

Tomás Díaz Cedeño

Withdrawal

Curated by Gaby Cepeda

The more cursed everything appears, the more we look at the persistence of myth, ritual and superstition, the manifold human practices of grasping at agency through rites and customs even in our technologically deterministic present: why do we still throw coins into fountains? Our superstitious spirit ebbs as we grow ever more distant from the temperamental rain that could suffocate the crops and engorge the rivers to disastrous width; and it flows as we crawl closer to enduring a horizon full of similarly catastrophic weather. This show is then an alloy, mixing together the deep past and the uncertain future to represent a current moment that continuously gets harder, tougher, impossible to break out of.

That does not mean that it is infinitely rigid—chaos continues to leak from every crevice and corner, dripping, soaking and rotting away at the very concrete forms of control that shape our existence. In the differentiation that Iván Illich makes between what he calls 'archetypical waters', the enigmatic vehicle for many a metaphor in almost every culture in the world, and mere H₂O, a product of the industrial era, scarce and technically managed; Illich underlines the motif of the disenchantment of the world, the lengthening distance between us and the realm of myth, dreams and symbols that gave sense and purpose to our existence. Over this body of work looms a desire to sharpen reality, which is not the same as re-enchanting it, but that does seek to enhance, intensify its experience, by activating that which remains odd, visceral or opaque in our perceived domesticity. Consider the humble bathroom stall: a place to avoid labor, to doom scroll on your phone, to survive a panic attack, to access anonymous pleasure, to sniff whatever up your nose. Its hideout potential, even if for a moment, is quasi-endless and it awaits at every turn: at your shitty job, at the gentrified warehouse rave, at the shitty mall, at the gross bus station, at the shitty dive bar.

Desire, like water, always finds a way, and the one thing that makes us human, is that we won't stop until we get our fix—even if that means the entire world must to be remade into our convenience-demanding image. We miniaturize a waterfall and affix it atop your reception desk, we miniaturize privacy too, turn it into a stall standing in the middle of the labor/consumption panopticon: both wink at the undeniable human need for a break, for reflection, for a moment alone or in communion with nature—even in its most abstracted form.

In here, the orifice is protagonist, it gives shape and function to space. Through it, goods flow in and waste flows out, pleasure is accessed and yearning is spilled. A dark beat compels you, a distorted nightcore-like call that starts thumping, tridimensional in its expansiveness and, as one approaches it, becomes dimmer, smaller, almost gone. It creates an interregnum, an impermanent state suspended between the governance of labor and the tyranny of consumption, which today homogenizes our hours and practices of so-called relaxation. Sleepwalking from the office to the rave, the spaces around us lose all specificity as transactionality imposes its logic: a world that craves sexuality but is near incapable of intimacy, that prays at the feet of efficiency but never envisions a clear goal beyond 'getting the bag', where privacy is what celebrities claim to want while we go into debt to purchase the latest model of surveillance state's tools.

The orifice is, more obviously, the void left behind by a long-forsaken promise, a symbol for our growing ever more accustomed to the cycle of fix and withdrawal, for our lethal passion for quick gratification, for a rushing feeling of splendor that refuses to stick around. The orifice is then an opening into dysfunction, a naked view into the nonsense that we are bent into obeying and desiring: it is a peeping and a glory hole, it is a slow and gurgling system, it is sensorial escapism, it is the literal, violent ripping down of the walls that confine us.

Gaby Cepeda

PEANA

info@peana.co

Tlaxcala 103, Roma Sur, CDMX