



Ratia, Alejandro; art critic, curator of exhibitions.

"The sincerity of the simulacrum".

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Maria Antònia Casanovas, who knows Rosa Cortiella very well, defines her as multifaceted, restless and curious. "Through transgression -she tells us about her- and, without ever moving away from tradition, she cultivates ambiguity and equivocation". He also cites her obsession with color, which leads her to use "always new" shades, "sometimes acid and garish, sometimes soft and warm". All these characteristics were present in Reversibles, the work with which she won the first prize at CERCO in 2006, a set of three pieces with a pop and playful air, but which contained a deep and wise reflection on ceramics itself, its ancestral and current uses, on the ambiguities of the concave and the convex, the interior and the exterior. Somehow, he had created rebellious and impudent vessels, which happily showed their interior.

Another of the authors who have written about Rosa Cortiella, Antonio Vivas, warns that the evolution of her artistic narrative "is certainly surprising, they are works of great freshness that in some cases are close to a clear, almost provocative, uninhibited work. Vivas highlights the multidisciplinary nature of his creations, "where he borrows the most diverse materials that, combined with ceramics, provoke new sensations, we are talking about the most outstanding ones, vehicles of light by means of fiber optic threads, iron as the faithful friend of clay, copper wire for the contrast of rough or smooth surfaces, the vividness of color of a rainbow that gives us his use of acrylic colors and photographic or silkscreen images that give a more detailed and intimate narrative, not to mention the use of rubber, paper or metal with the faithful company of stoneware, earthenware or chamotte clay pastes".

Hybridization and humor are important to Rosa Cortiella. In her projects she always avoids solemnity, but she avoids it as much as triviality. Her plastic art is of a promiscuous (and paradoxical) purity. As in *Reversibles*, she tends to turn both forms and ideas upside down. The fact that his medium is ceramics is not anecdotal. Ceramics has the gift of transforming itself, it is the most protean discipline. It can take any shape and simulate any texture, a quality that the industry takes advantage of, without any prejudice. "You are absolutely right," she confesses, "in that I love to play with the spectator, to trick the senses, to make rigid pieces seem soft, to make them move, to make them look like drawings... to give them the opportunity for multiple readings... to walk among the installations, to go through them: I think art has that marvelous capacity. His concern for the receiver of the messages, who will become an actor or explorer in his exhibitions, is something that is becoming increasingly important. His assemblies, his installations end up being like a small tamed jungle, or wild garden where to get lost and find the thread of a meaning. "If you give it all away, what role can the spectator have?" the artist asks herself.

The pieces she brings to this collective have that open and multidisciplinary, intelligent and intriguing sense that characterizes her. *Como en casa* (No place like home) plays, first of all, with the alluded confusion between appearance and reality, the softness of the cushion or stool that is offered to us is a simulacrum (tactile

perception transformed into an icon). But it also speaks to us of the tradition of the decorative arts, of ornament as a scheme prone to infinite propagation, a healthy ontological humility that would contrast with the pretension of singularity of a supposedly serious art. The carpet feigned by the decoration in stoneware on artificial grass, prolonged in the appearances of a mirror, speaks of another type of art, which is fiction but necessary and practical fiction, which you can transport as the nostalgia of home, as opposed to the useless and categorical idea of serious Art.

It will come as no surprise that another of Rosa Cortiella's proposals is entitled *Las apariencias engañan* (Appearances can be deceiving). In a tradition that starts with cubist collage and passes through Pop and the synthetic materials of Richard Artschwager, we are presented (once again) with a simulated grass surface, reproduced in vinyl. On this fake ground there are stones that are also fake, delicately faked in ceramic. Cleverly, the artist confronts us with two varieties of simulacrum that, in sociological and aesthetic terms, are polar opposites. The first is a mechanical imitation that tends to be despised, a cheap imitation that only children and simple people accept; the second is an artisan reproduction that is valued, a priori, more than the original, because it brings the added value of the ceramist who has made it with her hands. As much as it is self-critical, this work is poetic, because the stones, when reproduced, or rather, when they are the object of the attention of a portraitist, come to life.

Ikebana is a piece of simple appearance and smaller size (in the ceramic tradition of the harmless bibelot). Let us not be fooled, or rather, let us be fooled by its appearances, again. The first thing we notice is that the piece is composite, that it is several objects in one. And one of them is not ceramic, it is an intruder, an articulated wooden dummy, one of those used to learn to draw. The bouquet of forms that the artist has made is not, however, the fundamental thing, it is only the raw material to

fake on the wall, with the help of a spotlight, a huge shadow, which threatens us like a monster, and where the different elements are confused.

As we have seen so far, titles are an important part of Rosa Cortiella's works. She does not miss the opportunity to play with them. The title of the last work I will comment on, unlike the others, is impossible to understand without help, because its key is autobiographical. When Rosa Cortiella was a child, she liked sparkling water more than still water, which is not surprising given her artistic evolution, and at home she was told that she liked sparkling water because it was water with holes in it. *Los agujeros del agua, Els forats de l'aigua*, is a lyrical piece. I take this title," he explains, "as a metaphor for all that the imagination represents". This flying imagination is associated with the envied wings of animals. They can be of small insects, similar to the fairies of fairy tales. Although words can also be examined with a magnifying glass and show something similar to scales or membranes: letters. On the wall are arranged circles of exquisite majolica surface with their tattooed images; another circle rests on the floor, like a seminal element. With a new sense of optimism, Rosa Cortiella appreciates in the emptiness, in the bubbles of the blank surface, the excuse for reverie. The fact that the images are either fragmentary or repetitive - in the form of an ornamental scheme, like her garland of dragonflies - leads us back to the principle of intelligent modesty, to the flight from ostentation

(rhetorical or sentimental ostentation) that characterizes this artist.