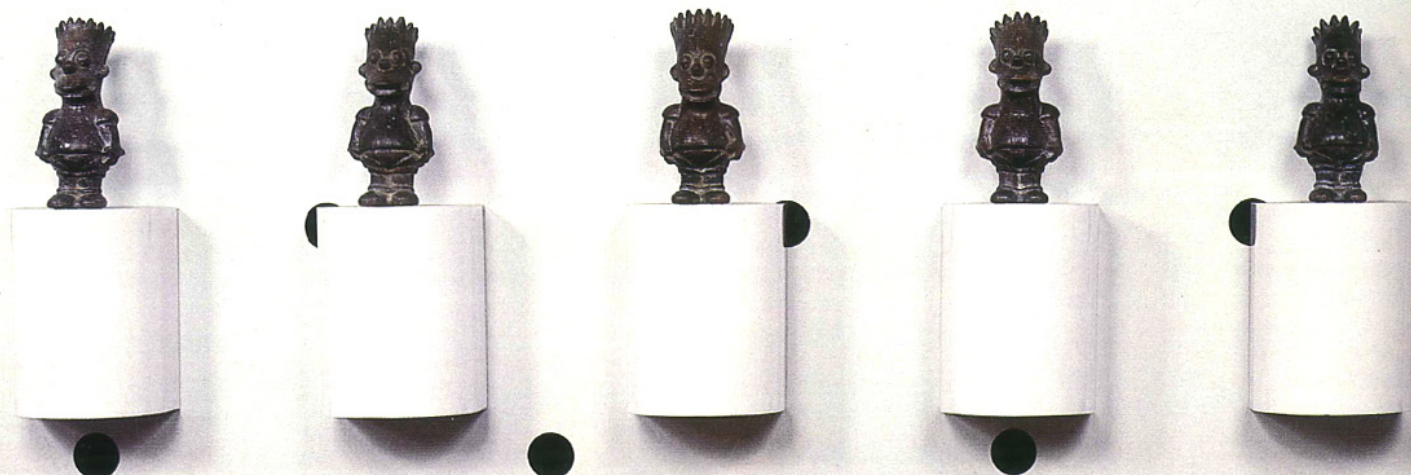


PUNTO DE APOYO



New Narrative in Contemporary Colombian Art

José Horacio Martínez Méndez
El olvido de los principios, 1994

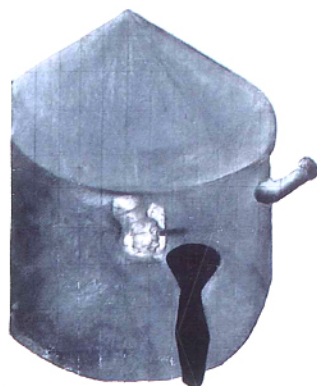
Thoughts on Composition

These works have in common certain formal qualities that stem from abstraction and fragmentation of ideas at the conceptual level. From this abstraction of thought, the artist is induced to create a composition which depicts a spatial fragmentation in which the different formal elements are amplified or reduced, layered, or juxtaposed. The choice of materials and fragmentation liberates the construction from rigid formality.

The works are differentiated by the artists' use of diverse materials such as oil paint, photographs, found objects, and organic materials. Their respect for matter and its intrinsic qualities resembles Minimalist ideas yet, here, materials are integrated such that the creation of a more complex composition becomes part of the subject matter. Here, color, texture, and form coexist with the narrative, becoming elements that enhance the meaning of the work. The eclectic use of materials results in fragmented, disparate, and, in some cases, ephemeral compositions, where the components resonate to create an active artistic language.

Materials that allude to the earth such as cement, mud, natural pigments and oils are used both for their coloristic qualities as well as for their ecological meanings. For instance, the use of animals by María Fernanda Cardoso is part of the dialogue between the anthropological, the ecological, and the autobiographical. In the work of Eduardo Pradilla, photographic reproductions serve both as a medium of representation and a formal element of the composition.

