totality of Luis' work so far. It is surprising how the remnants of painting from a hypothetical absent painting - in reality a simulation - acquire the decisive function of pictorially and aesthetically endorsing an exhibition that is evidently critical of the general conventions of art and painting in particular. With more than humble and minimalist parsimoniousness, "Untitled" performs a more than heroic task, I would dare to say. It presents and represents the artistic-critical intentions of its creator, at the same time contaminating with

art and artistic will the rest of its imaginative and experimental operations contained in the Oaxaca exhibition, without forgetting that it constitutes itself as a fully aesthetic object, moreover, emblematic painting in a post-contemporary way of interpreting visual creation but also as "painting" without adjectives - in its most general and multiple diversity -, a privileged support for a certain "historical" representation of reality. How wonderful! How much it reminds me of that masterful formula:

This interpretation I make of "Untitled" coincides in many aspects with the reflections of a group of French semioticians who present themselves under the acronym "Groupe μ " and who in one of their fundamental texts - *Semiotique et rhétorique du cadre* - advocate extending the analysis of the framework to the more general question of the margins of representation, now using a new notion, that of "bordure". "Bordure" would be "that which in a given space confers organic unity to a statement of an iconic or plastic order". It would not be defined by its material nature but by its specific semiotic function: it is a sign, an index that confers a homogeneous semiotic status to that which it points out, focusing the viewer's attention. Every form of art would be characterized by its "bordures" -- the cover of a book, the title of a work, the introduction to a rehearsal, the opening or closing of the curtain, the applause or silence at a concert, etc. The frame would be a kind of "bordure" for the visual arts, as is the title of the work or the pedestal of a sculpture, or perhaps the poster with the artist's biography. In all cases we can speak of a plurality of functions and situations: internal or external to the semantic and communicative space, or as a place of passage or as an insurmountable boundary, or as an index, threshold, delimitation, focus and device of ostentation. --also vary their connotations and functions with the variations of the historical, social and cultural context, of course.

It is surprising how "Untitled" constitutes both an example of the phenomenological reality of post-contemporary art and a paradigm of post-modern simulation without solution of continuity. In a globalized society, where images are detached from a certain place or support, and have a multiple and diverse symbolic effectiveness, they have lost much of their value to represent, establishing new relationships with the grammar and the "pragmatics" of our vision and with our faculties of interpretation. As Baudrillard pointed out, the advent of the era of "simulation" meant the end of the image as a representation related to reality; an end that means rather the end of a "partial and plausible" type of representation of reality, and that inaugurates a new mode of "hyperrealism", of visual obscenity, in which everything is translated and multiplied in images, and where the role of delimitation of the frame loses all its sense in a generalized situation of massive framing, reiteration and extraordinary enlargement of undefined and stereotyped images. .. The position of the spectator before the image has also changed radically, going from a frontal experience of the image (or lateral, in movement), to an absolute immersion in an enveloping magma of images -as Débray sustains-, which leads him to relate to the visual in a way that is closer to the action of listening than to that of contemplating. In this situation of "spherical experience" the grammar of our vision is so modified that even the gaze is transformed into a kind of astonished and stunned listening.

Jean François Lyotard defines modern art as that which "devotes its "little technique", as Diderot said, to presenting what is unrepresentable. To show that there is something that can be conceived and that cannot be seen or done: this is the field of modern painting". Lyotard's

statement has to do with the representation of the sublime, the feeling of the sublime. The feeling of the sublime, Kant said, takes place when the imagination fails to present an object that even precariously comes to be established according to a concept. This failure of the imagination occurs, for example, in the face of ideas that for various reasons cannot give any knowledge of reality because they are unrepresentable: "We can conceive of the absolutely great, the absolutely powerful, but every presentation of an object destined to "show" this absolute greatness or power is painfully insufficient. These are Ideas that have no possible representation, nor do they serve to make reality (experience) known to us, that also prevent us from freely agreeing on the faculties that produce the feeling of beauty, that hinder the formation and stabilization of taste. They can be called unrepresentable" --J. F. Lyotard: *Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants*. If modern art was in some way sublime, it was so because it always alluded to the unrepresentable. But this allusion was made in a negative way, presenting visible forms. Abstract painting is only one degree of expression of these principles, since it presents something that avoids figuration and representation. This simulation or concealment of the figurative in some post-contemporary trends --through the massive use of photography or the direct use of the object, for example-- could be due to a certain nostalgia for representation, and even to pessimism or the lack of a viable aesthetic project with a future.

