

Duero, Javier, "Cathode Identity. On Félix Fernández's video work", *Félix Fernández Fernández*, Lugo, Museo Provincial de Lugo, 2006, Cat. Exp.

*CATHODE IDENTITY*

*On Félix Fernández's video work*

I know Félix since some years now. The person and the artist. We are not friends but we have managed to establish some understanding codes based on creative and intellectual *inputs* which are pleasant to share and truly, much more interesting than any conventional friendship.

Without any kind of emotional servitude I'm preparing to approach a complex world, rich in shades and dense in inspiring sources.

The body as a map, the gender as motto of a new identity, the own self as the ecosystem needed for survival, the environment whose maintenance relies on all of us, the mass-media and their power of transformation of modern societies; these are just a few of the subjects researched by this artist whose smile is everlasting and creative keenness striking.

There is no person without a body. Our body is the support of our identity and both the physical aspect and visual appearance are part and parcel of it. Through the imaginary representation of the body, it is put in the context of time and space. I mean the symbolic, metaphoric, mythic, organic, political body; the polyhedral vision Félix applies to every frame shot aiming the investigation of one of his main work lines, the one dealing with the concepts of body intelligence and the authority it exercises on our own imaginary one.

Our thought, the way we understand the world, is metaphoric. The body is the complement in support format for the changes of identity, for the disguise and the deceit. The *performance* art is a way of lending the body for the construction of different identities on it.

This discipline plays an important role in Félix Fernández's video work being the artist both, subject and object of the action. This is shown as the plot of fictions which establish a speech or a concrete idea. It has nothing to do with documenting an action, it is about telling a story, almost a way of understanding existence. It is not an improvised technique with experimental features, but a very well cared for technique shown with apparent simplicity. Félix does not need post production resources, filters, layers, effects, etc. in order to make us quiver. As the excellent producer he is, he knows that a well reverse shot or a sequence shot in the precise moment of the script can settle the story in a narrative way. The rejection of just-for-show-elements, of superficial effects, of kitsch, and sometimes even to colour make him an expert artist in telling intense stories from a formal minimalism certified by the ignorance his camera pays to this new technology and the great amount of possibilities it offers on image manipulation.

Taking as a starting point the idea of identity having a cognitive component in relation with social representations and other affective component dealing with a feeling of being part of the different established groups, we can say that the identity of an individual is made up by a number of variables that are deeply and intimately related to one another. Sexuality is the nucleus on which each of these variables

develop with the detail that it pierces through the individual, making it up in a special fashion.

The research on sexual identity in Félix's work brushes several disciplines because the only way of getting a whole vision of a complex phenomenon is approaching it from different points of view. There have been many disciplines and theoretic trends which have approached sexual identity. Its influence range from the Greek mythology to Freud and Lacan. If we had to define a feature dealing with this subject shared by Felix's video work it would be the normality and absolute acceptance of oneself. There are neither pretentious queer elements, nor queer flags or pink dogmas. The artist make each of his works a social statement with poetic and manner elements presented with such an intellectual honesty and narrative transparency (with is truly welcome).

We live in a consumer society which offers new ways of individuality. The level of the big mass, to behave well, mean consuming a great deal. The index of consumption is the index of a country's health. Consumption is aimed to average individuals which are the image of consumers. We can watch fictitious speakers on television but they play a very important role for consumers. From the Amazonian jungle or from his flat's room Felix reminds us about the lack of conciliation between our development system and the environment, between us as consumers and us, as inhabitants of the planet earth.

There is a constant overestimation of the style favoured by the media. From a point of view the ones on the screen enjoy a much stronger way of existing and millions of people can feel it. There is where the feeling about existence requiring living through image standards comes from. The best way to capture audiences is making them think they have the chance to be on television. That's the reason why reality shows have such a success.

In his video work Félix questions the role of media which determine that instant character of communication as one of the factors helping broadcast that idea according to which, history has reached its end and there is nothing left to imagine but what already exists. That role devotes to the feeling of spiritual disenchantment the new generations suffer. There is nothing in store for the future, there are not any enthusiastic prospects, which is surprising because for Félix, in the end, we have everything to discover as individuals. Everything is reversible.