Figuration also plays an important role in the work exhibited in *Punto de Apoyo: New Narrative in Contemporary Colombian Art*. Images of the human figure are present alongside objects and animals. In each of the compositions there exists representative images—symbols—whose significance becomes essential for the viewer's understanding of the work. These images hold the significance inherent to the object represented. Their meanings become associated with the other elements present, figurative or not. Step by step, the observer discovers (or uncovers) the narrative of the work.



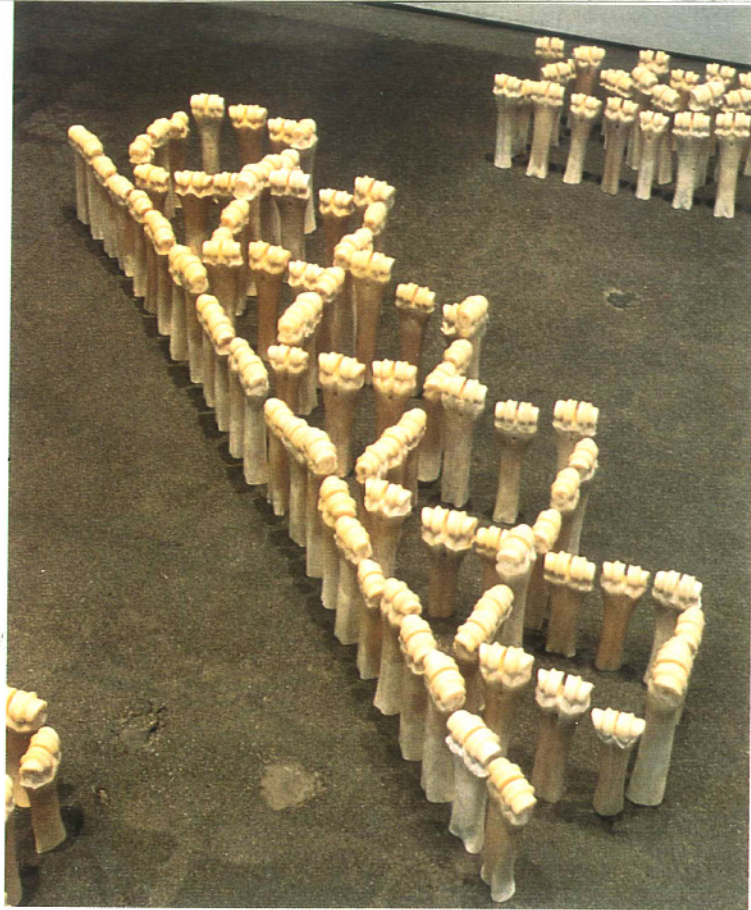
The Artists and Their Work

El pensamiento del día (The thought of the day, 1994) by Rafael Ortiz reunites an endless number of images which are reminiscent of a child's room, a representation of "home." Ortiz works with invented stories and develops works in series, sometimes repeating elements and images throughout. Each painting is like another chapter in which the story unfolds, allowing the observer to identify the artist's iconography within a fragmented representation in both time and space.

José Horacio Martínez depicts his memories through visual means. *El olvido de los principios* (Forgetting the Beginnings, 1994) inspired by

childhood memories, has a fragmented composition with empty spaces and images that float in the space. These appear to allude to situations either experienced or imaginary.

Rodrigo Facundo has a more socially conscious approach to art. Facundo uses existing historical and commercial images which he finds in magazines and transfers them to canvas by photographic processes. In *Sol* (Sun, 1993) and *Luna* (Moon, 1993) Facundo uses representative and suggestive images—forms that could be associated with the sun and the moon, as well as human figures positioned in circles. What are they? Day or night, life or death?



Maria Fernanda Cardoso *American Marble* (Mármol Americano), 1992

repetitively. Repetition and the lack of text to complement the image decontextualize it, freezing it in time and space. In *Motociclistas* (Motorcyclists, 1994), Bohmer distills a common image (a man on a motorbike) and converts it into an object of devotion.