Luis Carrera-Maul's simulations have little or nothing to do with nostalgia or lack of imagination, quite the contrary. If we find in his works quotes about the history of art, about his artistic practices, they are evidence of his knowledge and intelligence, of the artist's intentionality, his creative optimism, far from the mischief or rhetorical appropriations of other artists of his generation. This is how I interpret, for example, the pictorial construction of the "false frame" of "Untitled". In many ways it reminds me of the illustrations of Goethe's color theory, his circular compositions, in this case under the appearance of a painting (the square of the circle). I recognize similar symmetry and chromatic complementarities - certainly not a mere "coloring" at random. And not only the references to Goethe's color theory, but also the more complex ones of Wilhelm Ostwald with four elementary chromatic sensations --yellow, red, blue and green-- and two achromatic sensations with their intermediate variations. And of course the RGB and CYMK color models; the first one mixing light colors -the primary colors red, green and blue- and the second mixing printing colors -cyan, magenta and yellow, and black as a mixture of all colors. As in "Untitled", Luis Carrera-Maul multiplies these chromatic experiences throughout his exhibition as some titles of his works attest: "RGB" and "CMYK", for example. In the end he is representing "painting", that is to say color.

Another of his most effective simulations can be found in "Untitled". The sensation of absence of the original painting, its disappearance, is not only marked by the painted perimeter but above all by the traces of supposed diagonal strips of subjection in the corners; although they also seem to be scratches, crosses that annul and sanction. This double figuration of the diagonals in relation to the empty space they cross is curious and paradoxical. On the one hand they represent subjection, security, on the other hand, cut, amputation. But even more remarkable is the consummation of the simulacrum of what seems to have been and not existed. I am referring to the fact that there was never a canvas or a wallpaper on the wall although it seems so because of the traces of paint that frame their supposed absence and the traces of the strips of subjection in their corners. Luis has created an exceptionally evocative pictorial fiction. With

adhesive tape he has designed the conventional space of a painting; he has reinforced its visual presence with the artifice of marking its corners, anchoring them virtually to the wall. Then he has painted outside the delimited space, he has simulated the traces of an excess of paint that in reality were simply marks of territory. The interior of the supposed original painting is pure emptiness; the silence of the painting is its content. However, the painting is eloquent, it speaks its own language through the color on its periphery; alien, external to its conventional function as a way of doing or representing. The only original painting is therefore the mural that masterfully interprets the fiction of an absence. The virtual frame, that is, the residual painting, centers and focuses our attention on this empty space, in reality a deaf and silent screen on which to project our ideas and thoughts. What wonders those of imaginative intelligence, those of art! What a subtle way of saying the unspeakable!... -Every absence enlivens our melancholy, also our compassion. Who knows if these are feelings that have to do with what happened to painting in recent times, when it gradually lost much of its vitality and ability to say different, its influence on the art world, its almost hegemonic power for centuries, until it almost disappeared or barely survived, marginal, increasingly absorbed in its procedures and peculiarities, in its memories - of course, if this were so, it would be a metaphor.

All this simulation of presence and absence, of eloquent and hermetic silence, I interpret them as strategies of differentiation, not at all as declarations of identity. Fortunately, for years we have overcome the need to have to argue at all times about identity aspects in art and painting, that whether or not this is art, painting, etc. How much we have to thank Derrida for inaugurating the philosophy of difference and establishing new strategies of knowledge and interpretation. Our interest and that of post-contemporary art has little or nothing to do with traditional metaphysics or ontology. An artistic object, an artistic attitude, bases its value and interest not only on its aesthetic entity but above all on offering new meanings, new perspectives, increasing the world of the real and its indeterminate differentiation. With respect to "Untitled", his interest lies not in illustrating the notions of presence or its "simple symmetrical opposite", which Derrida would say to refer to the absence of painting, but in its capacity to discredit such deterministic notions. All traditional metaphysics was based on the determination of being as presence, as "presence of the present" or continuous present, on its being here and now, constituting a fixed center. Nothing could be further from our interests and those of art in these provisional and off-center times, to a certain extent eccentric, in which we claim better than new risky, heroic explorations, daily excursions to the peripheries and the outskirts.

