

Nieto: Linguistic chaos

Tearing the Mouth of Language





Controversial Colombian artist Luis-Ferdinand Nieto Peralta Adams del Rio Siete Colores started out as a religious student but soon found a deeper inspiration in natural sciences, linguistics and psychoanalysis. Influenced by the theories of the Latin American philosopher Francisco Flores he founded in his home country an artistic movement called 'El Perversionismo', culminating in a fictional documentary featuring Marcel Flores, a member of the perversion movement, who in the name of art made clandestine artistic creations. Andrés Dávila (bacanika.com) described the film as '...a sarcastic vision of art, a little affected but clearly humorous.' *Trebucher* asked this mysterious yet playful artist about his relationship to depicting people and portraiture.

"Well, in my artwork portraiture is not a main topic, but I have made some pieces of 'depicting' people somehow. My own work process is quite complex with many conceptual layers, so it could become quite indigestible. However here is an example:

It is a portrait of an unknown man 'a man and chihuahua'. It's a nod to the Yves Klein's Anthropometries. The result of this piece come from another portrait I made of an artist called Marcel Flores, who painted a painting using a dead body of a man cut in half as a stamp. This artist came from a bigger project called 'The Perversionism', an artistic movement I invented.

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THE FIGURE OF A PAINTING COULD
BECOME A SELF-PORTRAIT BUT
TAKING THE SHAPE OF A WORM

Another example would be the sculpture *Ramus Velato*. It's a portrait of an art collector called Ramus del Rondeaux. This sculpture is a nod to the 'gisants', European sculptural portraits of dead royals. This sculpture is the result of a video performance, also related to the bigger project of Perversionism and Marcel Flores.

"Any painting is a self-portrait." To what extent is that true and what does this say about portraiture? I think in our day, art has arrived at a point where there is no more sense or rules to anything.

We contemporary artists are what I call 'confetti sweepers' by which I mean the Party of Art is over now and we are just executing the nasty job of picking up the debris of what our ancestors created.

So this is how even the idea of portrait could take many different shapes and directions. It would depend on which chunk of art history debris is inspiring us. For example, if I'm inspired by medieval philosophy, the representation of a portrait should be almost abstract, following the theories of neo-Platonism or the dissimilarity in figuration by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

The figure of a painting could become a self-portrait but taking the shape of a worm, or just the black stains on a piece of white marble.



Daichi Portrait 4, 2019

What is the relationship between the subject and the painter?

Again, this relationship would depend on the influence the painter is taking from the stack of confetti. The painter could be constrained by his eyes, like the period where the lens appears as a tool for painter, or could be inspired by a more complicated theory of inaccessible 'reality', taking his own eyes away from the subject. When the human eye works like a camera lens, this means it's just an aberration and a narrow visual interpretation from reality.

What is the power of portraiture over photography?

Here you go, the power of portrait in painting would become more interesting when the painter tries to capture that reality behind what he is watching. That's why all the portraits from the medieval and antique periods feel so powerful, compared to photography, or any 'photorealistic' painting using lens techniques. Because they capture something more about the person than what we simply see.

Modern artists from the late 19th century onwards break with that silly technique from the Renaissance period of using lenses to capture portraits. And after photography appears, there is no sense in continuing to paint that way.

Cézanne, Picasso and the others, and later Francis Bacon, should come back looking into the medieval debris to find this ideal of 'dissimilarity' whereby the reality of this person in front of me, who I can't get access to, could be materialised on the canvas.

Do you feel that photography has replaced portraiture?

Effectively, it can totally replace any portrait which is painted using the lens, video projection or photographic references for the painter.

What is your relationship to photorealism?

I think I have already answered this question above. I think as far as there is no interpretation of reality



Vue d'exposition, Apocalypse de Nieto (ou ébauches d'un thaumaturge constipé), 2016

other than the same aberration that lenses can create, that there is no art interested in doing this, other than showing very impressive skills but without any core.

Like getting into a racing car without an engine.

I think portraits never were just for the wealthy; even back in olden times. Jesus was very poor and still the blockbuster of portraits until today.

A portrait becomes more interesting than a photograph or photorealistic painting, because there is an interpretation of reality.

I don't think we can talk about a 'contemporary painting' because in contemporary work there is no movement any more. It will depend on the reference that this painter is taking from art history.

How do you consider the relationship between the sitter and the painter? What's in it for them? Immortality?
It depends on the context. Maybe the models Caravaggio used just wanted the money, not necessarily the immortality.

Do portraits have to be of people?
I guess so, because that is the original definition of a 'portrait': a representation of a person, never, say, animal or tree.

What is the future of portraiture?
I don't know.

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