

GALERIE CRÈVECOEUR
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BESTUE & VIVES

Encargos difíciles

15/01 - 05/03/11

Some connotation exercise

The division of the arts in Antique Greece, according to Filostrate the Ancient, was between *tekné* – useful art, made by those who, in their activity, would dirty their hands, - and *sophia* – the masters' art without any practical application. Plato writes in *Gorgias* : « I do not call any irrational thing an art ». Before writing philosophical dialogues, Plato was a theatre playwright who decided to destroy all of his tragedies.

Placing an order means asking for something in exchange for payment. The possibility of making a difficult order presumes a high level of skill in a specific activity. For these difficult orders (*Encargos difíciles*) the technical agents produce a work of art. The series of instructions are in tune with the abilities of the craftsman but they create pressure to avoid getting an unwanted result, which would compromise it.

During one of the fundamental steps of modernity construction, technical ability coming from traditional practice was put forward as a way to oppose mass production. William Morris spoke in favour of development of artistic daily objects, based on handcrafted techniques of production, as a neo-medieval return of a clearly socialist ideology opposed to industrial production. Therefore, the aesthetical and epistemological system of modern art applied to the daily-use objects enabled one to transcend the new system of production, that is to say, to redeem alienation of mass production thanks to another kind of alienation justified by aesthetical matter.

Since the end of the 60's, it is common that artistic work consists no more in a material action but in a protocol that establishes a framework following precise rules. In the new artistic way, this kind of methodology was taken for the claim of intellectual production where the work, the final object, resulted free from psychological space and referential load. In case of *Encargos difíciles* though, formalisation becomes subjective because of the inappropriate nature of the rules the craftsman must follow to make a translation, and cultural as well, the artistic context of reception forcing an analogical process of reading.

In this position of negotiated authorship, the object results a staged relationship: it is the solidification of an action with unexpected consequences in time. The craftsman, who is not supposed to know the discursive frame of the order, produces an object that resumes a sum of strengths inherent to the productive system that marginalizes it, from the brands or other mechanisms inherent to the consumer goods. Small but significant revenges like undoing a *Comme des garçons* sweater or straighten the curved corners of an Ipod, become the signs of the subconscious of late exacerbated capitalism.

In *Arcades* project, Walter Benjamin writes that industrial production of daily-use objects in the nineteenth century coincides with a loss of casualty towards the objects. From this reflection, Giorgio Agamben explained that this guilty conscience towards the objects was replaced by art, how the original sin of mercantilism vindicated itself through aesthetical surplus value. "As sacrifices restore to the sacred sphere what servile use has degraded and profaned, so, through poetic transfiguration, the object is pulled away both from the enjoyment of its use and from its value as accumulation, and is restored to its original status. (...) To the capitalist accumulation of exchange value and to the enjoyment of the use-value of

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Marxism and the theorists of liberation, the dandy and modern poetry oppose the possibility of a new relation to things: the appropriation of unreality.”

Walter Benjamin insisted on the fact that the mercantile object contained the dialectic union of the living and the inorganic. During a fundamental moment of history of modern objects, the Liberty and Art Nouveau styles transformed the dead material into organic creatures. The objects from mass production are fallen goods speaking of what does not exist anymore. The collapse of objects is the collapse of a use order and of the social and material relations that produce it. This is why kitsch, a residual melancholic experience restores the fiction of a truncated genealogy from a fetishist genealogy: the fantasmatic reference to a transformation of matter they do not represent anymore.

According to Benjamin, this anxiety of daily life embodies in the anthropomorphism of objects that appear in Granville's caricatures. Joke is the linguistic strategy that enables these contradictions to be readable. Freud: “Joke is the most social of all the mental functions that aim at a yield to pleasure” Ludic acts provoke the combinatorial with use of absurd activated by reactions of emotional identification. A new audience is being created when art works like a mechanism inside intimate communication networks, enabling experiments of new possible connections and new social synthesis.

Bestué and Vives realize objects that are communication forms demanding a reaction, like sending a letter and logically hoping for an answer. The processes of identification or immediate denial are obvious in a joke, since its efficiency is always direct or void. This is why this modality of participation to the construction of meaning is a dialectic position open to antagonism, that is explicit, as vandalism, a political nature.

Each interpretation is then a community network. Each reading is a constituent link. Wallace Stevens wrote “each new meaning is the equivalent of a new word”. Precisely, each new meaning is a violence: the exercise or assumption of a new common vector attacks stability because it leads to more than itself, and it means reducing the ethical capacities of the individual and it strengthens its affected subjectivity in an ongoing movement.

The single machine in the center of this exhibition is the encounter of bodies and devices, of some labor forces and some others, willing to, in an ongoing continuum. As a sum of micro-political actions, they are the manufacture motors of a possible final object, a material condensation of some reasons, which are all said and done, historical.

Manuel Segade