Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt

Maria García Ibáñez
and
Javier León Pérez
curated by
Pilar Cano Romero
Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt

Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt is the title under which María García-Ibáñez and Javier León Pérez present their new works exclusively for Puerta Roja and the title that the artists have given to their collaborative print and installation Series. We are privileged spectators of one of those rare phenomena where two parallel universes converge momentarily.

The term Anamnesis, from the Greek ἀνάμνησις, means recollection, reminiscence, remembrance. Philosophically, the term refers to the idea that humans possess knowledge from past incarnations and that learning consists of rediscovering that knowledge within us. The term, originally used by Plato, reflected his idea of "knowledge as remembrance" or "dialogue of the soul with itself."

Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt, projects on us an image in full motion, using repeating patterns that never result in the same outcome. Like cartographers, the artists alter shapes and distances, translate reality through the use of scale, and face the ultimate decision of which elements, which details are the most relevant to draw a clear path.

Through drawing, María and Javier dissect, comprehend and then recompose reality into a complex tissue created with fragments of their own mental processes. Departing from the most basic geometric shapes, the artists create an infinite, cosmic web, where the smallest unit of expression is repeated. A calculated assembly of structures that creates its own personal language.

Maria and Javier present us with shapes that are colour, line, vibration, reverberation. The perspective changes radically as we approach. Looking closely, we discover a new reading code, a woven net of millions of hand drawn lines that reveal the content of their own stored observations.

Departing from the artists’ individual and more intimate works, in this collaborative project, drawing is saved for sketches and preliminary studies, making way to a construction of human scale proportions. This expansion in scale makes the work literally habitable. We can observe a nod to the Bauhaus movement as the starting point for modern design, where the materials, together with careful execution techniques, are treated as an artisanal practice which gives unique character to the works.

More specifically, in the Anamnesis collaborative series, we can physically see the graphic mitosis where the artists jointly investigate the encoded symbology in the purity of basic geometric forms. It is, however, a return to the larger scale synthesis that highlights and amplifies a loom of multiple connections. Through the process of geometrisation, the artists create interlocking membranes that transform and strengthen the space they occupy. Reticulations beginning from exact mathematical formulas, nonetheless breathe, palpitate and expand beyond their surface.

Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt brings new artworks of two artists that see themselves relatively distant in their aesthetic and conceptual strategies. However, it is in their processes of appropriation and their shared execution rituals where they find commonplace. We talk about the artists’ process not as a purposeful creative act or purely as an anticipator of the resulting work, but as an act of Anamnesis, the discovery of a memory that had always been there.
María’s latest works reveal a new stage on her investigation of the quotidian as container of the extraordinary. In her Telares (Looms) Series, she analyses the identity of a structure that is tactile and of additive construction. She takes the imprint of time and materialises it in her representation of the fabric, giving it an almost sacred quality.

The laborious and unrushed pencil drawings are built in the same way that textiles are woven on a loom. The weave begins with the warp, hoisted by invisible tension points that escape the composition and balance it. She transforms the weave into sound – vibrant, almost abstract.

María holds a perfectly balanced dialogue between concept and method. Despite departing from traditional elements, her works are graphic reformulations that bring new conceptual and visual values. The execution process is an indispensable part of the artwork’s ultimate meaning. Time and method exert the necessary conditions to establish an intimate connection, and to make the drawing exceed the qualities of the original material.

Whist observing María’s drawings, it becomes inevitable to venture into the process of their creation. Her repeating patterns are an attempt to appropriate the original object, to understand it by dissecting it at the same time as constructing it. It is no longer a textile but a map of coordinates that anchor her. It is a need to map, which means nothing more that the need to discover knowledge.

In her Looms drawings and accompanying Nets paper cuts, the surface is conquered by thousands of threads, strategically interwoven and tensioned to leave behind their individual fragility, giving way to something stronger. A weave that provides warmth and gentle protection yet strong enough to hold a body’s weight.

The concave and convex reversible state of things continues present.

