

Affectionate Paintings

Being invited to exert the role of “organizer” of the 2002 end of year exhibition at MUBE, which presented the work done in the courses, I first came into contact with the work of Bettina Vaz Guimaraes.

One could notice that in that diverse group, some already demonstrated a search for a unique form of expression, in the midst of the plurality of experimentations that these courses offer, Bettina was one of these students who ‘stood out’ for what she presented me.

The first impression I had, was that the painting was a source of pleasure to the creator, expressing feelings and intimate desires belonging to her and to our time. A universe which had on the mined camp of her canvas a deposit for her affectionate archive of images and symbols of the day to day.

There is something primitive in her paintings, like the form of recording the world through symbols of the contemporary bonding together in an apparently random form on her canvas.

The artist talks of her affectionate memory through her heart and has, as a means of expression, frugal objects which she collects on the day to day which make a part of her paintings. Like drawings of uncommitted observations, with precious outlines, ranging from a simple and “useless” plastic water bottle which in some way, in this action Bettina has dissected in her meaningful art structure. Even an arm chair that rests statically and solitary in the middle of the pictorial field of her canvas, expresses temporarily the conflicts of our time.

Without the guidance of intellectualism and, her art work manifests itself in a simple manner; through pure emotions of the day to day and through the subjective universe, proper of art, which in it’s own turn communicates objectively with the public.

The artistic result of this “observation” exercise could be understood as landscapes or nature, affectionately dead. The pastel colored background, hot in images is nebulous, without much tonal variation creating a desolate melancholic “landscape”. The thin stains in some areas of the canvas reveal the lines that have been erased by the many layers of paint.

Presently, the pastel tones give way to a dark background which is almost an abyss for the drawings, that wonder through the canvas maintaining a rustiness of lines, “crude” and vigorous, common to her first works of art, a purely pictorial decision of the artist.

The dead nature or landscape of the memory are formed by plastic water bottles, kitchen objects, toys, images of saints, glass vases (cups, bottles, jars) which possess a precious air, that refines the canvas, or an air of memory (which may belong to her mother, one of her daughters or friends house.) To this universe of objects join serene daily situations like a woman who waits seated on a bench in the middle of nothing or what would be a garden, a dog which “observes” the emptiness in front of him. That is to say, the simple things which one can observe, in the lives of those who permit themselves to contemplate the world. With emotion.

In a way it is like this that I believe, think and write about art, that there is no possible art without emotion. It is this that Bettina presents us in her first individual exhibition in the city of São Paulo, in a special moment which realizes a new revival in the interest of painting.

Ricardo Resende

São Paulo, 29 de março de 2004.