

Espino, Luisa, "Carlos Bunga: Yuxtaposiciones", Madrid, Galería Elba Benítez, 2008.

CARLOS BUNGA: YUXTAPOSICIONES

The Galería Elba Benítez opens the season with a new exhibition by the Portuguese artist Carlos Bunga (Oporto, 1976) called *Yuxtaposiciones* (Juxtapositions), an exploration of the slender frontiers separating distinct artistic disciplines. The work of Bunga is related not only to architecture, but also to painting and design. Here he tackles the temporality of objects and the importance of memory through the "juxtaposition" of techniques and concepts.

Since Carlos Bunga made his breakthrough debut in Spain at the Biennial Manifesta 5 (San Sebastian, 2004), he has taken part in exhibitions such as *Unmonumental*, *The Object in the 21st Century*, at the New Museum (New York, 2007), and *Low Key*, curated by Iria Candela at the Fundación Botín (Santander, 2008, which is still on view).

Known for large-scale constructions with which he transforms pre-existing architectures into completely new spaces, he first began to explore this line of work at the end of 2003 at the Museu Serralves (Porto). He also showed an early concern for urban space, in particular for places in a state of decline. "I got interested in the buildings, walls, scars left by demolitions that I came across in the city. (...), the concept of space"¹. It was in this manner that he embarked upon his cardboard interventions, exploiting the material's power to embody concepts such as the fragility of architecture, and thus evoke other more complex, irremediably up-to-date questions such as the impermanence of buildings. Since Bunga's installations do not follow a pre-established plan, this allows him ample opportunity to improvise and to refine his ability to adapt them to the site where they are installed. The process by which his ideas are put into practice is critical. The installations deal with the phenomenon of the appropriation of sites, not only being located inside architectural spaces, but also being made from objects that relate directly to the subject of the domestic. In his models he improvises "architectonic forms in which juxtaposed surfaces and colours refer back to neo-plasticism and its proposals for flexible, de-hierarchized architecture"².

Yuxtaposiciones is Carlos Bunga's second exhibition at the Galería Elba Benítez. In his first collaboration with the gallery, in 2005, he transformed the inside of the venue in a large-scale, site-specific intervention. This time he uses the gallery as his laboratory to present a new show that challenges the limits separating disciplines, producing a hybrid project combining architecture, painting and design. At the present juncture, which is characterized by a prevailing zeal to classify everything, Carlos Bunga poses the idea of intermediate zones. *Yuxtaposiciones* crosses the line that separates the exhibition space from the artwork. New spaces emerge that are confused with the ones already there, and paintings outgrow their traditional frames to expand across the walls. He places us in an abstract realm, in which each piece has a story to tell us, a story about the fragility of life, architecture and the artwork too. Pieces like *Intento de Conservación* (Attempt at Conservation), a painting protected by Perspex, reflect upon that which passes. *Pigmentos* (Pigments) takes us on a trip to the origins of painting, the foundations of his work and his academic training. And *The Phaidon Atlas of Contemporary World Architecture* (2008), an abstract composition made from clippings from the publication of the title, explores contemporary architecture and its political connotations.

Carlos Bunga stresses the inherent transience of all these new buildings which despite being undeniable symbols of progress and economic power are not invulnerable to gradual decay.

After studying Fine Arts at the Escola Superior de Arte e Design (ESAD) in Caldas da Rainha (Portugal), Carlos Bunga (Oporto, 1976) has continued with his training, awarded a visual arts grant by the Fundación Marcelino Botín (2006), and Residency Programs such as the Aldaba Art at Ciudad de México (2007) and Fundación Ilidio Pinho at New York (2007-2008). He has done solo shows of his work held at institutions such as Culturgest (Portugal, 2005) and Milton Keynes Gallery (UK, 2006); and with group exhibitions at the Artists Space (New York, 2005), San Diego Museum of Art (Farsites: Urban Crisis and Domestic Symptoms in Recent Contemporary Art, part of inSite_05, San Diego, 2005), New Museum (Unmonumental, The Object in the 21st Century, New York, 2007), Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno-IVAM (Contruir, habitar, pensar, Valencia, 2008) and Fundación Marcelino Botín (Low Key, Santander, 2008). At the last edition of Art Basel, his piece Ruins was included in the special projects section Art Unlimited.

This exhibition *Yuxtaposiciones* has been included in the programme of events held during the Semana de la Arquitectura 2008 (Architecture Week) and it is also part of the 6th Portuguese Mostra. The first of these events, organized by the Fundación Arquitectura COAM from the 6 to 12 of October, invites a number of visual artists to interpret and explore the current state of architecture in the section *Poéticamente habita*. The 6th Portuguese Mostra, promoted by the Portuguese Embassy in Madrid, will bring together, from the 27 of October to the 30 November, a broad selection of artists representative of Portuguese-Spanish culture.

Notas

1. Bunga, Carlos, "Additive Subtraction?", Madrid, Galería Elba Benítez, 2008, p. 18.
2. Candela, I., *Low key*, Santander, Fundación Marcelino Botín, 2008, p. 20, Cat. Exp.