

As Time Goes By

Notes on the Work of a Persistent Silent One

Carlota Beltrame

You must remember this
A kiss is still a kiss
A sigh is just a sigh
The fundamental things apply
As time goes by...
—Herman Hupfeld

The Phenomenon

As I have done with many other artists from Tucumán, some years ago I wrote about the work of Sandro Pereira, suggesting that its strategy lay in self-referentiality, while its tactic consisted in treating himself not as subject, but as object. Indeed, the body traversed by his empirical observations embodied his own lived experiences, just as he felt them unfolding. By treating himself as a specimen, he displayed the behaviors adopted by his body in order to indirectly convey the constellation of ideas that defined—and continue to define—his personal world.

Now, after so many years, I would like to push this line of thought a little further, as I believe it still distinguishes Sandro's work. In my view, the artist's body reappears time and again so that he himself may contemplate it; uncertain as he is about the independent existence of things, the subject Sandro cannot exist without the object Sandro. The result is a meticulous rendering of everyday gestures—eating, swimming, kissing, boxing, embracing—presented in the manner of an autobiographical essay that minutely unfolds the simplicity of daily life. In doing so, it renews perception and draws us into the intimate impulse of experiences shared within the world to which we all belong.



Faltan estos epígrafes,
Me los tiene que pasar Sandro.



Lo que no eres se lo debes a los poetas
Resina epoxi policromada
2014

The Narrative

And yet, upon closer reflection, this notion of the “essay” is only one of the possibilities activated in the viewer when confronted with his work. Sandro presents these pieces as if they were raw fragments of his life, for they return to him a cleaner, simpler version of himself and allow him to reclaim the freedom to perceive familiar things from a renewed horizon. Faced with this, we cannot avoid attributing to his work elements of the literary genre of autofiction: the recognition of a minor circumstance or event rooted in the author’s life, a narrative whose plot might be measured against his lived reality and simple existential experience.

In Thesis III, Walter Benjamin writes:

The chronicler who recounts events without distinguishing between the great and the small thereby acknowledges the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost to history. It is true: only redeemed humanity fully possesses its past. This means that only such humanity, at each of its moments, can cite its past. Every lived instant becomes a citation for the order of the day—and that day is precisely the last¹.

Accordingly, if the objectification Sandro performs upon himself posits a form of event, we must acknowledge that it leaves no room for grand heroic deeds. It does, however, open a space for the small, the unremarkable that inhabits everyday life—and which, under global financial capitalism, defines the existence of “losers.” Through the tactically and strategically deployed auto-phenomenology present in each of his works, Sandro contributes to inscribing into history a past that, lacking anything exceptional, had seemed definitively as unredeemed as it was lost.

¹ Tesis III en Walter Benjamin: aviso de incendio. Una lectura de las tesis sobre el concepto de historia. de Michel Löwy . pág 62. Fondo de Cultura Económica. México. 2004.



Hyacinthe RIGAUD
Louis XIV
Óleo s/lienzo
2,79 x 1,90 m
1701
Colección del Museo del Louvre



Sandro PEREIRA
El novio
Resina poliéster policromada y arroz
Escala 1:1
2001
Colección Herlitzka

Combating the Academy with Tenderness

In previous texts, I have noted that during the 1990s, at the Facultad de Artes of the UNT, the generation of artists who would later shape the contemporary scene of San Miguel de Tucumán abandoned practices more aligned with a provincial late modernity than with emerging times. The representational and disciplinary paradigm that had persisted since the years of Spilimbergo was shattered, and a thousand extra-academic practices arose, giving way to poetics of poverty that would only be set aside in later decades. Yet I believe that, contrary to Benjamin's prediction², rather than eliminating the distance between artwork and viewer, the aura continued to illuminate and intensify the radiance of a kind of art that only outwardly seemed unable to find its place.

Sandro's case is particularly striking: his small narratives are reinforced either through practices that appear to enhance no recognizable "artisticity", such as modeling in plasticine, or through the "bastardization" of traditional disciplines like drawing, sculpture, and painting, producing works that consistently run counter to the academic regime of art. This is because the contingent and the sublime need not recognize one another, and it is precisely within this tension that the poetic spark is ignited—in other words, where what Ticio Escobar calls the "dissident aura" is reinstated³.

In his "derailment," Sandro Pereira auratizes the very instability with which he approaches his practice, thanks, so I would argue, to the invocation of a new category: tenderness. Through

² La obra de arte en la era de la reproductibilidad técnica (1936) de Walter Benjamin.

³ Aura latente. Arte contemporáneo del Paraguay. Posibles líneas de fuga, texto curatorial de Ticio Escobar. Asunción del Paraguay. 2018.

tenderness, his fragile and silent work distinguishes itself from many more formally accomplished ones in which, paradoxically, meaning has already become saturated. Indeed, weary of the mannerisms of “contemporary art,” and far removed from familiar narratives, tenderness—like a micro-epiphany—imbues with unexpected brilliance the phenomenological will by which the object becomes subject, the autofiction through which a simple scene becomes a story.



La vida es un carnavalito continuo
Masilla epoxi modelada y policromada
2014



Niño interior y su paraíso
Masilla epoxi modelada y policromada
2014

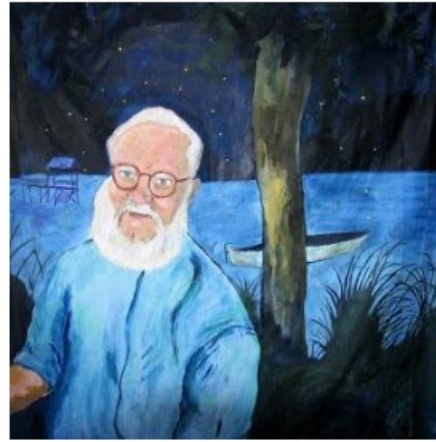
The Irruption of the Other

Today, as the years have passed, Sandro’s tactics and strategies remain intact. Yet something has changed. Between the works of those distant years and the more recent ones lies a long trajectory. Although his work continues to revolve around himself, its expression is no longer exclusively his own: this time, there is a commitment to the Other. Indeed, Sandro now produces his work so that others may speak, enriching his voice with theirs.

His pieces, reduced to a handful of basic disciplinary resources, hover on the threshold at which they are almost nothing; rather than grand works of contemporary art, they resemble notes, inquiries, questions—even spiritual exercises. In their simplicity, they stand in contrast to the desire to speak of a universe populated by pure love, where those Others who now inhabit it are likewise haloed by the glow of a persistent aura that refuses to fade.



Juan sembrando
Carbonilla , lápiz acuarela, pintura acrílica s/papel
1 x 1,20 m
2015



Retrato de Gumier Maier
Acrílico s/tela
1,50 x 1,50m
2017

Sandro knows himself by heart. His work does not appear as Truth, yet it produces truths.

Literature Cited

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LÖWY, Michael. *Walter Benjamin: Fire Alarm. A Reading of the "Theses on the Concept of History."* Fondo de Cultura Económica. Mexico, 2004.