



ARTUR RAMON ESPAI D'ART

Another imagination

Jordi Ortiz + 373 trees

09/19/2024 - 10/31/2024



Ceiba chodatii | Corisia de flor groga

***Ceiba chodatii* | Corisia de flor groga, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Brachychiton populneus | Arbre ampolla

***Brachychiton populneus* | Arbre ampolla, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm

The mystery of forms

The other imagination of Jordi Ortiz

Victoria Cirlot

The 60 images making up this exhibition by Jordi Ortiz, titled *Imaginació* (Imagination), provoke many questions. In the images of the tree trunks photographed in our city, Barcelona, we witness a world of forms unfold which surprise us because we ask ourselves “But, where was all this?” And we ask ourselves this because we had never seen them before. We come to a stop before these images which captivate us.

The bark of the tree trunks shows diverse characteristics: mouldy, rough; in the colours, the uniformity of browns or greys alternates with yellows and purples, blues and a rich spectrum of greens. Sometimes we feel we are contemplating a restricted landscape; in others, however, we see a vast landscape from an aerial point of view. On occasions, the bark opens and allows us to see what is underneath, which appears in another colour, suggesting that we can advance towards further interior layers. Shadows or reflections of the leaves seem to flutter in the breeze. The bumps multiply, small at times, others thicker. And suddenly we see a figure fighting like a warrior wearing a tall conical helmet; also, a face that emerges from the bark, but it is not possible to make out if it is human or not. Other figures can be made out which seem not to be human, but which remain figures, like that one where the head has no face and the torso is, on the other hand, a large face, and the lower part is covered with a long, floor-length skirt. And, especially, we see eyes, many eyes, which cannot be mistaken for bumps, because they look at us very intently. At times it is a single eye, other times it is several, dispersed, sown, like the eyes we have seen in the seraphims’ and cherubims’ wings. All of these figures, whether it be a full figure or only an organ, are somewhat spectral. I would say they “*transparecen*” (“transpire”) because they seem to arise directly from the bark, and they do so in reality without flesh or body, not even apparent. From them, there seem to arise “secret voices”, those referred to by Gérard de Nerval, and that emerge from plants, trees, animals and even the lowliest insects. Nature itself seems to be calling to us to decipher its hieroglyphics, convincing us that everything necessarily has to have a reason, and that everything has to be “explained”. This “infinite figurability” which fascinates and attracts us, holds a mystery that cannot be dissimulated. It is the mystery of the imagination.

In effect, it is about imagination, and more specifically about “another” imagination, as Jordi Ortiz has entitled the Project, still to be completed, to which this exhibition belongs as a central part. In effect, it is “another” because it is the imagination of nature, which “in imagining becomes what is imagined” as Emanuele Coccia explains to us in *The Life of Plants*. I wonder why this natural imagination leads us to immediately place these forms next to artistic ones, those produced by the hand of man throughout the centuries. And this is because they offer surprising similarities. And how is this? In *Morfología y arte contemporáneo* (*Morphology and contemporary art*), Juan Eduardo Cirlot counterposed natural masks such as the *Callistemma brachiatum* together with the sculptural-architectonic masks of the chimneys of Gaudí’s Casa Mila, or the pictorial ones of Max Ernst. To cite the article by E. Tériade “Le point de vue de la nature”, he compared the illustrations he used, by Savitry and Brassai, with those by Edward Weston and Joaquín Gomis, all of them showing a special attention to the “morphology of the background” within the combat between background and figures which is present in European painting since the fifteenth century, to the “furious emergence of the background against the figures” between 1890 and 1920, which constitutes another way to understand abstraction and the following informalism. The sudden similarity between natural and artistic forms is surprising; there comes a time when one doesn’t know who copies who, or if it is even a question of copying. Henri Focillon treated these two realms by establishing relationships, corre-



Laurus nobilis | Llorer

Laurus nobilis | Llorer, 2019-2024
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Podocarpus neriifolius | Podocarp

Podocarpus neriifolius | Podocarp, 2019-2024
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm

spondences and analogies, but also differences, by distinguishing, for example, between the materials of each of them, because it is true that “the wood of a statue is not the wood of a tree”. In any case, material, form, spirit, are not opposites, but rather are united in both realms. The plant, this great “cosmic artisan”, has transformed into what it imagined. How should one understand that?

