

"DES/APARECER". Paula Anguita.

Galería Gabriela Mistral. Santiago, Chile, 2021.

Text: Juan Almarza Anwandter.

In an unpublished note written in 1870, Nietzsche affirms: "*There is no beautiful surface without a terrible depth*".¹ Reality cannot be understood only from the perspective of the visible. We must tear the veil of appearances in order to understand it in its true amplitude, extent and depth. With her exhibition "Des/Aparecer", Paula Anguita reveals herself as a reliable interpreter of the Nietzschean sentence, rewritten in an artistic key. Through a series of works based on various techniques of optical illusion, the artist builds a bridge that allows us to move from the realm of the visible to the invisible, and vice versa.

This intention is particularly reflected in the series of works based on the optical-photographic technique *Double Vision*, developed by the artist in the context of her Master studies at Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin. It is a printing technique that makes use of surfaces with specific optical properties, which allow to discover hidden images when photographed with flash using smartphones. In this way, *Double Vision* gives the act of photography a new dimension: the temporal depth, in a dialectical game between presence and absence. Everyday urban locations, apparently innocuous, reveal the traces of a painful past that becomes present: memories become embodied, the flow of time is inverted. Individual portraits come to life through disturbing gazes that directly question the observer. And abstract planes, closed in their concrete superficial materiality, are transformed into windows open to transcendent spatio-temporal dimensions and narratives with a strong poetic-symbolic content. In synthesis, through her *Double Vision* technique, the artist allows us to achieve something apparently impossible, supernatural: *to photograph the absent*.

The light boxes, which are also part of the exhibition, complement the thematic and formal resources described above. At first glance, they appear to be digital screens. But a closer look allows us to recognize that they are entirely analogical devices. This perceptual ambiguity is replicated in the content of the images represented, which are situated on the threshold between the diffuse stain and the figure with defined contours. The intentional use of optical filters generates a state of permanent ambivalence between both poles, forcing the observer to try to fix and focus the represented contents, which tend to blur incessantly. And what is it that we fleetingly manage to recognize in this perceptual game between the permanent and the ephemeral? The portrait of a mother with her child. A solitary individual, contemplating the horizon of the sea. A dancer, exercising. Some of these images are complemented by texts, like strings of digital information. One of them reads: "*silence reveals us the secret / we didn't want to know*". And what is this secret? Nothing is permanent, time tends to erase our memories, "all that is solid melts into air" (Marx). In the silence of contemplation, Paula Anguita's light boxes allow us to experience the abyss of this secret, encrypted in an aesthetic experience.

The existential tone of the exhibition is reinforced by the inclusion of a singular work, which tends to dissociate itself from the logics of optical illusion: an oil painting. Its title is certainly suggestive: "A/MORT". A couple of women embracing, in a delicate gesture that can be interpreted both as an expression of love (*Eros*) and as a final farewell before the inexorable fact of death (*Thanatos*). In the manner of a sign, this image synthesizes the fundamental purpose of the exhibition: to make of art a way of bringing into presence some of the fundamental dimensions that constitute our experience of being in the world, transcending the realm of the particular and contingent. Just as there is no beautiful surface without a terrible depth, Paula Anguita reveals to us that life and death, the visible and the invisible, the permanent and the ephemeral, constitute an indivisible unity.

¹ eKGWB/NF-1870,7[91].