

WALKING THE CITY AND DRAWING ITS UNCERTAINTIES

Magaly Espinosa

Nestor Siré is a delirious, restless artist. His obsessions exude creation, as if it were impossible to exist without it. He moves between works in process, installations, relational works and video creations. He appeals to one or another combining them or separately, according to the needs of each artistic project.

He was one of the guests of the *Twelfth Havana Biennial*, with the work *Combos de Video*, where he summarized his experience in socially oriented video creation aimed at activating the social network.

In the art that is made in our context using video, social and cultural themes appear repeatedly as guiding lines of the works. Daily life seems to be one of the strongest stimuli for young artists, both regarding customs, habits and beliefs and the oral language that always seems to dominate the popular scene.

Nestor's video production up to 2014 comprises approximately twenty-seven works based on experiences of a reality that exceeds the most extraordinary imagination. The first of these series was called *Paquete de videos. Reconstrucción de ideología* (Video Package. Ideology Reconstruction) (2009-2013). It consisted of a fifteen interactive video multimedia that the viewer could choose to see. They were pieces that combined two elements: the *Package* and the ideology. The former refers to a social communication process that has invigorated Cuban daily life.¹ The latter is a trick to



rated as *Combos de Video* to the Weekly Package in several of its sections; the other one, somewhat more complex, comprised successive steps that granted the piece a relational character. With this purpose he created a link with private workers selling audiovisuals and music disks. The disks were distributed to these workers in fifteen sales points of the capital, in the municipalities of Habana Vieja, Centro Habana and the neighborhood of Vedado and handed out freely. Previously during the Biennial, some participants received a postcard with the information of the sales points where the videos could be found. A corner of the card was torn off when the viewer received them.

Such procedure was important for Nestor, since it enabled him to turn the work into an object of true social exchange, reproducing the same circulation aesthetics surrounding it. It was then not a matter of just showing pieces in this format, but of taking advantage of an established circulation form and of inventing another one that actively involved the attendants to the event, who could enter into an emerging sector of the city. [...] ▲

¹ ...It abridges and distributes audiovisual materials – films, documentaries, TV series, novels, music videos, music and humoristic shows... It is updated weekly throughout the country... and circulates underground... (Note taken from the catalogue of the work.)

² Email interview with the artist by Rigoberto Otaño, April 2015.

Todo para vender, Banksy en La Habana



approach us to beliefs and customs that are part of the world values of that life. The documentation or registration, from this point of view, is close to the New Documentary of photographic trend, since reality is not documented respecting the events but through metaphors that search into their meanings and the concepts that sustain reality. [...]

Los Combos are divided into four themes totaling twenty-six works: *El clave*, composed by seven pieces; *Juegos infantiles* (Children's Games), by six; *Utilidad del arte* (Usefulness of Art), by seven, and *Nuevas alternativas* (New Alternatives), by six. The methodology for their creation often lies in taking advantage of chance, of what appears in midst of the filming. That is why the artist's knowledge is sought, as representative of his social environment, with his learned glance, capable of penetrating the non-evident, the hidden intricacies of reality. This procedure shows scenes of domestic or state inventions to solve problems such as brewing coffee using peas, easy-to-make seals used in some state

institutions to ensure the security of the facilities, or images of children's games in the streets. With sharpness he approaches different forms in which art becomes daily life; an example is one of the large placards announcing the Eleventh Havana Biennial used as top of a taxi bike. Almost imperceptibly one observes two dogs running away with meat chunks in their mouth: they were the remains of the food used by artist Hermann Nitsch in his performance during that same Biennial. The cycle ends with the theme of the alternative economy, with views of clothing and perfume sales, or of jobs like the cleaning of kitchen pots.

They are short works that resume details of subsistence, instants of sporadic events combining their value as memory supports and as documents: «... Perhaps art is only a mechanism struggling against oblivion, so that we do not forget to question the daily and what happened yesterday...».²

Another specific aspect of this proposal is the way in which it circulated in two ways: one incorpo-

nestor SIRE
 todo para vender
 banksy en la habana



NANO, Muestra Colectiva Colateral. 12 Bienal de La Habana.



artprice

el único banksy vivo en cuba

