



↑ Azucena Vieites. Courtesy of the artist and Galería Fúcares.

Azucena Vieites

R E P E T I T I O N
 I S N O T R E P E A
 T I N G

In any form of art, translation involves a technique of concrete materialisation. An awareness that images are constructed by taking into account their materiality—how they are made, what sensory experience we have of them—which requires us to understand the different procedures through which they are embodied.

I have recently returned to silk-screening as a way of transferring drawings from one technique to another. Silk-screening always has the ability to surprise, and it is important that what you do surprises you. There is something magical and amazing about an image which suddenly comes up: something in which one's own body is involved. Through a movement, through an action, we obtain an immediate, undelayed result. What is obtained is the remnant of the action—the remnant as an organic result—which implies the idea of the abject. This process of working from the materiality of the images means not so much documenting a process—which consists on reworking the drawings through the silk-screen (the notion of the document acquiring a certain virtual character)—, but of combining the ideas of the remnants

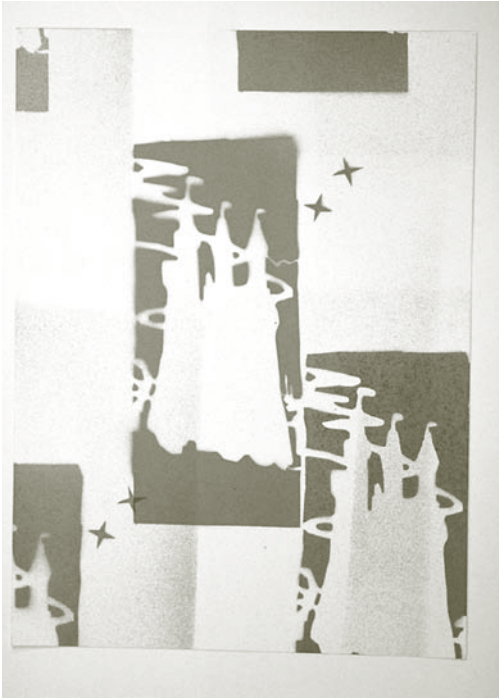
as an organic and object result, as the unassimilable.

The specific technique of silk-screening enables the image to be obtained over and over. It poses questions about the idea of original and the copy, the unique work and the serialised, reproducible one. The artist Sturtevant once said, «Repetition is not repeating». In the effect of repetition, the represented vanishes; it is distorted. The image is built from that reiterative effect. Something happens in the gaps that goes beyond mere representation, something that rarefies it. One of the *raisons d'être* of art involves its capacity to produce oddness.

The process de-essentialises the concept of the image as unique and original and makes us wonder about its naturalness. The fact that it can be repeated, copied, or imitated means we are questioning the original/copy binary opposites, we are negating the primary nature of the original and the derivative nature of the copy. It leads us to incorporate an idea of the absurdity of the image as absolute and linear.

Last April, I was invited to exhibit my work as part of a symposium held in Madrid entitled *The Copy, The Fake (and The Original)*. Someone in the audience said that it was paradoxical—given that I had spoken about developing a technique on the fringes of the idea of technique—to see that my most recent drawings seemed to be better than the first ones, that they were better made. Developing a technique from the absence of technique has allowed me to gradually control it; I am neither distracted by previously created expectations nor by prior conventions. Whatever I have achieved, has been developed from its absence, from an action which does not come from what the artist already knows or what it is already known, but which is a response to a certain idea of truth; for that





reason, the drawing ultimately works. In short, it is a better translation.

At the same symposium I mentioned a musical duo I had once seen. They appeared on stage and struck up the music, but they just stood there staring at the audience. They didn't actually start singing at any point. While the music played on they just stood there, without singing, staring out at the audience in amusement. It seemed like the beginning of something, but as that beginning lasted longer than which seemed necessary, their silence became more and more disconcerting. I also mentioned another case, that of an artist who is in the pannel of a debate and hardly says anything. Within certain limits, he knows he is being a performance artist.

