

RUNO LAGOMARSINO

WE HAVE EVERYTHING, BUT THAT'S ALL WE HAVE

MAY 4 THRU JUNE 15, 2013

OPENING: SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2PM – 7PM



Mendes Wood DM is pleased to present *We have everything, but that's all we have*. Swedish artist based in Sao Paulo, Runo Lagomarsino's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

From the first moment I thought about this text or, more precisely, about a text, not this one, but one that could accompany an exhibition that already promised to be, similar to the one we see here, I thought of *L'Amour Fou*. Maybe simply because of the title and the love. Perhaps because the last chapter is a letter to Breton's daughter, then eight months old, in which the author says that the book serves only to clarify to her the mystery of her coming into the world. The book then shares with this text, a background problem (or driving force): how to write to all potential readers, really writing to them, something of a mystery that has so much our own? *Porque eso es inescapable, no hay manera de que te mire, o mire lo que de vos resulta, sin que sea bajo la luz o la sombra de nuestro misterioso reiterado encuentro.*¹

But what came to mind from the book was chapter III, which deals with encounters of another kind. The pages describe Breton and Giacometti's visit to a "trinket market" and focuses on two objects – a wooden spoon and a metal mask – that they rescue, among all the dormant wonders of the flea market. This panoramic look and the fishing, the stalking and the attack came to mind; the mutual attraction that seems to be established between subject and object, which does not allow any another arrangement. Breton also saw the mask and describes it with enthusiasm, but he doesn't need it as the spoon. All the same, he sees himself involved in the equation of the other encounter: "these two findings that Giacometti and I have found respond to a desire that is not a mere desire of either of us, but the desire of one, to which the other is associated due to special circumstances."

I'm always amazed at the precision of the artifacts Runo is able to find in these places. I know that they would be of no use to me and still I wish I had seen them first. So much so that I have learned to anticipate. I feel the joy of having discovered the killer in a police story before the detective each time an object I collect or show him goes through the check-out. I look at each and every object at length for fear of letting some treasure pass me by distraction; for him, no matter the treasure that can't awaken him. And things seem to look for him.

¹ This is inescapable; there is no way I can look at you, or at what results of you, but under the light or the shadow of our mysterious reiterated encounter.

My favorite case is the one of the white saucers with golden motifs, by the repetition of chance. First he found the caravel saucer, days later, at another second-hand store, he found the knight saucer (if he hadn't already taken home the first one, he probably would have never seen the second). Immediately, I thought we had to find the other four, since it must have been a set of six pieces, and we had to know what else belonged to the group that united great voyages and crusades in a porcelain set. Runo Lagomarsino designed a wallpaper.

The patterned paper covers the once white walls of the gallery with a repeated image: caravel, crusader, caravel, crusader, caravel, crusader ... and the color of gold. Needless to say more. Only that, and this is made possible precisely because the drawing was found, it is interesting to imagine that it is, not the juxtaposition of something non-existent before, but the removal of a protective layer (or makeup) that reveals, under the white paint that makes the neutrality of these spaces uniform, the repeated mark of those navigations and horseback journeys; those conquests (in the sense of colonization, not victory). As if that pattern, thus domesticated, were still underneath all our silent walls. Everything else happens on this surface. Being given that through this path we got where we are, where do we go?

Chapter III of *L'Amour Fou* begins by saying: "From the moment when, compelled by the desire of discovery, the earliest navigators had sighted land until they set foot on firm land; from the moment a scientist has the conviction of being the witness of a phenomenon hitherto unknown until the moment he/she begins to assess the scope of what was observed (...) an extremely delicate fire brush outlines or draws, like no other, the meaning of life." Beyond the idea, not unimportant, that the meaning of life becomes palpable in the duration between the moment one glimpses unknown desire and the moment one begins to delineate where it may take us, the sentence reveals an approach between the seafarer's discovery and that of the scientist that also interests us here.

The incandescent bulbs, which today herald something nostalgic, are kept in glass jars with screw caps, accompanied by the memory of an invention filled with future; a future of light or, indeed, enlightenment. They are, we could say, part of the same movement that went east on horseback and west by sea. And their light covered almost everything, all cities and almost all fields, from all poles and all electrical taps to each house, each room, each dining table and bedside. Every light bulb encompasses a time, its time. Though unaware, they come with counted hours. Incandescent light bulbs bring an average of 1,000 hours of light and of everything else that takes place under this light.

Breton would have celebrated the way light bulbs began to burn since Runo began to collect them like this, burned. I say that when I'm not looking he shakes them or gives them a flick, but secretly I fear that the coincidence arises from a previously unsuspected problem in the electrical wiring that I have so far prided myself on having personally done. These bulbs convey a system of mistakes: the presumed flick; the overload; the rupture; the exhaustion; the end of service life (as they say); and the repetition of these failures in the household. All the moments in which what has been advertised with the supply of electricity and the invention of the light bulb (and the supremacy of rational knowledge, which it symbolizes) fade under our roof.

