

## Edu Carrillo - L21 - *Lazy Workaholic*

“Lazy Workaholic” is the title of Edu Carrillo's (b. 1995, Santander, Spain) second solo exhibition at L21 Palma. Entering the gallery's largest room, we bump into monochrome circles scattered across the walls, the canvases, and the floor. Dots that spatter, but also agglutinate, his new body of work. We risk following them as if they were the breadcrumbs that Hop-o'-My-Thumb left to lay a trail back home. We try to tie together what we see and what the artist tells us.

This project is the result of a prolonged pause that Carrillo imposed onto himself after the frenetic and obsessive activity of the last few years. He now presents the result of his contemplative reflection on what comes *before* painting and, from what we gather, it is not painting. The artist puts the problem of painting on stage: What does it mean to paint unceasingly? He asks himself as he questions his own process to open up other ways. With this exhibition, he makes clear, perhaps, the distance between what he was doing and what he wants to do. Hence the coloured dots that invite us to take a walk around the studio, to waste time lying on the sofa smoking, watering the plants, eating an apple, or reading a book. It seems that you always must have an excuse to procrastinate, even if you end up doing many other things.

Francesco Giaveri     Is painting a problem?

Edu Carrillo             Always and without solution. Every day I throw myself into the painting, giving it my all and trying for it to be the definitive one, although I know that it will only be another failure, one more. Even so, sometimes I find something, a detail, a stroke, an “I don't know what” that I can pull to change, to open the way or simply to try again, perhaps better, attacking the blank canvas.

FG                         Painting is always a problem, like writing. To get out and be exposed to the elements to devote oneself to poetry, for example, is to assume defeat beforehand. Even so, you have to try. Producing the exhibition at L21, what problems are you being exposed to?

EC                         The same as ever: to paint the painting that has it all. The last...or the second-to-last [laughs].

Knowing laziness is not enough, what matters is whether we are able to surrender ourselves completely to this radical inactivity. It is not as easy as it seems. There are very powerful conditioning factors that prevent that from happening, such as the fact that laziness is still unjustly considered the mother of all vices. Of course, inactivity is not the absence of activity, far from it. Laziness and inactivity are actions that involve devoting body and soul to doing something neither productive nor functional to consumption. For example, contemplation and boredom navigate this fertile ground of new possibilities and, above all, of serenity. A wide and calm sea. Boredom has been described as the “dream bird that hatches the egg of experience”.

Some of the paintings in the exhibition present Edu Carrillo's well-known character, the protagonist of many of his canvases, resting, perhaps thinking. The large right hand holds

his head. The tools of doing and thinking meet. The best ideas come when we are not doing anything. Leisure - of which the ancient philosophers spoke and which has nothing to do with its current meaning - is limited to designating the time we do not dedicate to work. When we are not engaged in any task, we dive in silence into a void that gradually fills with unexplored possibilities. Silence does not produce, and, for this reason, it is fertile and incubates the unexplored.

Is perhaps the studio a safe harbour that the red dot stickers (*gomets*) arranged across the space help us to reach? There are two fundamental moments in the studio. On the one hand, the feverish activity, like an ant that can't stay still. On the other, right the opposite: inactivity, taking distance and contemplating, like a bird gliding across the sky, without the need to move its wings. In the tedious wait it is possible to brew a kind of experience of doing that does not rule out any unexplored possibility, that acknowledges what is new... As Mladen Stilinović said: *there is no art without laziness*.

FG                    In studio-based practice there are moments, rituals or simple tasks functional to painting without being painting itself. Non-painting moments that are necessary but invisible in the finished canvas. Watering the plants or paying attention to the apparently anodyne things around us is more important than it seems. It is rhythm and meaning. In your exhibition, you precisely represent these moments: the plants and the watering can, the cig and the smoke, the apples and the hand, the books and the eyes, etc. The lit fag is a way of procrastinating. It occurs to me that all these modes of wasting time, taking care of the plants, eating fruit (not so much smoking [laughs]) function as representations of taking care of the painter and his painting, but also of the spectator, that is, to convey something pleasurable to him, don't they?

EC                    It is a luxury to be able to take care of the plants in the studio for a whole morning and take the energy back, to see my painting with a little more physical but also mental distance. While I'm doing other things I look out of the corner of my eye at the canvases that await me. I believe that breathing calmly is sometimes as important as solving an issue quickly. Smoking and thinking before a canvas is a ritual that I wanted to be present in this exhibition. Taking care of the plants and tidying up the studio is functional to my craft insofar as I take much care of my painting and I want the viewer to enjoy my canvases.

The works in the exhibition go along with the fact of presenting an extensive, intense, and intimate project, emerging from the need to take a break. To get out of the spinning wheel and take a walk to stretch one's legs. It is as if Edu Carillo had strayed from the intensity of the studio to wander around his work. To rest for a moment before plunging back into painting.

It is a luxury to wander aimlessly and alone. The waste of time can prove to be very profitable. As Chesterton said, there is one thing which gives radiance to everything, and it is the idea of something around the corner. It is the fascination of the new, experiencing the sensation of discovering and recognising that "I don't know what". Surely something that, in haste, had gone unnoticed. In the case of painters, their practice is divided between thinking about what to paint and painting. The feverish, infinite, and continuous work that painting demands... Hence the duality of the title and its apparent contradiction.

“Gomets” are small stickers used in galleries to indicate the availability of a work. They are also widely used by children and other fanatical customers of the best equipped stationery shops. Sold in various colours, they have many uses, whether functional, playful or decorative; and they never disappoint. In this project they function as decoys or footprints. Time can be wasted following them until the contradictions fade away.

With this exhibition, Edu Carrillo represents the important moments of painting excluded precisely from the act of painting. Small, unnoticed actions of non-painting. Strategies of procrastination and, at the same time, of care. Carrillo appropriates the duality between the obsession for continuous doing typical of all workaholics and laziness, the contemplation without doing anything at all. A “No” can define us much more as conscious humans than affirmative (and blind) action. Edu Carrillo points here to his frequent revisiting of Bob Black's pamphlet, *The Abolition of Work*, which proposes a playful revolution. On the other hand, the reflection on his practice refers to Enrique Vila-Matas as he makes literature by staging literature itself. But there are also many other references, such as small tributes to Philip Guston, among the most explicit.

FG                    Why do you include so many “gomets” in this project? Is it more playful than pictorial? Or maybe there is not so much difference between playing and painting?

EC                    Assuming that play is something very serious, introducing the “gomets” in this new series of paintings represents my boycott of having to make a painting, with this pressure of always having to do something new and, on top of that, something good. I wanted to stop in the best sense of the word, and 'entertain' myself by painting something that was non-painting. A monochrome circle. A simple and wonderful geometric figure; without any pretension, a bit of trompe l'oeil at best. I like to imitate these stickers you find in the stationery shop...I can paint them without any worries or issues for a while. It's also a Trojan horse to get into what I'm doing. To contemplate it with some distance. I told you: I can't forget to breathe...

Francesco Giaveri