

unequivocally functional artifacts: an umbrella, a set of keys, or a cane rests on or accompanies the sculptures as reminders of their pragmatic failure.

Surrealist echoes of René Magritte and Salvador Dalí reverberate on the walls of the gallery. Another possible reading, less infused of surrealist skies and more earthly, is one that can be established through Ikea assembly manuals; a reference that, incidentally, I also witnessed in another exhibition at the same venue but by another artist: The 2017 exhibition titled "The Ornament of the Masses" by Javier Arce also proposed useless things, although in that instance the relentless jabs at Ikea were less merciful and more literal.

Ikenaga's reconstructions refer us to constructivism because of the way she uses color and form—which connects this exhibition with another I also reviewed for this edition of the magazine: the exhibition by Andrea Canepa. Only that, while subversion, playfulness and perversion abound in the case of the show at the Galeria Rosa Santos, in Ikenaga's exhibition we simply find "another version."

In Elena Vozmediano's review of "Subtle Oblivion," the art critic warned that the exhibition would "feel a little cold to those who are not fans of geometry and constructivism." She also pointed out that it likely had to do with the few works in the exhibition space. I would suggest that it is not about quantities but about the deliberate minimal content in the pieces. In the face of so many other artistic proposals based on similar guidelines, her works are guilty of what I have already mentioned: conceptual simplicity. In this "subtle oblivion" I forget all about oblivion and I am left only with the subtle. On earlier occasions, Ikenaga has accommodated those wishing to sit on a pile of possible interpretations (like in her resounding invasion of the Tabacalera space, or in Case Encendida, both in Madrid). But here, she played a joke on us by removing the chair just before we sit on it. And, perhaps, something this simple is no longer funny.

JUAN JOSÉ SANTOS

Antonio Malta Campos F2 Galería

To return to the canvas and to the bichrome as a political gesture. Confronted with Antonio Malta's exhibition at F2 Gallery, it is worth asking whether formats in art still retain a specific connotation. Is it the same to

work on installation, on photography, or on painting? Contemporary art unfolds in a variety of devices and supports as an adaptation to a liquid modernity and the many facets of a world in the process of transformation. In this context, it is striking to enter a gallery and encounter works of art that could very well be part of the early-Twentieth Century avant-garde.

F2 Gallery is presenting the first exhibition of works by Antonio Malta Campos (São Paulo, Brazil, 1961) in Europe. The first thing grabbing our attention as we enter the white cube are the outsize formats and the black/white bichrome. These are recent works, dated 2017, comprising a set of five large-format and five smaller pieces. All of them combine the language of abstraction with the constructive values of analytical cubism. Using non-concrete spatial compositions, the shapes we see refer us to a forceful lyricism. Geometric, straight lines alternate with other more sinuous ones. All are superimposed on black grounds, with an evident connotation of heaviness and solemnity. The pictorial technique is heavily impastoed, not synthetic, in the sense that in the intermediate gradations between black and white we see grays, ochres, and ashen tones, where the traces of the brush can be neatly observed. There is clearly a defense of the language of painting *in itself*, with its own vocabulary and formal features. A tendency towards classicism is not hidden from view. The tradition is not set aside.

Antonio Malta studied Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of São Paulo. Some highlights among his most recent solo exhibitions are *Sim Galería*, in Curitiba (Brazil); *Aquarelas*, at Galeria Leme (São Paulo); or at the São Paulo Cultural Center. Among the group shows featuring his work are *Incerteza viva*, at the 32nd São Paulo Biennial in 2016; *Toda janela é um projétil, é um projeto, é uma paisagem*, curated by Paulo Miyada, and *Auroras: pequenas pinturas; Os Muitos e o Um. Arte Contemporânea Brasileira na Coleção Andrea e José Olympio Pereira*, curated by Robert Storr.

Given Malta's training as an architect, his interest in the constructive values of painting and in spatial distribution does not come as a surprise. The works on exhibit at F2 bring to mind a measured study of the compositions, the relationships between the different masses, and a desire to capture the proportions between segments and geometric lines. Color, meanwhile, acquires structural valence. We encounter works where the alternation of color is what constructs the entire surface of the canvas: white on black/black on white, giving shape to an evident visual rhythm. Other colors also come up: ochres and pink-tinged hues that lighten in

Hisae Ikenaga. *Línea amueblada* (Furnished Line), 2015. Varnished steel, wood, laminated board and vinyl leather. 124 13/32 x 78 47/64 x 141 47/64 in. (316 x 200 x 360 cm).



