

### The Duellists, Omar Pascual

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(a few notes on a project by ENRIQUE MARTY)

...to D'Hubert and Feraud,  
the duellists...

In the year 1977, when Enrique Marty turned ten, exactly ten years before his life began to grow towards what it is today, an artistic career full of (visual —and mental—) violence and fast productivity, the film maker Ridley Scott, then in his forties (born in South Shields, England, in the year 1937), embarked on his career as film director with the movie *The Duellists*, an extraordinary debut that won Scott none other than the Golden Lion Award for Best First Work at Cannes Film Festival in that same year. I find this piece of information extremely interesting because, in my opinion, the fact that, thirty years later, Enrique Marty, the artist from Salamanca, (two years before turning forty), invites us to the opening (and/or should I say premiere?) of his piece-show *Duelo* [*Duel*] is a revealing coincidence. With *Duelo* the artist starts his career as an 'animated film maker' (director, producer, editor, screenwriter and cartoonist) presenting us with a multimedia artwork of an installation character —also called *Duelo*.

Is it just fate, or a premonitory sign of a successful future path? ...Like Ridley's.

A unique piece. A unique piece which is conceptually solid and skilfully executed, combining three of the most characteristic features of Marty's work: the (almost obsessively) repetitive and reinterpretative treatment of the photographic or videographic image (in this case: stills from one of his own videos), the description of domestic —but not domesticated— life, and the almost mechanical use and abuse of handicraft, pre-Modern Art techniques (= Painting and/or Watercolour).

*Duelo* (the animation piece) is a work comprised of 1.216 watercolours on paper, 14,7 X 19,5 cm each, and a video installation consisting in the projection of his short film, for which the artist has 'animated' the 1.216 watercolours, also present in the room in a tautological gesture, as a kind of obsessive re-writing. In this piece, Marty has the courage to recreate himself by going over his own work and reinterpreting it. I am referring here to the double-screen videographic work *Duelo* of the year 2004-2006, in which the artist has filmed his father and mother while they were firing several gunshots: a metaphor of the kind of relationship married life inevitably leads to, a constant duel, of greater or lesser intensity... but always a duel.

However, what most impacts and maybe interests me in this work Marty is now showing us for the pleasure of our eyes is its evident neo-Romantic cynicism. Why do I point out this aspect? Because I think it is very meaningful that, when he decides to go over his own steps to 're-create' one of his pieces as a closed project for a solo show, he does so by painting his watercolours in the most artisanal and virtuoso Mannerist style.

In a recent conversation with an artist, we were comparing 'the act of Painting with the act of Love Making', and, vulgarising it, we went as far as to say that painting could 'degrade' itself to become the act of animal brutality that is to simply 'have sex'; for example, I believe that Pollock, sometimes, simply had sex, pure and simple sex, with some of his paintings. On the contrary, after seeing Marty's watercolours and being aware of the laborious execution process used in each one of them in order to achieve a global vision —always with a cinematographic narrative —, a vision which is more narrative than poetic, but, also, more poetic than an hyper-immediate Polaroid photo... And, moreover, noticing how, in this case, the watercolours have been put forward in the form of a summation: 'animated'... 'hand-made'... I have come to another conclusion.

Artists who devote part of their efforts to the painstaking support and medium of watercolour —that medium which, all of a sudden, the fluctuating waters of the art market have brought back into fashion, due to its visual effectivity, its descriptive ability and its apparently illustrative candid beauty— are 'onanists'. Yes, I have said and written 'onanists', that is: natural born masturbators, wankers, tossers. Because there, in the reductionist intimacy of watercolour, in the patience and precision it requires, in the level of meticulousity it reaches, what we have, rather than narrative control of the pictorial language, is an immediate and most intimate psychomotor control. Thanks to this psychomotor control, the hand is used primarily to efficiently execute a mental state or impulse. And —going back to the story— this is what makes *Duelo* so brilliant: the fact that it perfectly becomes a shot of sperm —of metaphorical sperm— that goes straight into our eyes. A shot fired in an almost pornographic and humorous way, making a mockery of our old-fashioned patriarchal understanding of concepts as ambiguous nowadays as family, marriage... or love?

So there you have it. It's love, pure love. Or as stated above, isn't love just that, simply... an eternal duel?

Omar-Pascual Castillo.  
Ciudad Real, Spain.  
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