

TRAVESIA CUATRO

Unfolded Paintings

Gonzalo Lebrija

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With Unfolded Paintings Gonzalo Lebrija continues to expand the intrinsic potential of the icon, approaching painting as a gesture that carries out architectural implications. The preceding experimentations of golden volumes belonging to the series Unfolded Gold highlighted the use of luminosity as an instrument of spatial expansion, now the pictorial medium questions the essential constitution of the icon as image.

These paintings present one of the basic elements of visual construction: verticality and ascending order. The unfolded planes exemplify how power structures and social aspirations can be depicted through a certain geometrical order. Ascension has been codified in various way, in religious art it represents the event of salvation or the pathway towards grace; other artistic movements such as Mexican muralism have identified it with social progress, presenting historical progression as a transcendental development.

Each process of ascension involves levels and some kind of hierarchical disposition, the dichotomy of the mundane and the divine, barbarity and civilization, they operate as geometrical strictures that entail human action and collective behaviors. This is represented as outlines, shadows and brightness in Lebrija's unfolding experiments, leaving behind only the margins of this notion of verticality: the tendency towards elevation and the avoidance of declination.

The paintings cannot be separated from the gestures that produced them, the simple act of trying to replicate the occurrence of flight. The traces and marks of this childish simulacrum are transformed into construction lines; the materiality of paper is substituted by the severity and formality of oil, giving place to an icon. Each work presents the trajectory from an ephemeral object becoming an autonomous image.

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Gonzalo Lebrija (Mexico City, 1972)

Gonzalo Lebrija has focused his recent work to analyze the experience of the instant, building situations in which is possible to use time as raw material. By extending the distance between past and future, the artist shows the succession of moments that culminate in the construction of a concrete event. With projects that involve registering certain actions through photography and video, Lebrija proposes temporality in two different manners, as an irremediable determination but also as an open possibility. Two notions of time that have predominated the western paradigm are forced into dialogue: time understood as a result of destiny and time as product of chaos. With previous projects Lebrija approached the subject of Mexican daily life, dissecting the social and cultural structures that support it. Through gestures that might seem naïve, the artist makes evident the contingency of institutions that provide solidity to daily life interactions; the bureaucratic dynamics are translated into childish games and the obsession with productivity derived from the capitalist ethos is reduced to the absurd.

Lebrija's work has been exhibited in various institutions in Latin America, United States and Europe. Some of his most prominent solo shows are: *Vía láctea*, Palacio de Bellas Artes de La Habana, Cuba (2016); *La sombra del zopilote*, Marfa Contemporary, United States (2015); *Measuring the Distance*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain (2015); *Unfolded*, Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Mexico (2015); *Possibility of Disaster*, Centro de las Artes de Monterrey, Mexico (2013); *Deriva especular*, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, Mexico (2011) and *The Distance Between You and Me*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada (2011). The artist has also participated in the following group shows: *¿Cómo te voy a olvidar?*, Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France (2016); *Love or the Lack of It*, Travesía Cuatro, Madrid, Spain (2015); *Habitar el tiempo*, Museo JUMEX, Mexico City, Mexico (2014); *Resisting the Present, México City 2000 – 2012*, Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico (2011) y Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (2012); *Energy Effects*, Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, United States (2007); among others. He participated in the XIII Bienal de Estambul, Turquía (2013). Gonzalo Lebrija was co-founder and co-director of the independent space OPA (Oficina para Proyectos de Arte) in Guadalajara, Mexico; the artist currently lives and works in this city.