Like Derrida, we abhor the binarism of Western thought, its dialectical processes, its maximalist contradictions. All this has produced too much intellectual violence, unjustified exclusions, excessive hierarchization. We are in favor of contiguity and elective complicities, the coexistence with what is different, the coexistence of diverse artistic languages, even their cohabitation. In short, we believe in a different kind of logic, in other ways of being and being in the world, of intervening with our things, equidistant equally from the authoritarianism of the hegemonic cultural movements and from the following of fashion trends and their undifferentiated consumption.

Postcontemporary art is in many ways a continuator of Derrida's strategies of difference, of its deconstruction from within its architectures, its structures, looking outward, beyond its

conventional limits. Its artistic practices are a good example of differentiation-"neither this nor that"-without having to propose a third term to solve the conflict. Derrida pointed out in this regard that we must learn to write "with two hands". With one hand we would respect the play of binary concepts, the modes of rational thought of our world, and with the other we would "pretend" to respect through a mask (in the Nietzschean sense), until it is erased, displaced, slipped "until its extinction and closure", putting in check the supposed unity of meaning that underlies each determined conceptual configuration. This is what Luis Carrera-Maul does with his works, with maximum efficiency, in his exhibition. On the one hand he uses the procedures and formal, conceptual references provided by contemporary art, art in general, the very history of painting, and on the other hand he masks them with new simulations, displacements, "heterodox" interventions, until he erases any kind of determinism and its identity principles. In each of his works Luis is saying simultaneously and successively: "this is painting and that is also" -- which is the same as saying "this is not painting and that was". His creative, intentional strategy is deconstruction in the most authentic sense defined by Derrida: "Deconstruction is both a structuralist and antistructuralist gesture: a building, an artifact, is dismantled to make its structures, its ribs or its skeleton appear (.), but also, simultaneously, the ruinous precariousness of a formal structure that explained nothing, since it was neither a center, nor a force, nor a principle, nor even the law of events, in the most general sense of that word".

Many of the procedures used by Luis Carrera-Maul seem to be a game, a mischievous manipulation; they have little to do with the taciturn seriousness in materials and techniques of traditional art, especially painting and sculpture, until today. This has already begun to be questioned with the modern avant-garde and especially in the contemporary art movements. Luis' most common procedures -- collage, assemblage, painting "without brush or paint", dripping, understanding, motor mechanisms, direct transfers, random processes, etc. -- have been a substantial part of our arsenal of ways of making art for decades. But they are still largely unknown by the general public, questioned even with a certain aggressiveness and disdain, undervalued by certain types of cultural bodies. For such a public of fundamentalists the exhibition of Luis Carrera-Maul is a real repertoire of provocations. Little or nothing can be done about such defensive positions. Except to respect their differences, to propose ours with freshness and lightness, to insist on our convictions. Art remains a privileged way to say the unspeakable and to express our optimism. In this sense, like Derrida, I claim Nietzsche's position in the face of life, a joyful affirmation of the game of the world and the innocence of becoming, of the eternal return --why not? -- "with a smile and a dance step", as Derrida would say.

This optimism that I claim to post-contemporary art -which I effortlessly recognize in Luis Carrera-Maul- is the best antidote to the proverbial nostalgia of art, its self-absorption. There is no justification or sense in sighing for the "lost homeland" of art. Nor is it justified to take refuge in supposed rights of lineage, that lineage of extraordinary beings capable of unveiling enigmas and transcendental mysteries. It is necessary, however, to sincerely compose our genealogy, to assume with naturalness our familiarities, filiations, to recognize our starting points. I reject the infantile self-sufficiency of the self-taught as the sterility of the genius born by divine whim, and more in the present art. We have the fantastic opportunity to have a practically unlimited catalog of images and artistic evidence at our fingertips at the touch of a button, to navigate the universe of ideas and thoughts accumulated by humanity over centuries with just a blink of an

eye, to travel and get to know directly almost any place in the world just by wishing to. and little more. Taking advantage of such opportunities is not only a right but above all a duty. As it is to point out without further mystery our fundamental references, to share sufficiently our archives and memories, to pay public homage to our heroes and teachers. This is what Luis does, loyal and generous.

