

**AHORA.** About Primera Línea, by Fernando Prats.

federico galende

If anything characterizes Chile, both naturally and culturally, it is an indomitable energy, which works not as much as a force transported in the network but as the extreme outbreak of the animal that stretches. Geysers, tsunamis, alluviums, earthquakes and volcanoes in eruption make up the sublime feature of a culture in which nothing is considered perennial and in which, therefore, an experiment as unique as that of the democratic path to socialism could turn, suddenly, in a totally unpredictable way, towards the abject laboratory in which the first recipes of neoliberalism were tested. In this aspect Chile is a country of loose moments, ruins and crossroads, of mnemonic swirls that suddenly jam the sedative course of history. This means that their different ages are not articulated by a causal link, but by a series of mysterious sensitive correspondences. They are sediments of times that, like the one that retain the eyes of their volcanoes or the backs of their tectonic plates, suddenly agglutinate an unexpected sparkle.

To this alludes “Chile woke up”, the slogan that, starting on October 18th 2019, began to run through the streets and squares of the country like a trail, unexpectedly upholstered by a crowd that emerged from the most diverse corners to dust off a forgotten language - the language of dignity - and staging the creative moment of a destitute power. At least here is an example of how a particular moment that was considered buried or remote - that of the years of Salvador Allende and Popular Unity - joins a later one - the creative moment of the crowd - snatching a time beggar to the tedious syntax of the story. Time stops happening, and instead it becomes spatialized and shares in the immanence of a community of bodies that define from themselves the way of being together. It is the moment of politics, although this moment is also that of art, because if something shares art and politics it is precisely this game of destruction/construction of unpublished or unthinkable communities.

This is what the work of the artist Fernando Prats seems to exhibit, that work has consisted since its inception in capturing that particular moment in which certain

materials in rebellion (physical, geographical, domestic) knot each other releasing the mnemonic energy of the country. We perceive it in a palpable way in this new show, *Primera Línea*, a kind of small visual atlas in motion in which fragments of texts, images, slogans, emblems and bodies shape the hectic days of a community that shows the artistic moment that precedes both the script of the story, and that which is characteristic of aesthetic work.

The visual daily example that Prats traces -pictorial itself and articulated by means of records and video- gives the impression of fulfilling two crucial objectives in this way: undressing on one hand the raw visuality that during Chile's revolt forges intervened monuments, the fire of the barricades, the cobblestones torn from the sidewalks, the rewritten flag and the fighting bodies as part of a performance practice that is anticipated when making the artist's singular, and showing on the other hand that the extreme energy that his own work liberates is not part of the muse that visits the creator in silence, but the underground power of some images of the confines of a creative multitude. This shows Prats as a determined friend of those who fight for their rights, and not of those who defend their privileges.

This friendship, however, is not limited to a personal affinity, because the purpose of his work lies in affirming the idea that art has always really been on that side, pushing to break into a space that discovers it. That is why what *Primera Línea* contains is a succession of art actions mounted by the experienced fisherman of fantastic pearl passengers. They are mute minerals and boiling materials, silent pieces that the artist, as a cemeteries ripper, exhumes in order to substantially rewrite history.

Hence, the look of Prats is directed this time (he had done it years ago with Tatio geysers, the desolate Salar de Atacama or the extreme and remote Nazca Plate) to the blank pages that speak on the dirty walls of a new Constitution, to the national flag painted with slogans about the future or to the stones that serve as improvised and precarious defence. The smoke, the spray, the stencil, the scratches, the hoods, the bells, the plastic and the detritus assemble the physical community with which Prats elaborates a new type of stain: neither that of the avant-garde informalist that in the Chile of the

sixties occupied the stain to inform the political contingency in his paintings nor that of the neo-vangarde who placed it during the eighties as a figure of the singular secretion of a body, but that of the ghost that's infiltrated in the ranks of a creative community in order to rescue the power of its spontaneous pictoricity.

This pictoricity, collected by Prats as interruptus of the monotonous domestic passing, abbreviates the suspense of the hierarchies that history had naturalized and receives a new data. One that serves to point out with expertise, as Foucault, the instantaneous replacement of a chronogram of the revolution on the spatial map of a constellated series of resistances. It is not a resistance that is characteristic of him or his object - the *Primera Línea* - but of one in which the classic boundary between the rearguard and the avant-garde is simply diluted. In the *Primera Línea*, it could be affirmed, in fact, that it is also the last line, in terms that it is no longer reduced to glimpse the salvific passage on the horizon towards which the people must mobilize than to protect, to this same people, from the fierce onslaught of police forces.