Antonio Malta Campos. *Máscara* (Mask), 2014. Oil on canvas. 90 35/64 x 141 47/64 in. (230 x 360 cm). © PalomaG.Dotór.



a way the exhibition's general note. Thus, from the influence of cubism and constructivism, we move to proposals of a different kind, closer to a lyrical abstraction that could be the show's most subjective aspect.

One of the most striking works in the exhibition, both for its format and its composition, is *Máscara* (Mask, 2014). It is comprised of two independent canvases, joined. The one on the right features a realistic depiction of a gas mask, and on the left we see a distorted face. We also see what could be a series of letters or graphic signs (highly characteristic of a traditional cubist vocabulary). This work was inspired by events that took place in Brazil in 2013 after a rise in the price of public transportation. The many protests that took place across the country were violently countered by the police, which only contributed to generate more social tension. The police was accused of acting with complete arbitrariness. Understood in that context, Malta's work cannot be more eloquent: it represents a situation of police repression, isolation, and alienation, where identity and communication are diffused into an indeterminate, dark, opaque space. The mask is an inevitable reference to Lygia Clark and her work around the interactions and the communication between different bodies, yet it is obvious that Clark's proposal is kept at a remove here: in Malta's case, the optimism and the lightness that are among the assumptions of Neo-concrete art are displaced by a clear allusion to violence and to the country's political situation. An artistic support, an iconography, and a chromatic display that leave no room for doubt.

ANA FOLGUERA

MAR DEL PLATA / ARGENTINA

Cristian Segura

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Mar del Plata - MAR

"X-Museum" is a site-specific project by Argentinean artist Cristian Segura (Tandil, 1976) installed in the hall of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAR) in the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina. It will remain on display for the entirety of 2018, offering during that time a few occasions in which Segura will be available in person to narrate the details of the extreme experience that he meticulously planned. It centers on a performance on the rooftop of the same museum on a windless day, which became an unsettling exploration for the artist in connection with the institutional element in art.

Exploring the architectural elements of the space, Segura designed a distribution strategy for the three giant prints encountered upon entering the museum that altered the regular use of that area. He did not use the surface of the floor and instead took advantage of the extremely high walls, transforming them into the central axis of the work. In doing so, Segura underscored their obvious function—separating the interior space from the outside space—to layer several levels of meaning that will be included in an upcoming book with three critical texts.

The idea was to perform an extreme practice known as rooftopping, consisting of hanging from the top of a very tall building with nothing but one's hands. It is part of a series produced by Segura in which he continues to explore the relationships between the museum (as architecture with social and political implications) and its institutional canonical function to house contemporary practices. Segura himself briefly, but successfully, served as director of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo of his hometown in the Buenos Aires Province, an experience that helped him define his double purpose as an artist and cultural manager.

In *Museo en llamas* (Museum in Flames, 2011) he depicted a few flames, rendered in the Pop Art style, escaping from the windows of the Art Museum of the Americas in Washington DC, located a short distance from the White House. The following year, at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Santiago, Chile, he showed *Museo en ruinas* (Museum in Ruins, 2012), which evoked the enormous power of the major earthquake that shook the Andean country. He used decomposed cyan and magenta pigments to evoke a trembling vision that was possible to observe with the use of special glasses available in the exhibition rooms.

For "X-Museum," Segura had to meticulously plan the actions because, according to the artist, "it is not a staged action because it presents a real but controlled risk." A risk he took with the help of a group of collaborators—given that the artist from Tandil had no experience in that extreme sport.

To physically challenge a building with 23-meter (75.45-feet) high concrete walls was a challenge in itself, but it was also an "agreed upon subversion," as pointed out by one of the theoreticians of the exhibition, Justo Pastor Mellado, since the institution accepted to share the risks. The museum building in Mar del Plata caused great controversy when it was unveiled to the public. The architecture of this latest grand space designed for the housing of contemporary art in Argentina stands in stark contrast to the surrounding landscape. Located by the edge of Buenos Aires's maritime coast, three large cubes stand in an area with few other tall buildings when compared to the rest of the city. However, from its interior, the space opens to the surrounding landscape and brings the "horizon inside." The formidable lobby has two opposing escalators that visually form an X—a proposition that served Segura's project. The X, which usually precedes most extreme practices, happened to be already there and only needed to be underscored with an intense red.

The sequence of actions associated with the "X-Museum" brings the walls to the forefront through the strategic recording of a performance that succeeded in showcasing their scale, the vertigo that they can provoke, and their unique vantage point. From inside, helped by the size

Cristian Segura. "X-Museum," 2017. Performance, photographic record. Photos Cristian Segura at Museo MAR. Courtesy of the artist.