n "Horizontal painting" there are multiple recognitions and reinterpretations, more than artistic kleptomania or ironic appropriation as we are used to see and suffer in fairs and exhibitions of all kinds. There are recognitions and also formal and/or conceptual contiguity worthy of note. For example with the "Nouveaux réalistes" --Yves Klein, Arman, Dufrène, Hains, Raysse, Spoerri, Tinguely, Villeglé, César, Rotella, Niki de Saint Phalle, Deschamps, Christo-- grouped between 1960-1963 around the theorist Pierre Restany and which had such an influence on contemporary movements such as American Pop, Fluxus or Arte Povera, among others. I notice in Luis a similar spirit of "poetic recycling" of reality - in his case contemporary art - that the members of the group advocated and proclaimed Restany. It is not about recycling industrial objects, urban waste or advertising posters from the streets of Paris, but about things closer to home, from the world of art in particular --in the first place his own works, drawings and plastic experiments that have already been overcome; art books and magazines, posters and other publications, music scores, images of rationalist architecture, construction models, singular artistic practices, such as César's or Chamberlain's compressions, Arman and Christo's accumulations and encapsulations, the most recent by Ignasi Aballí, the décollages and alternative procedures to advertising by Dufrène, Hains, La Villeglé, or Mimmo Rotella, the "artist machines" by Rebecca Horn, the performances by Marina Abramovic, the pieces to share by Félix González Torres, the "Instructions Paintings" by Yoko Ono, for example. Without a doubt it is a poetic recycling, nothing rhetorical, of objects and artistic processes with which Luis Carrera-Maul constitutes new artistic realities to a certain extent "precious", delicate and elegant, with a certain minimalist aesthetic, attractive just to see. I think that his formal beauty is a mask that hides (or rather, disguises) more conceptual than formal intentions, certainly nothing melancholic.

We find other evident evidence of the absence of nostalgia in "Esfera San Lluç" This is a piece made up of original drawings by Luis in the Cercle San Lluç in Barcelona (1998-2003) and now compressed; or in his installation-assembly "Pulsaciones", made up of paintings from his penultimate exhibition in Zacatecas, which he has now placed as an insurmountable obstacle between two rooms in the exhibition space in Oaxaca. "Pulsaciones" is also one of those recycles or poetic reinterpretations of another's work, in this case the performance "Imponderabilia" carried out by Marina Abramovic and Ulay in an Italian gallery in 1977. In "Imponderabilia", Marina and Ulay remain naked, hieratic as caryatids, on the sides of the entrance door to the gallery; the visiting public must pass between them, touching each other with their nakedness, before entering the empty space of the gallery; the threshold of art is the artists, their direct contact sometimes uncomfortable. In "Pulsaciones" the assembly of recent paintings recycled by Luis act as a physical barrier between two spaces in the exhibition hall, they prevent the public from moving freely from one side to the other, they force the public to make a detour, they interrupt their visual monotony. It is curious that the term "différance" that Derrida coined to rename his strategy of "different difference in its differentiability", that is to say his proposal of a new order different from the binary, comes from the Latin "differre" -differre- which means dissimilarity, not

being identical, alterity. but also to leave for later, to stop briefly, to make a detour. I believe that "pulsations" has much to do with the Derridian proposal, with its specific notions of "temporization" and "despair" -- that strange "economy" of making time out of space and making space out of time, in Derrida's words --, a necessary differentiation that delays the appearance of the present continuous, the temptation of the ontological, that forces a detour and somehow delays the unshakable "presence" of the metaphysical. It is necessary to go towards a new spectrality in our aesthetic experience, beyond any temptation for the unitary or its symmetrical opposite.

In many aspects "Horizontal painting" is a spectral journey through the philosophy of space and time, a questioning from the aesthetic and artistic point of view about the possibility that space and time exist independently of the mind or not, for example, that they exist independently or intertwine indifferently according to one or another logic and experience of reality, if there are other times in addition, contiguous or parallel to our partial experience of the present continuous, or how to explain the incessant flow of time, its apparent unidirectional linearity, or its vicious circularity. Reflection on the identity of space and time has always occupied human thought, philosophy, and more rarely art, artists, which is curious and paradoxical given their permanent observation of space, spaces, their contingency, their transfiguration in the course of time, their skill in freezing it into memorable images, representing its avatars. Let us not forget that Luis Carrera-Maul, besides being an artist, is an engineer, used to thinking and rethinking about these issues, and not only from aesthetic positions but also from scientific and philosophical ones. I do not want to be exhaustive in pointing out some of the issues I recognize in his works and processes.