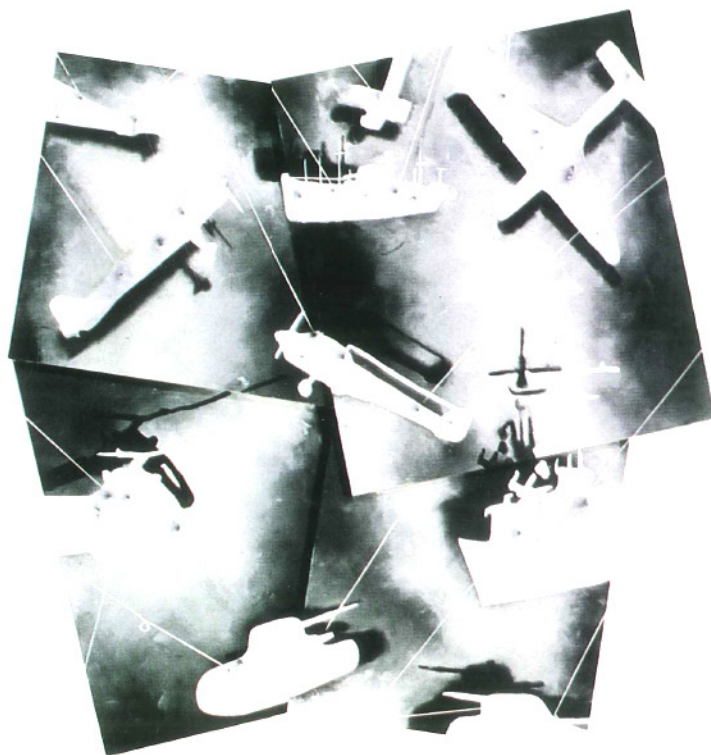
Pradilla enlarges and reproduces images taken out of locally produced magazines and books. When appropriated, these images transcend into a distorted commentary on their immediate significance. The work then becomes a study of the meanings of the images outside their original context and content. The work by Pradilla

Argentina, that could also be applied to this exhibition:

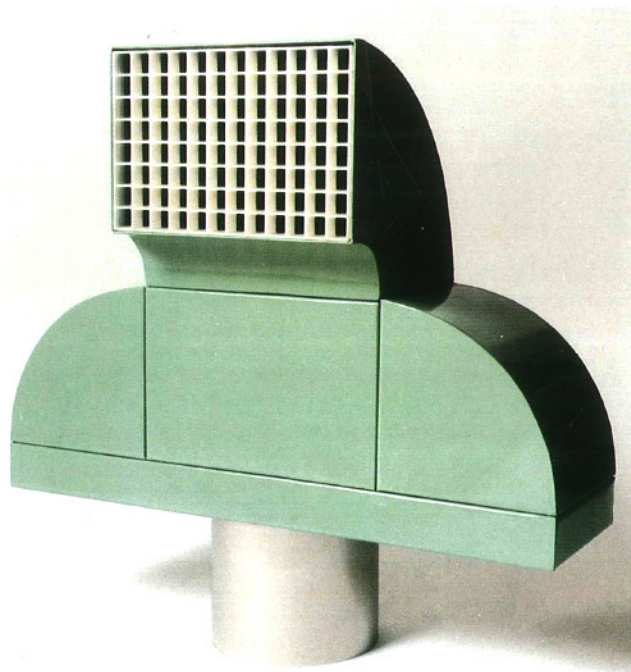
The artists here included are aware of their debt to Europe and the United States...thus becoming the cultivated Latin man, who does not reveal himself against the myth of European art, but overcomes it becoming the equal of his conqueror.²

¹ Simon Watney, *Parkett* No. 39, p 39, Zürich 1994. Watney further explores the definition of collective memory in reference to the work by Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

² Marta Traba, *Prisma* (Bogotá, 1957)



Catalina Mejía *Suma de cuadros*, 1993



Elias Heim Procer, 1994

cover:
Nadín Ospina
Críticos del High-Tech, 1993

body of work. "Each work reflects my own world, my education." Mejía, who spent several years in New York was in constant contact with Post-War art. From this experience, Mejía developed a dialogue with art which is reflected in her work. In *Suma de cuadros* (Sum of Squares, 1993) Mejía uses images from the iconography of the Abstract Expressionists and Pop artists—cars, airplanes, machines—recontextualizing them according to her own experience.

