

DIANGO HERNÁNDEZ: ALL HANDS



6 May 2023 – 1 July 2023

Opening: Friday, 5 May 2023, 18 – 20 Uhr

Now you see waves everywhere. (For D.H.)

Now you see waves everywhere...

Waves that speak, gathering themselves into narratives of their own. As if learning to speak from scratch.

What could you do to give form to a language of your own? And for and to whom else?

You wonder if Diango's first waves came from some kind of lonely place. Making space, bridging space. That is, the waves were an attempt to translate oneself homewards. Or equally, translate oneself from home abroad. Because home is always elsewhere, and the water between one place and another, those waves, that distance, is where the waves began. The waves connect, and yet they exist in a liminal space between one place in another.

We called that first exhibition of Wave paintings, The Book of Waves. The invocation of a book; an impossible, unknowable, book. As if, already, there was an infinite resource to draw from.

The waves suggest the prospect of a universal language. And yet it's a kind of code, a private space where ideas and objects and memories might reside. Diango's waves offer an infinite realm of possibilities. There is no end to what could be done with them. It's as if Diango uncovered his own DNA markers, and every work builds upon this inner structure. Sometimes gestural, sometimes more systematic.

Upon reflection, after some years of thinking about these waves, of watching their evolution, how they've taken on a life and mobility of their own, you come to think that they are a reflection of your own relationship with Diango and his work. Something to do with the way that you knew Diango long before you knew him. Not only that a work of artist often travels before the artist who made it. But that there was a deferred encounter, while you were negotiating those works. An intimacy in the way that you've worked together. We were friends before we were friends. Before we met. The friendship was sent ahead. Defined through objects and ideas that made journeys, when Diango perhaps could not. Incontrovertible messages which always reach their destination, however circuitous the route. It meant, for you, that Diango's work has always been in a state of becoming. The sum of its journeys. An idea which travels ahead of you, and leaves a trace after it has departed.

NICOLAS KRUPP

Briefly, you might have taken for granted that the waves were language, or about language. Or more specifically, about being written. But that's only the surface of things. If the waves constitute a new language, they don't require translation in themselves. Rather they mark the very process of translation. Waves as carriers from one language to another. (It's tempting to talk about floating signifiers here, but the wordplay is too much.)

More than the process of mark-making, the waves set up a simultaneous indebtedness to a language that is permanently translating itself, back and forth. In and out of a syntax of their own making. (And as all translators know, a translation of a translation leads you to places you might not recognise.)

Or waves as lens. Through which you see absolutely everything. Everything is mediated. The lens is a filter and a condenser of images. But the question remains whether you look at, or through, the waves. Both, of course. But Diango sets up the problematics of where to look. It's an important ambiguity, because this enables not only a doubled vision, where you perceive more than one visual plane at a time, but as a consequence this liberates the subject within the visual field. That is, you might ask what is this image about? Its subject? What does it describe? It is less a question of the configuring image and more the process of configuration itself that matters.

But this is not to suggest that the very intimate nature of the waves excludes the viewer. You can read through the waves. Up to a point. Certainly, inherent to the waves, there is the loss of any original source. Always begging the question, can you return the word or the image to its source once it has been translated into waves? There is no return, and one could be tempted to dwell on this in terms of the absence it proposes. However, it is perhaps more useful to think of the waves as a strategy for continuity. The waves enable, on their own terms, in their own language. They become their own genre. Diango has created an infinitely reconstituting space where the waves lead into a series of events within his work. They're always there, always at work.

Lately Diango has been painting through waves in another way. (There's always another way.) If the first wave paintings were a linear exposition of the language of displacement, the new paintings offer the possibilities of perspective, focusing and deferring how you perceive the image.

Waves as blur; the politics of unseeing. There's a distance. Diango understands this distance, which paradoxically only emerges with the engagement and intimacy of the gaze. Perhaps it's a clue to a type of melancholy which weaves through the beauty. Somewhere on the way to a figure taking shape, the image can never quite be discerned, although you have the uncanny feeling you've seen it, or heard word of it, somewhere before.

You still see waves everywhere.

Andrew Renton, London, May 2022

Image: Diango Hernández, *Hand 3*, 2023, oil on canvas, 70 x 60 cm