Telares (Looms) and Redes (Nets) Series for Anamnesis: the reasoned doubt, María García-Ibáñez
Telares (Looms) No. 1
María García-Ibáñez
Telares Series
Graphite and colour pencil on Bockingford 190gm paper
155 x 126cm (framed)
2016
Process of Telares (Looms) No. 1
Telares (Looms) No. 2
María García Ibáñez
Telares Series
Graphite and colour pencil on Bockingford 190gm paper
119 x 93cm (framed)
2016

Telares (Looms) No. 3
María García Ibáñez
Telares Series
Graphite and colour pencil on Bockingford 190gm paper
119 x 93cm (framed)
2016
Detail of Telares (Looms) No. 3
Redes (Nets) No.1 and No.2 as diptych. María García-Ibáñez. Redes Series. Graphite on Bockingford 190gm paper. 122 x 87 cm each (framed)
Cradle
Maria García-Ibáñez
ARADA (Ploughed Land) Series
Graphite and watercolour on Arches 300gm paper
120 x 80cm (framed)
2016
Cestos (Baskets)
María García Ibáñez
1 of 9 Drawings
Pencil and watercolour on paper
49 x 38cm (framed)
Available in set of 3 or 9
Detail
Cestos (Baskets)
María García Ibáñez
1 of 9 Drawings
Pencil and watercolour on paper
Redes (Nets) No.3
María García-Ibáñez
Laser-cut Guarro Super Alfa 256g paper
White on white, triptych
116 x 243 cm (framed)
2016
Detail of *Redes (Nets) No.3*
Redes (Nets) No.4
María García-Ibáñez
Laser-cut Guarro Super Alfa 256g paper
White on white, diptych
80 x 234 cm (framed)
2016
Javier’s abstract landscapes, developed from textures and sculptural constructions, act like a resonance box that immerses the spectator in an experience that was unannounced. The reference to the sense of touch always present as well as his study of light behaviour.

As in his previous body of work, Javier investigates an order of natural geometry that lies in the organic world that surrounds us and that is within us. A geometry that follows principle and order and not spontaneous chaos. In Vernacula Ordinationis, the artist’s characteristic obsession comes through in thousands of folded paper elements. Void of colour, they are like miniscule flakes or wings, spiritedly rising from a reticulated pattern to play with the light.

Surprising us, however, in his new series 28 Phases, Javier reveals this natural order more purposefully, more directly. The artist uses drawing to dichotomise the complex relationship between Man and Earth, and their shared satellite. His explicit titles referring to gravity, tides and the mirroring effect of the Moon and the oceans, diverge from his previous abstract categorisation of work. It is there for us to see, the extraordinary influence the moon exerts on our globe and ourselves.

In this new attitude of directness, all the works have an intense ultramarine colour. In his characteristic style, Javier uses the qualities of a simple pencil, to alter the canvas state from solid to liquid. The reflective nature of the graphite redirects light and projects it, creating an optical effect that forces us to give a closer look in order to re-establish the concave from the convex.

The two-dimensional blue plane offers itself as the surface of an endless deep ocean that reflects light like a mirror, metaphor under which Javier interprets the reflection of man and his subconscious.
Mirror No. 3
Javier León Pérez
28 Phases Series
Graphite on acrylic
160cm diameter
2016
Marea (Tide) No.1
Javier León Pérez
28 Phases Series
Graphite on acrylic
120 x 100cm
2016
Untitled No.1
Javier León Pérez
Vernacula Ordinationis Series
Japanese paper on wood in acrylic box
80 x 60 x 8cm
2016
Mirror No. 4
Javier León Pérez
28 Phases Series
Graphite on acrylic
80 x 100cm
2016
Medium No. 3
Javier León Pérez
Japanese paper in box frame
72 x 59 x 6cm
2016
Mirror No. 6, 8 and 7. Javier León Pérez. 28 Phases Series. Graphite on acrylic. 50 x 40cm each. 2016.
Mirror No. 5
Javier León Pérez
28 Phases Series
Graphite on acrylic
196 x 66cm per panel
2016
leiunare (Rapid) No.6
Javier León Pérez
Estratum Series
Japanese paper on wood in acrylic box
80 x 60 x 8cm
2016
ANAMNESIS 1 (red and cyan)
Digital print on Canson Infinity
310gm cotton paper
101 x 82cm (framed)
Ed.1/10, 1AP
2016
ANAMNESIS 2 (black, ultramarine, cyan and yellow)
Digital print on Canson Infinity 310gm cotton paper
101 x 82cm (framed)
Ed.1/10, 1AP
2016
ANAMNESIS 3 (yellow, black and magenta)
Digital print on Canson Infinity 310gm cotton paper
101 x 82cm (framed)
Ed.1/10, 1AP
2016
María García-Ibáñez

b. Madrid, 1978

The work of María García-Ibáñez displays a simplicity of lines, purity and elegance that almost betrays the deep discourse and moral dilemmas that are embodied in her work.

Maria’s works reflect a marriage, a reconciliation between science and aesthetics, contemporary digital techniques and traditional craftsmanship, the views of the old and the ‘new’ worlds, the anatomical construction of the human body and its soul, strength and vulnerability.

