

ROMA VERSUS CARTHAGONOVA: archeology of the memory

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The journey obsession, the constant “tracking” of areas, manipulating its enclaves - historical, visual- remembering that childhood mine, as a way of approaching to oneself, is often a necessary and recurrent eagerness to provide evidence. Different interpretations of the world that would let “see further”, reveal links, hidden and unexplored ways. Maybe, “find another definition of site-transit, where the real and the virtual map superimpose, endlessly holding”¹.

Rosell Meseguer, “a tracker of vestiges and documents from the past...”², continues this coast trip, *bordering*, junctions and differences, limits and transgressions, walls and horizons, as a part of an emotional encounter with her identity and her need of rising out subsoil realities. She is talking about time as a critic way of the established order. The visual research between the Cartagena’s harbour in Spain, and the roman harbours located at Monte Testaccio and Ostia Antica in Italy – connecting comercial places of the Roman Empire situated in the Mediterranean coast- offers a significant meeting point of images. Traces, memories, from which is established a group of thoughts about society, giving a new vision of the setting.

Rome and her native Cartagena come closer, pointing out similitudes and differences. They come together, cross one each other, talk one to another, as

¹ (Michel Serres: Atlas, Ed Cátedra, Madrid, 1995, page 47, quoted by Fernando Castro Flórez in: *The ruins of the memory and the fortification of the subject* (Some ideas related to Rosell Meseguer) from the catalogue: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 63.

² Rosell Meseguer: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 67.

a registration of their autobiography transformation. A tourist postcard of the Italian Mediterranean coast and an anonymous photography of Cartagena, belong to these approaches. Both images are quite similar: shape, countryside, sea entrance and way out. She makes a research about the history of both places through social and historical changes – the amphoras that travelled from the Mediterranean Spanish coasts towards the harbours of Rome, full of food and oil, as far as the tourism boom, born during the 60's- this leads the artist, to recover and work with fragments as old postcards, maps, photographs..."A group of recreated real images, a tower of images which constitute a living evidence of a symbolic and changing reality"³.

The wish to explore a memory that talk about us, in its own social and cultural subject, goes with a need of divide space and time, creating new places, as a continuation of those outings. The ones that touched the salt of the salt mines and the dockyards, drew her initially to explore the subworlds and the sea coast...⁴

Four artist books - gold, silver, red and bronze- talking about visual links through history and social movements between both Mediterranean areas. Gold book: old anonymous postcards with an evocative black & white contrast – Italian and Spanish Mediterranean coast photographs- Silver book: beautiful and delicate cyanotypes images of mediterranean plants, used during roman times with a medical and decoration purpose. Red book: anonymous color

³ Rosell Meseguer: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa, Fundación Antonio Pérez, Cuenca, mayo 2003, page 27. Quoted by Fernando Castro Flórez in: *The ruins of the memory and the fortification of the subject* (Some ideas related to Rosell Meseguer) from the catalogue: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 63.

⁴ Rosell Meseguer: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 67.

postcards about tourism during the 70's to the 80's. Bronze book: recreation of maps – Rome, roads to the coast, inverted Pompeii- using collage, wax and crayon on paper.

She uses traditional techniques – XIX Century photographic procedures-. Photography, with a relevant presence in the last twenty years of contemporary art, has been perhaps, one of the best instruments to talk about the social cacophony and the psychology of a group that moves in time and space towards virtually⁵.

Photography, is mixed up with other medias as installation, collage, drawing, dvd projection and light boxes. The elimination of limits in a concept way, is combined with the mixing up of different techniques as one of the most important contribution to photography in contemporary art: the idea of freedom and the erase of topics, limits and exclusions⁶.

Roma versus Carthagonova is an important point in this transforming process of an expressive language that involves a distant history review -. “Revising the past history as well as her own subconscious ideas, she explores elliptically the memory of her own feelings”⁷, as a particular way of thinking about the universe that encloses us. The accumulation of metaphors, “related to these military spaces- writes Rosell Meseguer- currently abandoned, articulate themselves as an archive of deserted images, abandoned places...⁸; there is a contrast between the complex and isolated reality shown at natural environments – idilic landscapes of the Mediterranean coast- and built views of massification during the tourism boom of the 70's and 80's – the *touristism* of our past and present-. “The abandoned fortifications are the negative space of time dominated by stupidity, the moment when different bands clinged on to banality. The violence

⁵ Marta Gili: “La fotografía en el final de sus días”: Primavera Fotográfica. Suplemento del Periódico del Arte nº 33, Madrid, mayo 2000, p. 9.

⁶ Rosa Olivares: “La fotografía como método”: Exit Express, Suplemento Especial para Arco 2003, p. 22.

⁷ Fernando Castro Flórez in: *The ruins of the memory and the fortification of the subject* (Some ideas related to Rosell Meseguer) from the catalogue: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 63.

⁸ Quoted by Fernando Castro Flórez, opus cit. p. 60.

of real life which isn't faced in postmodern ideas drives us to camouflage ourselves and we become negative accomplices"⁹.

Rosell Meseguer recuperates the track, a breath full of lyricism -the poetry of the fragile, nature against the threatening existences-. She rebuilds the map, transforming the countryside, working on the geography itself, re-thinking areas and universes as a contemporary tendency of researching cartographies. "The map as an earth writing. That geography exercise that belongs, exclusively, to the big operations of circumnavigation and discovering, conquest and cartography, colonization (...)"¹⁰.

Italian maps talking about the Spanish Mediterranean coast, as expressions of reordering psycho-geographies, new ways, discoveries; new maps that would renew them all. "Without a place, autoexiled, the artist searches another place, a new model, and that research makes up an spontaneous nomade space. This space is a land full of double meaning and double entries. The figure and the space that the land occupies, in action and image, are changing constantly, as urban air sweep the leaves away, as the pages from a novel"¹¹.

This project begins with the descent during the artist's childhood to a mine; a real labyrinth of galleries¹², where we still find her searching events related to transforming landscapes. She is constantly looking for, "showing her elliptical portrait", from "the land art bunker to the enigmatic ruins". Rosell Meseguer's art work, talks about survive, relocation; a way that projects itself further on the horizon, changing our reality perception.

⁹ Fernando Castro Flórez in: *The ruins of the memory and the fortification of the subject* (Some ideas related to Rosell Meseguer) from the catalogue: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 62.

¹⁰ Iván de la Nuez: "Cartografías de la aventura urbana": Personal geographies & Wellcome to the show. Consol Rodríguez, Pagés Espai d Art, march, 2006, without page.

¹¹ Bruce W. Ferguson: "Creaciones inquietas": Francis Alÿs. Walks/Paseos, Ed. Travesías Nuevos escenarios: los 90, México D.F., 1997, p. 60.

¹² Rosell Meseguer: Batería de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II, Ayuntamiento de Cartagena, octubre 2005, page 67.