Emanuele Coccia, in his work *Metamorfosis* has opened a new perspective from which to contemplate the world, precisely that of “metamorphosis”, springing as much from an ancient thinker such as Ovid, as from current sciences. His main conclusion arrives at a certainty, according to which “all life which exists around and outside of us is the same as that which is inside us and vice-versa. We live the same life as all that which surrounds us”. For this reason, none of the correspondences that we can find between the different species should surprise us, since we are permeated with the same fluid, which is what we call “life”. “If we discover that a part of our life is identical to that of non-humans, we can recognize humanity in these traits; and vice-versa, each time that we attribute a human characteristic to a plant or an animal, we recognize that there is something in us that human nature does not possess exclusively.” The trunks of the trees, or the clouds, have ceased to be simple elemental surfaces or footholds for our imagination. In the recognition in them of our human forms, this other equally important understanding occurs, that is of our non-humanity. Coccia encouraged us to stop contemplating the sky, which is only a museum, “the largest archaeological site of the cosmos”, so that we direct our vision towards the earth, proposing an “inverted astrology”. This is an idea that we already find in Novalis and Breton, as Olivier Schefer reminds us “*Verkehrte Astrologen*”, (opposite astrologers), is what the hermit of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* called miners. André Breton introduces this expression in his *Langue des pierres*, in affirming that they, the stones, convert us in “*astrologues renversés*”. But Coccia’s proposal is not limited to seeing the analogy between earth and sky, but rather that he encourages us to do something tremendously rash: suppress the sky to claim the earth. “If astrology must be altered it is because we know that the earth is also a celestial body. The sky, all that which is in our atmosphere and the sun have the same substance, the same material, the same form as the Earth: we are the sky by definition, due to the material and the form.”

I don’t think that we should stop looking at the stars because they have been dead for millions of years. The past of the cosmos also belongs to us, as does the past of our lives. Because everything continues to shine. But an attentive look at our planet seems necessary. Especially from a different perspective to that which we have been using up to the present, because the relationship between the human and the non-human has suffered considerable displacement, to reposition itself in a very different way. It seems that our vision of the world is changing in a radical way, and Jordi Ortiz’s project is testimony of that.

Now when I walk around Barcelona, I find that something new has been added to what I usually see. It is them, the trunks of the trees, that have been shown to me, awakening an interest in me hitherto unknown.

[Works cited in the order that they appear in the text: Emanuele Coccia, *La vida de las plantas. Una metafísica de la mixtura*, Miño Y Dávila, Buenos Aires, 2017; Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *Morfología y arte contemporáneo*, Omega, Barcelona, 1955; Henri Focillon, *Vie des formes*, PUF, París, 2023 (First edition 1943); Emanuele Coccia, *Metamorfosis. La fascinante continuidad de la vida*, Siruela, Madrid, 2021; Olivier Schefer, “Les pierres de rêve: Minéralogie visionnaire”, in *Trajectoires du rêve. Du romantisme au surréalisme*, ouvrage réalisé sous la direction de Vincent Gilles, Pavillon des Arts 7 mars - 7 juin 2003, Paris-Musées, 2003.]



Pinus halepensis | Pi blanc

***Pinus halepensis* | Pi blanc, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Acer campestre | Auró blanc

***Acer campestre* | Auró blanc, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Styphnolobium japonicum | Acàcia del Japó

Styphnolobium japonicum | Acàcia del japó, 2019-2024
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Celtis australis | Lledoner

Celtis australis | Lledoner, 2019-2024
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Calocedrus decurrens | Calocedre tacat

***Calocedrus decurrens* | Calocedre tacat, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Parrotia persica | Arbre de ferrou

***Parrotia persica* | Arbre de ferrou, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm

It has been thousands of years since the appearance of humans; they, who were already there, welcomed us with a multiple embrace. Little by little we have grown up together, their skin and ours in constant symbiosis. Evolving together, they have taught and modelled us to become as we are.

Their thought is slow, also mysterious and imaginative, always connected to two parallel worlds: the sky and the earth. Even though they cannot move around, they can move. They are altruistic: they give without demanding anything in return. They are resilient, forward-looking, communicative and intelligent. They also breathe, see, feel, smell and sleep.

If they have visitors, they speak and dance: they constantly seek interaction with others. They are discreet, peaceful, autonomous, austere, respectful, sensitive, joyful, humble and grateful. We pass by their side at all hours, and despite their permanent presence, we have stopped seeing them. They, on the other hand, look at us all the time, as if demanding our attention. They are of all ages: little, young and old. Some are imposing and there are even millenary ones.

