

The Corporal Canticle by Rafael Navarro

Angel Guinda

a world lost, a world unsuspected, beckons to new places

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The art of photography grazes the prodigy of the great illusion: freezing time. A kinaesthetic art: voice of a vision, hearing of an outcry of silence, a sense of brilliance.

The visual poetry of Rafael Navarro is and has been a corporal canticle, an approach to the spirit of exquisite sensuality, a profound reading of surfaces.

Beyond stillness, a moment frozen in time by the snap of a camera, bests the restlessness of a revelation. Beyond the obsessive tranquillity, Navarro delves into the restlessness of the immobile, a paradoxical notion of photographic creation: Its oxymoronic effect, this living moment obtained from the object-subject in movement.

Thus, the observation / perception / reception / representation journey, besides moving one from the pleasure of nostalgia, provokes a reaction of desire in a process of transformations. On the one hand, the plastic step from the figuration to the neo-figurative and his transfer to the abstract, to the sublime. On the other, memory, inhibited, activates the imagination.

What is found delving here: the geometry of seduction, the sway of flows, the garden of splendour and that of ruin? Moreover: carnal ecstasy; equidistance between the transparent, the visible and the invisible.

The bones illuminate the flesh; mask, fragility of existence in resistance. In each block in space, in each fragmented body, resides a block of time, a sculptured fragment of eternity. The optical talent of these photographs erupts into tenebrism as black ice scorned by the sun.

Contemplate, touch, smell this body overflowing in flames crying out to you. This body, an excess of its soul. Enjoy, savour the voluptuousness, living to the full in the bygone expansive instant, so alive, one would think it captures the before and after. Think, as a Roland Barthes thought, on looking at the portrait of his child mother in the catastrophe; as all beauty is a secret statement of death.

It cries out with the exaltation of inner silence. Silence is magical element of the photograph.

The work of Rafael Navarro contains a silent dialogue with the world of the skin as a metaphor of the skin of the world, that indistinct membrane sexed under which life seethes and death hides.

The stylistic evolution goes one steep further: The bodies that continue offering themselves in a detail are not all decapitated bodies. Some have faces. And the disfigurement of the figure on mask, swept, manipulated or unmasked, transmits macabre connotations: facial features transposed to continuum in their abject erosion.

What a morbid dance the dance of light and that of shadow to a record stopped in time, to percussion of solitude and to reduced speed of the shutter! What a brutal inscription of the ravages of a cry strangled in the revolutions of the physic motor!

The repeated erotic and elegiac chant of the presence which disappears is the icon of the spell in *The Dance of Life and Death*.

And remains under the wonder of the new dream, which is the true marvel.