For example "the relativity of simultaneity", the differential characterization of the "moment", in the words of Palle Yourgrau the possibility that each point in the universe contains its own network of events, that each has its own "now", that there is no universal present and therefore no permanent presence. There would be no absolute time, time would not flow as we think, we would not be in a three dimensional universe but in a four dimensional "block universe": "the future would already be here". Or the visual representation of the notions of "invariance" - a mathematical concept that designates that which does not change in spite of being subjected to different types of transformations, for example, making it rotate, transferring it, etc. - and "covariance", when this transformation does occur. Leibniz already intuited that the position of an object is not a property of that object, that its location is not an invariant. Nor does a coordinate system ensure its exact location. There are no absolute objects.

Such scientific conjectures, among others, help to reinterpret some of the works in this exhibition; for example the three pieces-"Compressions". Of course there are previous artistic references -Cesar's "compressions" or those of the American Pop artist John Chamberlain- but we can also venture other possible intentions, aspects that have to do with "bubbles of emptiness" and "quantum emptiness", why not? Luis Carrera-Maul accumulates a certain type of publications: art magazines -in this case ArtForum-, wrestling posters, flyers of popular dances, to consummate his compressions transforming them into a kind of multicolored, three-dimensional pictures, with a certain objectual appearance. At first glance they look like abstract paintings, rich in textures and shades; up close they invite you to touch them, to

manipulate them. Sight deceives us again. The understanding that Luis subjects these materials, basically paper, empties them of their inner air by mere gravity, it seems as if he rearranges his molecules, solidifies their folds and wrinkles, giving them a consistency that is in principle unimaginable. A new simulation, a new differential characterization, a painting without paint reaching similar visual sensations and illusions; these compressions only lack the smell of paint to be paintings in their totality. Nowadays it is believed that space-time is full of matter. Although not visible, but verifiable, the existence of dark matter and dark energy has been confirmed, which could represent up to 95% of the total mass of the universe. Modern physics explains this and other phenomena according to the uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics that contemplates the existence of virtual particles. There must be some kind of quantum fluctuations in the universe - for example, pairs of light or gravity particles appearing together at a certain time, then separating and coming together again to annihilate each other once a certain critical mass is reached. We cannot directly observe these virtual particles but we can measure their effects on the energy of atoms and electric fields. What power is there in artists who create aesthetic worlds at their whim and give them a soul with just a simple mechanical operation! What cements the universe? What gives consistency to a work of art? The isostatic equilibrium of its particles? The force of gravity of their will to art? Oh, that power to make visible the invisible that Merleau-Ponty referred to. That ability to work with invisible materials: gravity, equilibrium, underlying uncertainty, chance, necessity.

There is a lot of cinema in Luis Carrera-Maul's artistic display, in his exhibition. In some respects it reminds me of installations and processes followed by Rebecca Horn -- which is not surprising given her direct influence on Luis at the Berlin Academy. I recognize her sequence pieces, of course. I also interpret the design of the exhibition as a feature film in which the previous realization of the works-scenes, their adaptation to the previous conceptual script, as well as the final assembly, the interaction of the parts independently of their relative chronology and the personality of their protagonists --that is, in the final assembly the "when" or "how" or "where" this or that work was made is not significant. The time and course of an exhibition are pure paradox, a succession of linearities and discontinuities, of catastrophes, of evocations and expectations, symmetries and assonances, even when the linear representation of an artistic trajectory is chosen, for example. "Durability" raises the hypothesis that for a reality to exist in time it must do so as a reality in continuous change, and that even when we consider that reality as a whole what we see in reality is a conglomerate --an assembly, I would say-- of all its "temporal stretches" or lapses of existence". Artistic "perdurantism" would assemble such sequences in a poetic order, that is, by lexical contiguity, rather than chronological or meaningfulness. After all, in the universe of art things and events attract and repel each other by pure formality, meanings are magnetized after the advent of forms and volumes, colors precede the explosion or implosion of conceptual galaxies.