It is Prats' way of showing that art and politics guard each other within an undifferentiated knot. From this knot the artist does not participate as a mere witness; on the contrary, he becomes part through his work. And that is why among the mapuche flags, the green flags of feminism, the pages of the old fascist constitution trapped with smoke or graffiti that disrupt the official language of power in statues and memorials, appears overlapped, in offset version, the symbol that Prats devised to raise the logic of equity: a small circle that decompresses the abusive weight of the centre bringing the marginal and extreme zones closer to each other.

This sign of his (worth considering) does not appear as a guide or as a vector, it appears only as a member of the prodigal tribe of replicating signs. It is the hallmark of the investigating artist, who thus says goodbye forever to the ancient art of awareness and its subsequent relational becoming. Mediation is absent, and so art returns to be another piece of the assembly that expresses the eternal in the exceptional detonation of now.

**AHORA.** About Primera Línea, by Fernando Prats.

federico galende

If anything characterizes Chile, both naturally and culturally, it is an indomitable energy, which works not as much as a force transported in the network but as the extreme outbreak of the animal that stretches. Geysers, tsunamis, alluviums, earthquakes and volcanoes in eruption make up the sublime feature of a culture in which nothing is considered perennial and in which, therefore, an experiment as unique as that of the democratic path to socialism could turn, suddenly, in a totally unpredictable way, towards the abject laboratory in which the first recipes of neoliberalism were tested. In this aspect Chile is a country of loose moments, ruins and crossroads, of mnemonic swirls that suddenly jam the sedative course of history. This means that their different ages are not articulated by a causal link, but by a series of mysterious sensitive correspondences. They are sediments of times that, like the one that retain the eyes of their volcanoes or the backs of their tectonic plates, suddenly agglutinate an unexpected sparkle.

To this alludes “Chile woke up”, the slogan that, starting on October 18th 2019, began to run through the streets and squares of the country like a trail, unexpectedly upholstered by a crowd that emerged from the most diverse corners to dust off a forgotten language - the language of dignity - and staging the creative moment of a destitute power. At least here is an example of how a particular moment that was considered buried or remote - that of the years of Salvador Allende and Popular Unity - joins a later one - the creative moment of the crowd - snatching a time beggar to the tedious syntax of the story. Time stops happening, and instead it becomes spatialized and shares in the immanence of a community of bodies that define from themselves the way of being together. It is the moment of politics, although this moment is also that of art, because if something shares art and politics it is precisely this game of destruction/construction of unpublished or unthinkable communities.

This is what the work of the artist Fernando Prats seems to exhibit, that work has consisted since its inception in capturing that particular moment in which certain

materials in rebellion (physical, geographical, domestic) knot each other releasing the mnemonic energy of the country. We perceive it in a palpable way in this new show, *Primera Línea*, a kind of small visual atlas in motion in which fragments of texts, images, slogans, emblems and bodies shape the hectic days of a community that shows the artistic moment that precedes both the script of the story, and that which is characteristic of aesthetic work.

The visual daily example that Prats traces -pictorial itself and articulated by means of records and video- gives the impression of fulfilling two crucial objectives in this way: undressing on one hand the raw visuality that during Chile's revolt forges intervened monuments, the fire of the barricades, the cobblestones torn from the sidewalks, the rewritten flag and the fighting bodies as part of a performance practice that is anticipated when making the artist's singular, and showing on the other hand that the extreme energy that his own work liberates is not part of the muse that visits the creator in silence, but the underground power of some images of the confines of a creative multitude. This shows Prats as a determined friend of those who fight for their rights, and not of those who defend their privileges.

This friendship, however, is not limited to a personal affinity, because the purpose of his work lies in affirming the idea that art has always really been on that side, pushing to break into a space that discovers it. That is why what *Primera Línea* contains is a succession of art actions mounted by the experienced fisherman of fantastic pearl passengers. They are mute minerals and boiling materials, silent pieces that the artist, as a cemeteries ripper, exhumes in order to substantially rewrite history.

Hence, the look of Prats is directed this time (he had done it years ago with Tatio geysers, the desolate Salar de Atacama or the extreme and remote Nazca Plate) to the blank pages that speak on the dirty walls of a new Constitution, to the national flag painted with slogans about the future or to the stones that serve as improvised and precarious defence. The smoke, the spray, the stencil, the scratches, the hoods, the bells, the plastic and the detritus assemble the physical community with which Prats elaborates a new type of stain: neither that of the avant-garde informalist that in the Chile of the

sixties occupied the stain to inform the political contingency in his paintings nor that of the neo-vanguard who placed it during the eighties as a figure of the singular secretion of a body, but that of the ghost that's infiltrated in the ranks of a creative community in order to rescue the power of its spontaneous pictoricity.

