



El quadern robot

Monday, May 10, 2021

Walking along the fine line



At first glance, the photographs of Amparo Fernández that are part of the “[Lotus flower](#)” series –a selection of which is currently being exhibited in [el quadern robot gallery](#)– could appear to be abstract photographs. In fact, this was the first impression we had on seeing them for the first time. But a closer look made us discover something else. As [Llorenç Raich](#) observed, during his visit to the exhibition, Amparo Fernández walks along the fine line that separates realistic from abstract photography. Her photographs do not depart from reality, they do not deliberately abandon the reproduction of visible objects, on the contrary: it is what the camera records that her photographs reproduce.

The history of photography runs parallel to that of other artistic movements. From the beginning, [abstraction](#) appeared as one more possibility for the photographic medium. Photography could not only reproduce reality objectively, but transcend it seeking other expressive purposes. At the beginning of the 20th century, a series of movements emerged that investigated in this sense. The British [vorticists](#), with [Langdom Coburn](#) and [Ezra Pound](#), invented the “[vortoscop](#)”, a tool made up of mirrors that formed a prism that fractured the surface to be photographed. The kaleidoscopic effect made the object to be photographed disappear completely. The French photographer [Pierre Dubreuil](#), took some photographs following the same reasoning as the artists of Cubism, fragmenting reality and presenting several points of view at the same time. [László Moholy-Nagy](#), introducer of the teaching of photography at the [Bauhaus](#), was at the genesis of the [New Vision movement](#), and was the author of photographs that border on abstraction. In the 1920s, [Man Ray](#) would perform the “[rayogrammes](#)”: he placed objects on photosensitive papers and projected light on them. These images, taken without a camera, are an example of how experimentation with the techniques of photography also found its translation within the [surrealist movement](#). Later, [Brassaï](#), with his graffiti photographs, dialogued with the same language used by the abstract expressionism of the 1940s or 1950s. Similarly, we could find parallels between [Běla Kolářová’s](#) photographs and other works of the [kinetic movement](#) or of [op art](#). From the 60s, some of [Elsworth Kelly’s](#) photographs could also dialogue with the presuppositions of [minimalist](#)

In this very quick historical review, we see that, from the beginning, photography has sought new plastic results, and that many of these authors followed the line that, despite the investigation, did not leave the reality aside. Amparo Fernández's photographs travel along this line, as they seek a balance between chance and control. Our photographer knows what she is looking for, but she lets reality surprise her (at random). The subject (the lotus flower) does not become an end either, but a medium, just like the technology she uses. Her purpose –perhaps– is a transcendental approach to nature, in the manner of the American poet [Emily Dickinson](#). See how the smallest things (water fleas, tadpoles, little algae) collude with the greatness of the world and the universe.

Posted by Anna Belsa at 7:31 PM

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The stories of this blog have two things in common: they all take place, directly or indirectly, in a contemporary art gallery and they are all real.

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