I am sure that Luis has insistently read Gilles Deleuze -one of my reference teachers- and more specifically his excellent studies on cinema: *The Image-Movement* and *The Image-Time*. Recognizing and analyzing Deleuze's contributions to Luis Carrera-Maul's thought and artistic work is a pending task. However, I would like to point out some Deleuzean references as a preview. In principle, Deleuze interpreted time from positions close to traditional thinking, as a succession of instants, now, present, which did not satisfy him but provided him with a basic and

consistent starting point. His most original contribution is that he understood this succession as progressive, that is, time is enriched in time, increasing its values and possibilities. Deleuzian time is not, therefore, a time that is the product of cumulative juxtapositions, successive strata, but progresses in intensity as it passes, increasing the number of its dimensions. "Change -that is, movement- is only thinkable by the coexistence of the whole past in each present". Past and present are strictly contemporary but manifest different realities. Deleuze says that the present is current, the virtual past. Thus, actuality and virtuality, when assembled, make up our dynamic, that is, creative reality.

Among Deleuze's most suggestive thoughts I would point out his proposal of "seer cinema" capable of producing time-images beyond movement -- which was a necessary condition since Aristotle. These special images relate to time both as "duration" and "time-total". --these are those "living images" of the silent cinema in whose face nothing is foreseen, everything is possible, they are as if suspended in the abyss of their silent eternity. I believe that the images of art, their direct contemplation, have much to do with this feeling. They are images foreseen and sensed by their seers. They are remembered "timelessly" and "unexpectedly" by their blinded spectators, recently blinded by the dazzle of the aesthetic, their aura.

It is curious that one of Derrida's last intuitions has to do with all this. In *Mémoires d'aveugle. L'autoportrait et autres ruines*, Derrida reflects extensively on the conventional differentiation between seeing and touching, its sensory specificity, and questions it by referring to a "seeing touch", that exploration usually made by the blind man with his fingers or that typical gesture of extending his hands to anticipate what he is going to find, a "foreseeing without seeing". The gesture of the blind man is to extend his hands forward, to explore the void, to anticipate danger. The (im)foreseeable is sought and found by palpitation. It is "the speculation that ventures", Derrida would say. The most surprising thing about Derrida's reflections on blindness are his analogies to writing and drawing... Writing goes "through the night, further than the visible or the predictable. (.) "No (more) knowledge, no (more) power: writing is more about anticipation". An anticipation that is not only foresight or prediction but goes beyond the plan, beyond what is foreseeable and predictable; it runs risks, is pure clairvoyance just with the fingertips. This is how I understand art, especially visual arts, artists, blind people whose gesture "oscillates in the void between apprehension, apprehension, prayer and imploration".

Speaking of the blind, I cannot help but remember Borges -what comes to mind at the end of this long text dedicated to Luis Carrera-Maul. I don't think it is pure coincidence that the last work in his exhibition is a composition of thirty-six painted squares, surely the most strictly pictorial of the whole show. In this vicious circle that is Luis' exhibition in Oaxaca, at the end we find the pretext for this project. This series was the winner of a prestigious painting prize in Zacatecas, which allowed Luis, among other options, to exhibit in the Museum of Oaxacan Painters - curious paradoxes of fate. "Horizontal Painting" ends its tour with a set of painted constructivist compositions. His images have as much to do with Dutch neoplasticism -led by Piet Mondrian-, the group De Stijl -grouped around the magazine of the same name and integrated by Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg, Bart van der Leek and J. J. P. Oud, among others- and Russian suprematism, with Malevich at the head and Liubov, Popova, El Lissitzky, Rodchenko,

among its members. I recognize the greatest formal affinities in the paintings of Malevich and Teo van Doesburg, but I sense other secrets that Luis keeps in this final pictorial labyrinth.

I like the metaphor of the experience of painting as a labyrinth; that is to say, creating a reduced, limited and dense space, a simulacrum of the undetermined universe (built or not), at the same time self-absorbed and seductive, which attracts the gaze and curiosity. A trap space for both the spectator and its builder, which provides both pleasure and fear to walk through it or get lost in it; a sublime space, as an aesthetic category, of course.

Cristina Grau, in her magnificent book *Borges y la arquitectura* points out that "the reader who approaches Borges' work does so expecting to find references to the labyrinth". However, according to the author, Borges usually avoids the term labyrinth, it seems that the writer hides the semantic references to the labyrinth in order to emphasize its plausible presence -- "so that it is the reader who discovers them. By refusing to define and qualify his labyrinths, Borges provides us with multiple readings and his suggested spaces attract diverse interpretations, thus culminating the creator's strategy, his simulations: "this pleasure in hiding precisely what one intends to make see". Visual artists are also characterized by their condition of tricksters and tricksters of other people's eyes, for stubbornly rehearsing this game of concealment and unveiling without solution of continuity, and not only articulating a language of symbols or signs whose keys only they possess -a kind of cryptic and hermetic visual literature-, but above all through the dense network of their lines, the transparent or opaque viscosity of their colors, the ambiguity of their mutant figures.