Another result of our periodic trips to second-hand stores and markets, this time in São Paulo, was a pair of paintings with macaws. One of them, with a single red macaw, never left the shelf. The other is a more vertical canvas than it should where two blue macaws were painted with effort, one in the foreground, another more in the back. The painting gave rise to a series of drawings that reproduce the pair of birds 28 times. I see these drawings as an effort to arrive in the tropics. An attempt to grasp the subject in the repetition of the portrait of the portrait. A practice of another way to learn, another form of knowledge, not by encyclopedic reading, but by firmly stepping on the sighted land. Maybe that's why they are shown against on the only white and bright wall.

On another wall, without silences, directly above the gallery reception desk and right next to the niche where this text is kept, images light on and off in a constant rhythm. Each slide registers the two sides of a machete, from a collection maintained at Hacienda Buena Vista, an old sugar cane plantation of the colonial period, in Puerto Rico. Standing, gigantic, facing itself, every machete is shown in full; with all the use marks carved in the tool from the sugar cane field and all their power of resistance, engraved in its memory for more than one revolution.

In this letter to his daughter, written in September 1936, Breton says that he does not join the militia in Spain for being unable to find the courage to expose her life along with his. It was because of Paula's birth, a year older than Runo, that Giuseppe and Diana left the ERP and the country in 1976. They embarked in the port of Buenos Aires with a stop in Rio on their way to Barcelona. He left by bus, fourty hours on the road, to join the two in Rio de Janeiro. Thirty-six years later, Runo retraced this journey by land. He photographed all the birds he saw near the border, from before and to after crossing it. Maybe some bird is the same, after having crossed incognito or inadvertently above all the fences, but seemed to be another on the other side. Maybe one is the son's son's son's son's son (or however long birds live) of another that his father saw and wished to follow in the swiftness of flight, almost invisible.

I first met Giuseppe last year in Sevilla. We met him to shoot "More delicate than the historians' are the map-makers' colours". In the suitcase, besides the gifts for the approaching Christmas from the distant land, we took two cartons of eggs bought in Buenos Aires and smuggled via Sao Paulo. Giuseppe looks like the voice I had heard before, like the photographs I had seen, like the reports. Or maybe the memory has adapted photographs, voice and reports to what I then saw. The fact is that he did not surprise me. He has such a sincerity that makes things easy and such clarity of what counts in life, it seems. *Fué lindo verte con él, y verlo a él como te mira. Lindo que te acompañe en ese esfuerzo inútilmente victorioso. Que esté con vos en ese gesto que de alguna manera continúa lo que él comenzó.*²

Breton's letter to his daughter who still does not read continues: "it was also my desire that everything I hope for the future of men, all that, in my view, should lead us to fight for everyone, not just for one, stopped being a formal way of thinking, even the noblest, to confront reality in a live future that you are." I, myself, desire that what we together hope for the future of men, which could have led us to fight for all and brought us to think the forms, unites and merges to confront reality in this live future that yet cannot be read.

Carla Zaccagnini, April 2013.

PS. On the last page of the book, the one that originally only read "Printed in Portugal (...) September 1971", there is now a phrase I wrote in pencil in August or September 2008. It says: "this text is the result of a combination of improbable things that have happened one after the other."

In 2007-2008 Runo Lagomarsino (1977, Malmö) participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York and he holds a MFA from Malmö Art Academy, Sweden from 2003.

Solo exhibitions include: *Even Heroes Grow Old* Index, The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, (Stockholm, 2012); *OtherWhere* Nils Stærk, (Copenhagen, 2011); *Hay siempre un día mas lejos* Galeria Luisa Strina Espaço projeto, (São Paulo, 2011); *Violent Corners* ar/ge kunst Galerie Museum, (Bolzano, 2011); *Trans Atlantic* Art Statements, (Basel 2011).

Recent group exhibitions include: *The Unexpected Guest* Liverpool Biennial (Liverpool, 2012); *The Imminence of Poetics*, The 30th São Paulo Bienal (São Paulo, 2012); *Unfinished Journeys*, The National Museum of Norway (Oslo, 2012); *Untitled*, 12th Istanbul Biennial (Istanbul, 2011); *Speech Matters*, 54th Venice Biennale (Venice, 2011); *The Moderna Exhibition 2010*, Moderna Museet (Stockholm, 2010); *The Travelling Show*, Colección Jumex, (Mexico DF, 2010).

² It was beautiful to see you with him, and see how he looks at you. It's beautiful that he accompanies you in this useless victorious effort; that he is with you in this gesture that somehow continues what he started.

List of Works:

Entre Mundos, 2013
wallpaper
variable dimensions

Heaven Falls, 2013
dia projection loop with 81 different images
variable projection size

O Mundo é Muito Mais, 2013
folder length of paper
20 x 380 cm

Unenlightened Times at Rua Ribeiro de Barrios 338, 2012 -
wood, glass jars with lids and burned lightbulbs
variable dimensions

Creemos Ser País y la Verdad es que Somos Apenas Paisaje, 2012/2013
18 digital print on cotton paper
46,5 x 31,5 cm each

Two Eggs Cartons (More Delicate Than the Historian's are the Map- makers Colours) 2012/2013
two eggs cartons and wood shelf
63 x 26 x 8,5 cm

More Delicate Than the Historian's are the Map- makers Colours, 2012/2013
HD video
6'18"