This pictoricity, collected by Prats as interruptus of the monotonous domestic passing, abbreviates the suspense of the hierarchies that history had naturalized and receives a new data. One that serves to point out with expertise, as Foucault, the instantaneous replacement of a chronogram of the revolution on the spatial map of a constellated series of resistances. It is not a resistance that is characteristic of him or his object - the *Primera Línea* - but of one in which the classic boundary between the rearguard and the avant-garde is simply diluted. In the *Primera Línea*, it could be affirmed, in fact, that it is also the last line, in terms that it is no longer reduced to glimpse the salvific passage on the horizon towards which the people must mobilize than to protect, to this same people, from the fierce onslaught of police forces.

It is Prats' way of showing that art and politics guard each other within an undifferentiated knot. From this knot the artist does not participate as a mere witness; on the contrary, he becomes part through his work. And that is why among the mapuche flags, the green flags of feminism, the pages of the old fascist constitution trapped with smoke or graffiti that disrupt the official language of power in statues and memorials, appears overlapped, in offset version, the symbol that Prats devised to raise the logic of equity: a small circle that decompresses the abusive weight of the centre bringing the marginal and extreme zones closer to each other.

This sign of his (worth considering) does not appear as a guide or as a vector, it appears only as a member of the prodigal tribe of replicating signs. It is the hallmark of the investigating artist, who thus says goodbye forever to the ancient art of awareness and its subsequent relational becoming. Mediation is absent, and so art returns to be another piece of the assembly that expresses the eternal in the exceptional detonation of now.

## **AHORA.** Sobre Primera Línea, de Fernando Prats.

federico galende

Si alguna cosa caracteritza a Xile, tant naturalment com culturalment, és una energia indòcil, que funciona menys com una força transportada en la xarxa que com l'esclat extrem de l'animal que s'estira. Guèisers, tsunamis, al·luvions, terratrèmols i volcans en erupció configuren el tret sublim d'una cultura en la qual no-res es pot donar per perenne i en la qual, pel mateix, un experiment tan singular com el de la via democràtica al socialisme va poder girar de sobte, d'una manera totalment imprevisible, cap a l'abjecte laboratori en el qual es van posar a prova les primeres receptes del neoliberalisme. En aquest aspecte Xile és un país de moments solts, ruïnes i cruïlles, de remolins mnèsics que embussen d'improvís el curs sedant de la història. Això significa que les seves diverses edats no s'articulen per un nexa causal, sinó per una sèrie de misterioses correspondències sensibles. Són sediments de temps que, com el que retenen els ulls dels seus volcans o els lloms de les seves plaques tectòniques, de sobte una inesperada guspira aglutina.

És això últim a què al·ludeix segurament el cèlebre “Chile despertó”, la consigna que des del 18 d'octubre del 2019 va començar a recórrer com una reguera els carrers i places del país, entapissades d'improvís per una multitud que va emergir dels més diversos racons per a desempolsar un idioma oblidat -l'idioma de la dignitat- i posar en escena l'instant creatiu d'una potència destituent. Es té almenys aquí un exemple de com un determinat moment que es donava per soterrat o remot –el dels anys de Salvador Allende i la Unitat Popular- s'uneix a un altre posterior -el de l'instant creatiu de la multitud- arrabassant-li un rosegó de temps a la tediosa sintaxi de la història. El temps deixa de succeir, i en canvi s'espacialitza i reparteix en la immanència d'una comunitat de cossos que defineixen des d'ells mateixos la manera d'estar junts. És l'instant de la política, encara que aquest instant és també el de l'art, perquè si alguna cosa comparteixen art i política és precisament aquest joc de destrucció/construcció de comunitats inèdites o impensades.

És el que sembla exhibir l'obra de l'artista Fernando Prats, el treball del qual ha intentat, des dels seus inicis, captar aquest instant particular en el qual uns certs materials en rebel·lió (físics, geogràfics, domèstics) es vinculen els uns amb els altres alliberant l'energia del país. Ho percebem de manera palpable en aquesta nova mostra, *Primera Línea*, una mena de petit atlas visual en moviment en el qual fragments de textos, imatges, consignes, emblemes i cossos donen forma als agitats dies d'una comunitat que trasllueixen l'instant artístic que precedeix tant al guió de la història, com al que és propi del fer estètic.