These two cases reveal what they represent or do not represent in relation to what one presupposes they should be or should do: in the case of the musical duo, singing; in the case of the artist-lecturer, saying something, filling the space of time for which they are going to be paid. Both might seem like impostors since they are not fulfilling certain prior expectations, not matching a prior convention. However, my experience was that what was represented in both cases was adjusted to the idea of truth I have previously mentioned. It is an exercise of the greatest radicality to try not to contain, nor fill «empty» spaces, not to build them from the convention. These initiatives are materialised as an effect of repetition, of not singing, of not speaking for one, two, three minutes or longer. In this effort to try not to contain, the result takes place at the edges, at the fringes, and it is from those edges that it exceeds mere representation. A different translation might very well have shown us nothing but mistakes.

In my work, I have been developing a certain idea of collage based on the landscape, understanding by landscape

that which surrounds me. Appropriation is a means rather than an end in itself. The images from which I work have something of the *objet trouvé*, and so does the result. The idea is to represent a kind of aesthetic-political memory in relationship to a specific time and an experience of transit, of passing through all that; a memory whose intensity is diffused.

The translation consists on understanding what the other says or does through a process of empathy and through making oneself understood, trying to locate the place where one stands. Collecting other people's work allows you a kind of contact in the distance, a genealogy, a form of complicity and knowledge.

Some of the titles I have used have generated a containing space for drawings that I have kept as long as they haven't been exhausted.

Let's Play Prisoners, Los sueños de vidrio te engañarán, Get Your Laws Off My Body, No mires, Pirates On Parade, Sorgiña zara zu?, Ezetz harrapatu!, Who Is Free To Choose?, Remake of the Weekend, Jeux de Dames Cruelles, Drawings of the Natural, Som aquí, Results, Feminist Sweepstakes, Practice More Failure, Straight Not, Arty, The Remix, New Feminism, My Body My Right, Around the World, Notes for an Art of Resistance, Un cambio de forma, Oye lo que traigo|Check Out What I've Got, Positively Dirty.

I often listen to music while I'm working. I did a show once called *Oye lo que traigo|Check Out What I've Got*—though there was nothing actually to be heard at the exhibition. There was no music as such, just references to it. I mostly listen to mainstream music stations while working, like Kiss FM. This is paradoxical: I want to get away from conventions and yet when I am working I listen to music that comes from a sphere that might be termed conventional. The Opium of the People.

Making use of a certain narcotic, hypnotic quality contained in it all, we can clear the way forward and see what may happen.

During the first fortnight of last April, I gave a silk-screen workshop at Arteleku, *Radical Expressions*. A guest artist spoke about his work. He posed lots of questions that had arisen over the previous days. I wrote it all down, like some note-taker, collecting everything someone else says, from both the objective to the subjective at the same time. Objectivity does not exist; everything is subjective. I have ended up talking about my work from a position of objectivity out of precaution, having seen how subjectivity waits for women, with open arms—what I call the garbage of femininity. Buñuel and Dalí are supposed to have proposed an exercise consisting on not giving an idea to be thought any more than three minutes... or something like that. After three minutes, convention comes to the door. I suppose the exercise can be revised later, provided the initial idea and the possible ethic it contains are respected.

Sounds transmit moods, someone once said. Images also transmit moods. Melancholy through images. Melody as a good way of transmitting levels of intensity. When they are greatly exaggerated, that excess may need readjusting.

In the most recent workshops I have taught, the silk-screen one in Arteleku I mentioned and another on drawing (*An Approach to DIY Drawing*) during the last week of February at the School of Art in Cuenca, the participants were glad not to have to finish anything, not to be subjected to the comparisons of being a better or worse artist which depended on the final result of their work: it was a liberation for them. The proposal I made consisted not so much on finishing a process through drawing or silk-screening but in beginning it and watching to see what it led to. And that's about it. ♦



FERIA: Helena, Marta y Elisa., en una feria.