Fascinated with anatomical constructions and organic forms she buried herself in the understanding of underlying structures, cells, veins, roots, anatomical and geographical maps, the different scales of the territory, issues that ultimately imply a revision of the origin, from a spatial and psychological point of view. Questioning them, dissecting them and then reconstructing their essence and layers with a deeply feminine aesthetic style.

In her past projects, Maria tackles themes related to identity as related to mobility, belonging, the different scales of the territory, issues that ultimately imply a revision of the origin, from a spatial and psychological point of view.

Drawing, is an essential part of María’s process and the base that supports her body of works. It drawing that allows her to open up a propositional discourse, which surfaces in a more or less intuitive form, that explores elements such as the ordering of the earth layers, the orography, the historical distribution of human settlements, and the histologic sections of tissues and organs, anatomy or landscape.

Maria lives between her native Spain and Mexico, where she currently works. She has participated in a number of cultural projects and has held solo and collective exhibitions in Asia, Europe and Mexico. As a young artist, she was recognised and broadly supported with several production grants including the residence grant for creators from Ibero-America supported by the main Cultural Councils and Foreign Affairs ministries of Spain and Mexico. Maria was invited to participate in Mystical Path, one of the most striking exhibitions curated by Gonzalo Ortega at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Monterrey (MARCO). In 2015, her work Molecule was one of the 65 selected works - amongst 3,487 inscribed - for the XI FEMSA Bienal, one of the most recognised biennales in the Americas.

Puerta Roja represents María García-Ibáñez in Asia since 2012.
Javier León Pérez

b. Seville, 1977

Javier’s monochromatic abstract landscapes undulate with rhizomatic movement. In his three-dimensional works, small elements of carefully folded Japanese paper interweave with each other tracing a dance, drawing the viewer into a parallel reality. As with poetry, the message is implicit, it points to a new place that opens up new possibilities.

In his paintings, drawings and sculptural paper works, the almost obsessive detailed process, and eternal repetition of small elements that cover the surface, act as a mantra, a sacred formula and deeply personal ritual for the artist. For the viewer, the first impact of the powerful colours or monochromatic pallet combined with the tactile oil, graphite or ink textures slowly move into a full aesthetic sensory experience. The eyes explore the surface and discover differences in density, quantity, as well as the games of light and shadow.

In many of his series, Javier invokes the philosophical idea of Li (理), a concept found in Neo-Confucian Chinese philosophy that refers to the underlying reason and order of nature as reflected in its organic forms. This order or “natural geometry” is spontaneously generated in the physical world and can be visible, for example, in the textured patterns that arise in the bark of trees as they grow; in the ripples of sand dunes created by the wind; in the cracks that arise in dry clay; in the undulating surface of water.

Javier lives and works in Seville, Spain. He studied at the School of Arts in Seville and a postgraduate at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He obtained the highest rating with his research “Return to the Silence”, focused on repetition of elements in painting as analogous to meditative rituals. He is the recipient of numerous awards in Spain and his work on Japanese paper was recognized in the Paper Biennial of Contemporary Art at the Museum Rijswijk in the Netherlands, and the Biennale of Contemporary Art Lalín in Spain. Javier has held multiple exhibitions across Europe, with his first solo show in Hong Kong in 2015. He has participated in art fairs in Spain, Portugal, Holland, Germany, the UK, Hong Kong, Korea, Indonesia, and Taiwan. His works have been acquired by important Spanish collections, including La Caixa Foundation and DEARTE, and by prominent collectors in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea.

Puerta Roja represents Javier León Pérez in Asia since 2014.
About the Gallery: Puerta Roja

Since its foundation in 2010 by Adriana Alvarez-Nichol, Puerta Roja has pioneered the promotion of established and emerging contemporary artists as the only gallery to specialise in Latin American and Spanish art in the region. Located in Hong Kong’s most up and coming art district, SOHO 189 Art Lane, Puerta Roja prides itself on having both a strong influence in the development of the local contemporary art scene as well as a growing footprint across Asia-Pacific.

Adriana Alvarez-Nichol is the first art dealer in Hong Kong dedicated to Latin American art in Asia Pacific and Vice-President to the Board of the HKAGA. Born in Mexico, but having spent her working life in London and around the world, Adriana has always been passionate about the artists of her homeland. As both new and established collectors look for higher quality art and greater diversification, Adriana is opening the door to Latin American and Spanish art.

Under her guidance, Puerta Roja collaborates with a wide network of renowned galleries from Latin America, Asia and Europe, independent art exhibition venues, innovative art fairs, international art dealers and non-profit art organisations. The gallery invests in the primary market, arranges for commissions, sources specific mandates and intermediates in the secondary market, primarily between Asian and Latin America private collectors.