The trees are these marvellous beings who always accompany us.

The trees will have the last word

Joan Brossa

Do trees have imagination? And if they do, what kind of images do they represent? And where do they show them? It is difficult to respond to these questions because, for a start, it is difficult for us to believe that there are other creatures capable of thought and imagination, apart from human beings.

“Another Imagination” takes as reference a community of trees who coexist with other living creatures in a specific space, in this case, the city of Barcelona (but it could be any other city). 1,660,000 people and 1,400,000 trees interact in this space, in addition to other animals and plants. Of all these trees, 250,000 individuals live in parks, gardens, squares and streets, and represent approximately 400 species, including shrubs and palm trees. The rest of them are in a forest in the hills near the city. There are autochthonous species and others from diverse points of the planet.

We usually speak of the city of humans, but we should also speak of the city of trees because, as I was saying, we coexist: the animal world and the plant world, the humans and the trees. This project proposes to rethink our concept of city and convert the trees into another citizen like any other. They are personalities in an environment which is, often, hostile to them.

Of the three parts of the tree - roots, trunk and branches - I have paid attention to the trunk. This part is the visible face of the tree, unique and expressive, the face that is perennially visible and that expresses its evolu-

tion; it is a language unto itself. The goal, therefore, has been to search for and portray the trunks of the largest number of species of trees present in the city. Finally, I have selected 373 individuals of different species to configure a more imaginative work.

The result is this collection of photographs which show the slow but intense work by which the tree exteriorises its creativity. On each image, I have written the name which corresponds to its taxonomy and its common name. In this way I try to restore to the trees the status they deserve as living beings and to equip them to us.

It is also important to highlight the parallelism of the two processes which interact with each other and which have a common origin in light: on the one hand, photosynthesis (from the Greek *photós*, “light” and *synthesis*, “compose”), which gives life to the tree, and on the other hand, photography (*photós*, “light” and *graphe*, “draw, write”), which gives life to the image.

Finally, I would like to remark that this work is a collaboration between the trees and I. In return for my seeking them out, to meet them and look at them, they have taught me their natural universe, which is mystic and unknown.

“Another imagination” is composed of six chapters: Imagination, Community, Home, Identity, The Tree of the World, and Correspondences, of which Artur Ramon Art exhibits the following:

Imagination. Using a multitude of pigments, fruit of the relationship between the earth and the sky, trees draw an oneiric and fantastic world, full of magic. Lines, volumes, forms and textures are combined to create images, which spring from the trunks with infinite nuances, with primitive and profound colours produced in a constant interaction with the surroundings. This is the central chapter. It is composed of 373 photographs, of which sixty are selected for the exhibition.

Community. Throughout history, our relationship with trees has been very close, so much so that, with a view to bring them closer to us, we have given them, in addition to scientific names, common names taken from our cultural references which help us to identify them. There are names which refer to love, life, paradise; others are toponyms which help us to situate them. This part of the project brings together the names of the 373 trees drawn from popular imagination.

The tree of the world. Leaves which are trees and trees which are leaves. Buildings, vehicles, urban fixtures, people... and trees. Their appearance, their colours and coexistence in the city make up an installation with the photographs of the 373 trees and their relationship to their surroundings, accompanied by an earthy frame which contains them.

Correspondence. Human works and tree works. Often the images remind us of others, giving rise to what we would call analogies. Can there be images created by other living creatures which are similar to images created by humans? Who was inspired by the other? This part of the project seeks to establish correspondences between the works created by the trees and those created by humans.

Barcelona, May 2024



Fraxinus angustifolia | Freixe de fulla petita

***Fraxinus angustifolia* | Freixe de fulla petita, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm



Corylus colurna | Avellaner turc

***Corylus colurna* | Avellaner turc, 2019-2024**
Inkjet print on paper | 128,3×35 cm

barcelona
gallery
weekend

Cover: *Viburnum tinus* | Marfúll; *Paulownia tomentosa* | Pauüònia; *Parkinsonia aculeata* | Parquinsònia, 2019-2024. Inkjet print on paper | 128,3x35 cm



The tree of the world, 2019-2024
Photography and clay
Installation. 373 photographs
each 15x10 cm, and a clay box
237x344 cm