

ANTONIO PAUCAR, MEMORIAS DE UN VIAJE

Insect chirps, toad croaks and cries of birds in Antonio Gonzales Paucar's work evoke 'noise scenes' resembling the Amazonian rain forest. The irritating, muddling sound fields result from precise, strained fibres, as well as from meticulously equalized cans and hoses and bath salts, crackling like glow. These are the sound experiments of Antonio Gonzales Paucar (*1973, Huancayo, Peru), following extensive research, constructed out of natural and industrial materials without any technical support.

In this magnetic field between nature and domesticated culture arise video works such as *Composicion Manual* (2007), which is a refined register of sound produced by the artist using daily objects and selfconstructed instruments. Alterations of images and shrinking sequences generate a confusing and dizzying sound picture carousel.

Furthermore, in complex performances that require all the senses of the observer except sight, Gonzales Paucar creates experiments full of ritual, which demonstrate his own personal confrontation with his origins in the Peruvian Andes. The surprising confrontation with natural smells and tastes of exotic origin, artificially produced, space-filling sound-collages and different textures, evoke feelings of 'loss of control' in the western observer.

With his sensitive depictions and stagings of nature, Gonzales Paucar not only highlights cliché images of Latin American identities that have been passed down, but also transforms them in ways that subtly threaten the physical integrity of the observer -- subtle threats that are, however, never validated. In these works, time and space seem to blur, and with them the alleged existing cultural attributes of nature and civilization, and of spirituality and rationality.

Gonzales Paucar demonstrates extensive interest in formal expression in photographic works such as *Maple Insect* (2007), as well as in installations such as *Dandelions* (*Dientes de le—n*, 2006-2007) and *Shoes that break the silence* (*Zapatos que rompen el silencio*, 2007). The artist displays filigree nature forms in needle-sharp close-ups and, thereby, shows their ephemerality in a very poetic manner. The artist brings thousands of dandelions together with plastic bags (as containers of industrial origin) in a manner that gives a sculptural character to this raw material. Innumerable, finely arranged, black and silver resplendent flies evoke, at first glance, fascination, which -- on closer examination -- turns to abhorrence. Gonzales Paucar arranges these mechanisms of "the sublime" with an old pair of black shoes facing one another -- following an encounter in his youth with an anonymous dead person, this image symbolizes for the artist the beginning of a chain of political murders in his homeland.

In these works lies as in his previous art an implicit threat to physical integrity, which is especially intensified in the photograph *Altar* (2006) and in the video work *La Resentida* (2007). The candelabra coming out from the fingers of the artist refers to the ritualistic employment of the primary element of fire in religious or pagan cults. At the same time, it inevitably erases the short-lived beeswax candles, and runs the risk of hurting the artist as the holder of the candlestick. In *La Resentida*, a knife, mirroring the face of a native Indian, softly strokes extinct Fern plant *La Resentida*, but in so doing threatens it causing its leaves to close. Pictorially as metaphorically, Gonzales Paucar brings up for discussion here, against a background of disturbing noise, the ambivalence of civilization, which brings progress, but irreparably destroys existing resources, as the forest in the Peruvian Amazon region.

Gonzales Paucar's ritualistic employment of nature in the questioning of his own origin and identity becomes particularly clear in the video work *Protect me* (*Protéjame*, 2007) and in the video documented performance *Dancing with my glowworm* (*Danzando con mis luciérnagas*, 2007). Similar to Cuban artist Ana Mendieta (1948-1985) in the earth-body-works of her *Siluetas* series (1973-1980), Gonzales Paucar enters a symbiosis with the primary element of earth.

However, regarding location, where he realizes his work -- in this case a corn field in his Andean homeland -- Gonzales Paucar selects a direct point of reference from his childhood, which he connects with the processes of sowing and harvesting, as well as with playing with loam and the surroundings of Adobe houses.

In *Protect me*, as well as in *Dancing with my glowworms*, the process is in the foreground. The successive, digitally animated digging tells about the desired connection of body and hair with the earth. The fireworks from rockets and miracle candles, burning around Gonzales Paucar's body, however, recall the Latin American tradition of music, dance and pyrotechnics, in which a ritual-detention-cleaning function is also attributed. The rhythmic movements of the artist underline this aspect, even when this is conditioned by natural circumstances. Light and outlines are only visible so long as fire feeds the subject. With its slow expiring, the darkness swallows all form. What remains is night. `

Dr.Kirsten Einfeldt, 2007