Using materials that have shocked her since childhood, María Fernanda Cardoso has managed to imprint her work with an incomparable individuality. With seemingly mundane objects such as flowers, frogs, lizards, and gourds, Cardoso captures their social and spiritual significance. *American Marble* (1992) is a cow bone construction organized in geometrical patterns on the floor. The forms copy the moorish floor designs commonly used in Spain. During the colonial period in America (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), these floor patterns were widely popular. However, inexpensive and available animal bones were substituted for costly marble.

María Teresa Cano also uses common materials such as sugar, wax, metal, cutlery, and plates. In works charged with domestic symbols, the artist creates statements about the woman's role in society. *Tendido* (Spread, 1994), made of plastic bags filled with grease with an imprinted image of a knife

an image entails.

Contemporary Colombian artists also use contemporary myths and trends taken from the mass media. Miguel Bohmer and Eduardo Pradilla are inspired by photographs published in journals and magazines. Working in large format, Bohmer cuts out portraits of people and blows them up



María Teresa Cano
Serie Segmentos rectilíneos, 1993

Acknowledgments

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Assistant Curator

Judith Steinberg
Editorial Consultant

Deimos Diseño y Decoración
Coordinators in Bogotá

José Echeverría
Art Handler

Richard Bonano
Lighting

Checklist of the exhibition

Miguel Bohmer
Motociclistas, 1994
(Motorcyclists)
Pigment and oil on canvas
118 x 66 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Bogotá

María Teresa Cano
Serie segmentos rectilíneos, 1993
(Rectilinear Segments)
Sugar, wax, and iron
35 x 12 inches
Courtesy of Galería Valenzuela y Klenner, Bogotá

María Fernanda Cardoso
American Marble, 1992
Cow bones
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of Ruth Bloom Gallery, Santa Monica

Rodrigo Facundo
Sol, 1993
(Sun)
Photographic emulsion and acrylic on canvas
40 x 40 inches
Courtesy of Galería Valenzuela y Klenner, Bogotá

Luna, 1993
(Moon)
Photographic emulsion and acrylic on canvas
40 x 40 inches
The Billy and Carmina Wightman Collection, Bogotá

Carolina Franco García
El proceso: Entrañas tibias, Nacimiento, Despertar, 1993
(The Process: Warm Womb, Birth, Awakening)
Photographic emulsion and collography on paper
40 x 21 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Elias Heim
Procer, 1994
(Eminence)
Metallic plate, plastic, and stainless steel
65 x 17 x 13 inches
Collection of the artist
Courtesy of Galería Valenzuela y Klenner, Bogotá

José Horacio Martínez Mendez
El olvido de los principios, 1994
(Forgetting the Beginnings)
Oil and collage on canvas
35 x 36 inches
Courtesy of Galería Valenzuela y Klenner, Bogotá

Catalina Mejía
Suma de cuadrados, 1993
(Sum of Squares)
Acrylic on canvas
90 x 80 inches
Courtesy of Galería El Museo, Bogotá

Rafael Ortiz
El pensamiento del día, 1994
(The Thought of the Day)
Paper pulp, resin and pigment on canvas
61 x 67 inches
Courtesy of Galería El Museo, Bogotá

Nadín Ospina
Criticos del High Tech, 1993
(High Tech Critics)
Ceramic, wood and formica
12 x 3 x 3 inches each
Courtesy of the artist, Bogotá

Eduardo Pradilla
El coleccionista, 1994
(The Collector)
Photographic transfer on canvas
67 x 51 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Bogotá