

Micrographies 1998

Foreword to the 1998 exhibition catalogue by Juan Gustavo Cobo

Cecilia Vargas has lived in London for sixteen years and her work as a painter has continued to grow in skill and in expressive content. Her last exhibition in this city succeeded in transforming colour scales into visually harmonious chords.

There was a jubilant light in those patterned rhythms which repeated themselves until they would become one unit of complex structural symmetry.

Now she breaks this scheme and faces the risk of taking us looking into organic shapes which float in silence on the visual plane. But they are more and more a spiritual quest. She holds them tight so that they are able to flow. Like Monet's water lilies, they are a patch of light which changes the size and nature of their surrounding space. A space which in turn embraces and makes more significant those centres of visual energy.

In Ronda, Spain, working with silks, she learnt to respond to the rules of the dyes which would make each brushstroke something unique and unchangeable. In these oil paintings, though, this precision becomes essential and revealing.

Rings, circles, broken lines, textures and the fabric of dreams move across many pictures and make the contrast between yellow and purple, bleached white and nocturnal blues, a wisely orchestrated sequence. Here, the vibration of a tone and the resonance of a contrast connect all the works which she now shows in Colombia in a vigorous visual concert.

Each note is unique but the whole embraces them in a singular development. It is the place which her art has reached, from intuition to precision, from the open shape to the closed one, which is in turn questioned, and which takes her to the world

again and to the constant fluctuations of our perception. Now she observes the smallest things, the original cells which float on the basic matrix. But the smallest thing is always projected onto the largest one. Biology inexorably flows onto a cosmology. The shifting and placing of the infinite layers of which our inner self is made point at the hidden but necessary harmony between body and mind, between nature and culture. Without it, we would not know where to look for the map of our own stars. This is why she knows that her home is where her heart is: inside each painting. This is the space she has built to inhabit.

That molecular world, where the rhythmic pattern makes chance necessary: an alphabet of simple lines and complex constructions at the same time. The attention she devotes to the surfaces becomes profound.

This is why these slow paintings, hovering quietly in their submarine atmospheres, of the deepest blues and the whitest whites, of bleached reduction, aptly correspond to the title of the exhibition: Micrographies.

Sharp insights into our minds. Revelations of that which is not yet expressed. And so, like in any other valid painting, more eloquent for what it suggests than for what it affirms. These paintings turn thought into a sensible interrogation.

*Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda
Poet, art critic and diplomat.
Athens, June 1998*