L'exemplar diari visual que Prats traça -pictòric i articulat per mitjà del registre i el vídeo- fa l'efecte de complir d'aquesta manera amb dos objectius crucials: despullar d'una banda la visualitat en brut que durant la revolta de Xile forgen els monuments intervinguts, el foc de les barricades, les llambordes arrencades de les voreres, la bandera reescrita i els cossos en lluita com a part d'una pràctica performativa que s'anticipa a la manera de fer singular de l'artista, mostrant d'altra banda que l'energia extrema que la seva pròpia obra allibera no és part de la musa que visita al creador en silenci, sinó el poder subterrani d'unes imatges tretes del confí d'una multitud creadora. Amb això es mostra Prats un decidit amic dels qui lluiten pels seus drets, i no dels qui defensen els seus privilegis.

Aquesta amistat, no obstant això, no es limita a una afinitat personal, perquè la comesa del seu treball rau en afirmar la idea que en realitat l'art sempre ha estat d'aquest costat, licitant per irrompre en un espai que el descompta. Per això el que hi ha a *Primera Línea* és una successió d'accions d'art muntades pel pescador avesat de passatgeres perles fantàstiques. Són minerals muts i matèries en ebullició, peces silents que l'artista com estripador de panteons exhuma amb la finalitat de reescriure sensiblement la història.

D'aquí ve que la mirada de Prats es dirigeixi aquesta vegada (ho havia fet anys enrere amb els guèisers parlants del Tatio, el desolat Salar de Atacama o l'extrema i recòndita Placa de Nazca) a les pàgines en blanc que parlen en els murs bruts d'una nova Constitució, a la bandera nacional empastifada amb consignes sobre l'avenir o a les pedres que serveixen d'improvisada i precària defensa. El fum, l'aerosol, l'esprai, el stencil, els ratllats, les caputxes, els timbres, el plàstic i els detritus armen la comunitat física amb la



qual Prats elabora un nou tipus de taquisme: no ja el de l'informalista d'avantguarda que al Xile dels seixanta ocupava la taca per a parlar de la contingència política en els seus quadres o el del neovanguardista que la situava durant els vuitanta com a xifra de la secreció singular d'un cos, sinó el del fantasma que s'infiltra en les files d'una comunitat creadora amb la finalitat de rescatar la potència de la seva pictoricitat espontània.

Aquesta pictoricitat, recollida per Prats en qualitat d'interruptus del monòton transcórrer domèstic, abreuja el suspens de les jerarquies que la història havia naturalitzat i rep una nova data. Una que li serveix per a assenyalar amb perícia, a la manera de Foucault, la instantània substitució d'un cronograma de la revolució pel mapa espacial d'una sèrie constel·lada de resistències. No es tracta d'una resistència que sigui pròpia d'ell o del seu objecte -la *Primera Línea*-, sinó d'una en la qual el límit clàssic entre rereguarda i avantguarda simplement es dilueix. De la *Primera Línea* podria afirmar-se, de fet, que és també l'última, en el sentit que no es redueix més a entrellucar en l'horitzó el passatge salvífic cap al qual ha de mobilitzar-se el poble que a protegir, a aquest mateix poble, de la feroç investida de les forces policials.

És la manera que té Prats de mostrar que art i política es custodien una a l'altra a l'interior d'un nus indiferenciat. D'aquest nus l'artista no participa com a mer testimoni; per contra, es fa part a través del seu treball. I per això entre les banderes maputxe, les verds del feminisme, les pàgines de la vella Constitució feixista gargotejades amb fum o els grafitis que desordenen en estàtues i memorials l'idioma oficial del poder, apunta traspaperat, en versió offset, el símbol que Prats va idear per a plantejar la lògica de l'equitat: un petit cercle que descomprimeix el pes abusiu del centre acostant entre elles les zones marginals i extremes.

Aquest signe seu (val la pena considerar-ho) no apunta ja en qualitat de guia ni de vector, ho fa a penes com un membre més de la pròdiga tribu de signes replicants. És el segell de l'artista indagador, que s'acomiada així per sempre de l'antic art de les conscienciacions i el seu posterior esdevenir relacional. La mediació s'absenta, i torna així l'art a ser una peça més de l'ensambladura que expressa l'etern en l'excepcional detonació de l'ara.