

That which is Universal cannot be expressed in its purity More than when the individual does not obstruct the way.

MONDRIAN, “La nouvelle plastique dans la peinture”

Anyone familiar with the trajectory of Fernando Varela will have already confronted the reductionist process that has been an integral part of his work for some time now.

A communicative, chromatic, and representative reduction. In this exhibit, the only reference to reality are the letters of an apparently meaningless language.

The complexity of his budgets is proportionally opposed to the simplicity of the formal aspect of his work. In this sense, his current work comes the very closest possible to what is the minimal language. It avoids all traditional aesthetic taste, actually producing a sharp distancing from these traditional values, initiating a process of absolute self-absorption and embarking upon the search for the true “reality,” marginalizing all appearances. In this case, the results are to be seen through a number of works of art in which the intellectual content is far more important than the message possibly perceived by the spectator’s senses. This is a real approximation to the lineaments of conceptual art.

In the works of Varela, this process of deep introspection and self-absorption requires a number of audacious observers, each inclined towards seeking out the transcendental qualities of his aesthetic proposals in the exquisite features of the details of his work, as well as in its breathtaking simplicity.

The words, or rather the letters, along with the vast silence that permeates the work, bring to mind a complete lack of interest in pre-conceived forms. These are the works of art of a perfectionist, elaborated with the starkly controlled passion that requires a measured physical force, particularly in the hammering of the letters over the linen cloth, and the subtleness of the very same action performed on paper. A similar dexterity in the control of the different intensities of the chromatic gradations is evident. The sobriety of such dexterity brings the work very close to the minimalism as well.

Traditional supports or mediums (cloth, paper, wood), all of which feature a stark economy of forms, reveal themselves before the onlooking spectator that, in an attempt to capture the variety of semantic meanings everpresent, initiates a silent dialogue with the work of art; notwithstanding the silence of his or her words.

“La Palabra Callada,” or “The Silent Word,” picks up the reflections on the recent works of Fernando Varela. The Museum of Modern Art is honored by being able to host the exhibit of such a passionate artist of great stylistic maturity, one that has come to be recognized as one of the maximum representatives of the Dominican Republic’s plastic arts.

Thanks to the León Group for its important contribution to the realization of this exhibit, once again reaffirming its traditional position in the patronage of the national arts. María Elena Ditrén Director of the Museum of Modern Art.

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