

Assemblage as ordering of the world

There is in Genevieve Maquinay's work a complex world of her own that is instantly recognizable and that allows for a wide array of readings and interpretations from diverse and various stand points. At once primordial and sophisticated, austere and rich, her work bears witness and exemplifies the importance of technique and language regarding construction and 'assemblage' in contemporary art. Given the reductive quality of her work, its relevance lies in as much in its artistic processes and social construction, as in its apparent alchemy in its representation of a new reality.

Yet for all their richness of allusion and intriguing diversity, her work stands out because of its intimacy. They invite the viewer to take careful observation of its various components, such as –wood, roots, seeds, stones, sea shells, feathers, and fragments of human made found objects, - that have often been discarded and bear evidence of their use and deterioration, small artifacts from diverse ethnological groups and territories, such as pieces of ceramic, in addition to treasured objects from her intimate sphere, with the memories they contain. They are, in fact, the inheritance from her journeys throughout the world, and her involvement in social justice programs that help vulnerable communities in her country of origin, Colombia.

This worldly experience that expresses itself in an integral context , allows her work to be affected by various subject matter such as the ecology, landscape, natural resources, culture and historical memory. She selects and finds her materials throughout her travels, creating her personal archive, a world of things. She then proceeds to associate these elements, at first intuitively, combining them in relation to their inherent formal qualities, such as color and various textures, establishing a dialogue between them. The decisive test that leads her to formulate her artistic vision and philosophy is summed up through her own personal spirit, her uniqueness of vision and feeling, marked by an unmatched sensitivity . Nevertheless, her respectful interventions allow these objects to maintain their associative memory and essence. She allows her organic materials to come to life, conserving their color, textures, forms, knots and openings. If they are fragments or remains of man, she allows them to conserve their cultural memory and the vicissitudes of their previous use and history. She rescues these objects from their eventual oblivion or disappearance, they cease to be impersonal and indifferent, suggesting a unique new reading.

The concept of 'assemblage' has a vast trajectory in the development of the art of the twentieth century, starting with the cubist collage, and the whimsical creations of the surrealists, continuing their journey

in the sixties by detaching themselves from pure abstraction and developing a closer relationship with material reality. Nevertheless, the works of Maquinay invoke more remote and profound roots than simply keeping to modernist trends. They manifest a conception and certain qualities related to her own cultural heritage, as well as a relationship to primordial processes evident in Native American and African art. She allows her found materials to accumulate and expand their vital animistic qualities, responding to her own primary impulses while she reconfigures them and brings them back to life. This method of working requires a profound sensibility to her surroundings, and to her own process of introspection and assimilation so as to discover their meaning in relation to her vision of the world. The viewer is also invited to discover the world and its multiple layers of meaning through her work.

Her juxtapositions, although related to a post modern vision through their conceptual and ecological components, do not subscribe necessarily to a formal category, they are more a way of relating and assimilating a multicultural world where she exalts the most diverse traditions and puts them in contact with each other. A world within a world.

We must also consider that, if the strength and appeal of Maquinay's art lays in its synthesis of disparate elements into a coherent body of work, it is

largely due to her own mixed Belgian and Colombian heritage, her cosmopolitanism, , her art as a mirror of herself and her own relationship to the world. She is at once one with a rational order versus the emphasis on magic and the irrational. Jacques Derrida explains the concept of 'assemblage' as a process of suspension of differences; in Maquinay's work not only space but time collapses, making themselves omnipresent..

André Breton, on the other hand, places the practice of selecting found objects by chance in the sphere of the unconscious, a need to deal with traumatic experience. In Maquinay's case, some objects imply the presence of missing bodies or figures , others make visible the suffering of entire communities and peoples that have experienced social conflict. So much loss is trapped and survive in these objects, fragments and broken things; there is a disquieting effect of abandon, trauma and even violence. The myth of origins and the establishing of a link with the organic origins of our past, allows the artist to touch upon a universal human essence through her desire to repair or reconfigure different realities, to recycle them so to speak, so as to create such wide ranging associations and at the same time something completely new.

Genevieve Maquinay's subtle and delicate work bears witness a desire to express at the same time aesthetic, cultural and social values that reconcile into an authentic

expression. She goes beyond a mere precious technique as she involves a wide array of values and significances, creating a complex and profound representation and reinvention of the world. Beyond their intimacy and size, her work articulates a particular and personal self-contained universe of monumental richness, where unity and diversity co-exist through her exploration of the metaphysical and animistic qualities of the work of art.

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