But what is really a labyrinth? We continue with Borges' conjectures and brilliant reflections interpreted by Cristina Grau: "If the fundamental characteristic that defines a labyrinthine construction is its capacity to create disorientation, to become a prison of impossible exit, we must accept that labyrinths designed with a law of composition should not be considered properly labyrinthine. Its law, its structure, however complex it may be, can always be discovered". Medieval cities and Arab medinas provide us with that sensation of the unexpected and the capricious - dead-end streets, curved streets that widen in a square, in a souk, or narrow in a covered passage, broken pavements and patrol paths, interior courtyards communicated with each other on the surface, at height, subway. Borges refers to this type of labyrinth-city in his story *Abenjacán el Bojarí, dead in his labyrinth*, which Cristina Grau, interpreting Borges, points out as "the best labyrinth that men can build, because it has not been built by one man according to a plan, but by successive generations that oppose it to the exterior emptiness, to the open field". With a few exceptions, labyrinth-paintings are labyrinths in the strict sense: they are built as their process develops, that time and the very accidents of space reveal unsuspected perspectives to us, that our emotion alters and curves the most predictable lines. -as if the next step and what to do next were communicated to our ears, in secret. All processes of creation have such stages and secrets (sooner or later someone dictates to our ear).

But why hide in a labyrinth? Are labyrinths built to hide or conceal something transcendental? Borges believes that a fugitive does not hide in a constructed labyrinth, but in an organic and historical city like London, of a collective author, anonymous, with time. A fugitive "does not erect a crimson maze that sailors see from afar. He does not need to erect a labyrinth when the

universe already is". And then, what are labyrinths for? -besides the pleasure of building them and imagining the success of the trap. I believe that labyrinths serve to attract the attention of the curious, the brave and/or the unwary, the sensation seekers, those who expect answers jealously guarded, hidden and secret and do not settle for the comfort of their conventional securities. that is to say "the voyeurs" and so many more who are deceived by invisible things. An artist -Luis, for example- does not paint to take refuge in his painting, but to expose it to the eyes of others sooner or later and attract their attention in the undifferentiated generality of the normalized. The labyrinth-painting thus fulfills a double function: on the one hand, they provide an exceptional experience for those who invent them, they offer them the opportunity to catch the glances of all those to whom I have referred - the curious, the sensation seekers, those who expect hidden and secret answers, the brave and the unwary of the adventure of knowledge and the full-time live-boards - and on the other hand, they somehow satisfy the imaginary and the expectations of their "victims", stimulate their desires, grant them some kind of hope even in the anguish of their despair. The spectators who approach painting and other visual arts-traps do so with the hope of reaching the heart of the labyrinth where they hope to find a hidden treasure or at least to come out of it intact, which is already a reward after having gone through such dangerous territories. Every labyrinth is an allegory of the adventure of knowledge and its risks, as it is of the experience of creation, of art, its odysseys.

One of the most exceptional faculties of the artist -unquestionably necessary- is his condition of seducer of other people's eyes, artisan manufacturer of seduction artifacts that trap the gaze and domesticate it inside -and Luis Carrera-Maul is this in the highest degree. But the simple attraction by the shine of the mirrors of his surface is not enough, that species of sudden, fragile, light hypnosis of the fairground magician and the sensation swindler. The artist must attract the curious, or whatever, to the interior of his labyrinth, with a certain ineffable light that dazzles and blinds him, only in this way will his strategy and pleasure of hiding what he intends to make see culminate, or on the contrary, make believe that there is something hidden deeper than what is seen.

Where, in each one of those small maps that are a painting? What are their coordinates? In Oaxaca? Where Kandinsky's words intersect -- "the meaning of painting is to express the invisible in terms of the visible"-- and Frank Stella's -- "art is a formal exercise where you see what you see"? How do we operate our pendulums on Luis Carrera-Maul's "Horizontal Painting"? What day, what time? Now? -Now is no longer, while it is not yet. What to do? What to expect in the meantime?

In the center of the labyrinth, any day of June 18, 169 --13x13-- of the solar calendar, at the hour of wolves in point, the oracle reveals the secret: "There is art outside of art". --Why not?