

David Ymbernon

Visual and performing artist

“With a Madelman you can do things that are not childish at all”

● Possessed by the orange colour. And by the effects and affections of a world of small objects. It is the soul of ‘Latung La La, poems and epics’, his new exhibition at El Quadern Robot gallery



David Ymbernon (Igualeda, 1972) in the Barcelona gallery El Quadern Robot (Còrsega, 267) ■ ORIOL DURAN

Maria Palau
BARCELONA

Where does the obsession with orange come from?

After my father's death [the artist Alvar Ymbernon] in 2015, I read many psychology books to know myself and to be able to face things that I had never faced before. It helped me to understand better the roots of my work. I had a tough childhood, marked by the troublesome divorce of my parents. In an adverse environment, children tend to develop a very creative imagination. I built a world with my own fantasy within which I took refuge. The orange colour, which came out in my adolescence, helped me to channel this powerful parallel reality. It made me feel free to do whatever I wanted.

Artist since when?

There has always been artistic activity in my life. Since I was little, my father made me participate in his creative process. We were struggling financially

and on weekends we attended speed painting prizes to earn some money. When I was eight years old, I won the second prize in the contest in the Font Vella neighborhood, in Igualeda. They changed the bases so that it could not happen again.

What impact has your father's death had on your art?

It was a hard hit. Perhaps it has affected my gaze towards objects in a more transcendent sense. This year, within the festival ‘El Més petit de tots’, we performed ‘La odissea de Latung La La’ –it was a success, next year we will do many other performances–. Here in the exhibition, I present some photographs with a black background, which had not appeared before in my plastic work.

One of its great references is the poet Carles Hac Mor. When did you meet him?

He held a lecture on Dadaism when I was studying painting in Tàrrrega. The following year, having already finished my studies, I met him in Barcelona

on the street. When I told him my last name, he was stunned: it turns out that his father and my grandfather were close friends and, furthermore, we had a distant kinship. I admired him. His poetry also has the game as background, he was not afraid of anything. He lived his work as I live mine: as a personal growth.

This playful component is not always well understood in art. You elevate your child's toys to work.

Toys, as my grandmother's bobin lace –another important figure in my life– or any other object are tools. Objects are words. I was a bad student and objects were my language to express feelings. When I was six years old I had an accident and I was in bed for a year. I know what can be learned by playing. I do not have any prejudice. With a Madelman you can do things that are not childish at all. Now I have a problem: I have already used all my Madelmans. And I search for new ones desperately. If anyone has one, I would pact

an exchange.

What objects seduce you the most?

I am guided by the same impulse of a child, who takes an object for its visual attraction, without knowing its usefulness.

His home and even his own family are also raw material –I dare not say objects– of his shows. His life is his work of art.

Since babies, my sons Dadá and Daida have dressed in orange clothes, they have brushed their teeth with orange brushes and washed their hair with orange shampoos. They have grown older, they are 15 and 13 years old. Now they buy their own clothes. I asked them that if they wanted to change the color of our house, which of course is also orange, but they didn't. They feel part of this work of art. They have always collaborated with enthusiasm and in a natural way in the shows. When they are asked to play theater in the school they run away because they say that they are not actors. Playing

theater is embarrassing for them! They are both very creative. And it makes me happy because creativity is an heritage that always accompanies you. It is the same good memory that my father left me, what I want to leave them.

Whose is the watch in the magnificent work at the entrance to the exhibition?

It is my grandfather's watch: Andrés Ymbernon. Carles Hac Mor's father's friend. Quite a character. He was military, from a military saga that reaches to Inverness, Scotland. My father was the first to not continue. He was on both sides of the Spanish Civil War. Cult, extraordinary draftsman, saved the Seu Vella de Lleida from many plunder and was one of the founding members of the Institut d'Estudis Ilerdencs. On April 21 we will explain it in an exhibition. I will be the commissioner. We will show his personal files, which the family have deposited in the Lleida Historical Archive. It will be the first thing I will do with love without the orange color.

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