

David Lopez

2011

for a court of the gentiles.by Jose Antonio Garcia Hernandez*

Each person is a unique being, and this is no less between artists. Education tries to standardize us a bit and gives us communication and comprehension tools. However, even if two people are identical twin brothers, even if we are dealing with people who we have much in common, we always find chasms of difference. They are necessary bridges that connect the gap between what is very important for someone's sensibility and insignificant for another.

David López, 1972, is an artist who has been educated in the crisis of modernity, or what was dramatically called, the discredit of the avant-garde. The so-called conceptual art and all the Duchamp inheritance in its second major stake has been his growing environment. However, he hasn't had the formative gaps that exist with many artists in which the cut with tradition has been strong. In addition, his time spent living in Paris has given him a wealth of resources and experiences and has enthusiastically deepened his knowledge.

The artists of my generation, in Spain during the 1970s, the assimilation of us modern masters had to be done in a parallel way, through visits to exhibitions, correspondence with foreign friends, long conversations in cafes, and many lectures. Each person is a son of his time and always has the accent of his own mother tongue as a starting platform. Another equally significant aspect is that my generation received the first great shock of disclosure from the fathers of suspect, Freud, Marx, Nietzsche, which was the key to subsequent nihilisms.

David López is a son of his time and has the foundation of his mother tongue (as regards language and artistic problems) therefore the appropriation of objects, the re-signifying of known images, the crossing of boundaries of specialization moving away from video to installation, from drawing to transfer, or a mixture of all this, whether it be a collage or bricolage, it comes to him as something completely natural. He doesn't need to force himself; this is the way he expresses himself. Moreover, he always has a strain for searching and daringly experiments on that possessed being that moves every artist.

David stands out by the authenticity and the veracity of what he does. It's not that he battles only and at whatever cost in order to gain a foothold in this hard and competitive globalized world. That is not the question; every human being struggles and every artist is a man. However, he is doing it in a very particular way.

This exhibition, especially the series of pieces about the Crucified One, has reminded me of the book *Discurso, Figura de Lyotard* because of the inclusion of images within each other. That complexity of games of the "figural": thanks to the discovery of the de-figuration of the images to be turned into letters, sounding signs, and later to be covered again with figures. This great upheaval was an exciting game to me. I think David has found this discovery, where the embodiment of Christ is shown capable of assuming all of humanity, its sufferings, its joys, its hopes.

It is already commonplace in the works of David that the starting images are from diverse backgrounds: some are indisputable universal quotes from painters; some are pictures of life's most

intimate moments. It's a curious clash - and a productive clash-of these two worlds, the private or intimate living with what is made or that has been made universal- very recognizable images in the history of art- but that want to be rescued as an emblem of human dignity, because the genius of great artists, the beauty and grandeur of their works, dignifies all species. We feel part of a lineage able to reach great heights. By means of the quotes a new discourse about life is realized, and above all, the key to all this: David puts his life above art.

Every artist, by nature, tends to make an idol of his work. His life is sacrificed for the sake of his art. But David is trying to make art serve life as a game, as a party or celebration, even as a liturgy, which is the meeting place of the arts. Instead of aligning himself with the so-called "culture of complaint" (R. Hughes), he places himself in the culture of wonder and blessing, and this is the novelty.

The discrediting of the avant-garde coincides with the discrediting of the social revolution, no longer believing that Marx's utopia is feasible, an equal welfare for everyone. Why do things get worse rather than better, millions of victims and nothing. The experience of Nova Huta in Krakow in particular has been the shock that inspired David to create this exhibition. A communist prototype of a city without God, as so many others, where the people gathered together to celebrate in the street and raised the sign of the cross that was constantly pulled down by the government. However, there are still many projects that involve a conception of art as an instrument of agitation and propaganda. Many artists of our time went on to fame with the boom of scandal. Andres Serrano, his urine "Piss Christ" is a significant and widely imitated example.

Today we live in a world where the supremacy of science and technology gives them a mythical position, and they are taking the place occupied in the past religions. There is a call for secularization and lacism. A globalizing and scientific culture is presented as having all the answers. However, science has nothing to say about the big questions of life and about the last existential worry of man, about death. Neither does science have anything to say about human dignity. No, human rights are not based on scientific knowledge, they are pre-scientific, which does not mean they are irrational. For science, man can be transformed into an object and as such object be used subjectively-the world of science is a hypothesis world, being used at will and experiment with him. He has no value. Hence it is possible to speak of 'scientific nihilism' (VE Frankl), because the human being is depreciated and devalued. On one hand there is this loss of the fundamentals in his being, since man is not programmed and does not move by instinct, and on the other hand he has lost the cultural coordinates that guided him - experience transmitted in the traditions of each people and condensed in a proven collective historical experience - and man has been left in a situation in which he doesn't know how to live or what to live for.

The philosopher R. Spaemann notes: Today the place of utopia as a substitute for religion is occupied by a radical anti-utopia that completely rejects the idea of the transcendence of man. ... This is the image of the desires of a society in which the cognitive, ethical and religious demands have all completely disappeared and in which "nothing is considered real except pleasure and pain." All that matters to men, all that is serious for them is an illusion. We should not take anything seriously. The highest result of education is irony. The place of heroic nihilism is occupied by what I call "banal nihilism." Modern man's awareness of this situation is influencing the work of artists like David López. This can be seen in this exhibition to a large extent. David gives a response to those called to tolerance, to those who demand respect for all cultures and are ashamed of their own. Some of us have tasted that false liberty that enslaves and that happiness that leaves you left for dead. What is happening to David? He has found a treasure and wants to share it. What is this treasure? Nicholas Cabasilas describes it this way (Tsalónica, 1320 -1391):

“As often happens among men, when love is overwhelming and more intense, the lover is brought out of himself, as God’s love towards men brought him out himself; because he was not satisfied with calling the slave who He loved towards Him, but He descends in search of him, the Rich comes to the hut of the poor, and approaching him, he declares his passion, and rejected, he does not leave; insulted, he is not irritated; dismissed, he sits at the door . He stops at nothing to show his love; He endures the sufferings that were inflicted until death (...) What is most beyond belief is that He was not satisfied with enduring the worst sufferings and wounds until death, but once risen, after having rescued his body from corruption, he keeps his wounds and scars. He has abandoned everything else associated with the body, but He has not rejected the scars at all, He has not erased his wounds. On the contrary, he wanted to keep them because of His love towards man, because with them He was been able to find the one who was lost, and with those wounds He has won over the one He loved (...) What love could be equated with that? Who has ever imagined through beauty a love so crazy that in the name of that love, comes to be hurt by that same one who he loves, and not only withstands it, not only does he preserve his love for the ingrate, but places his wounds above everything? ”

This is the treasure found, the Event and the Person. And this is how it has happened in history. I finish with another paragraph from Spaemann: In banal liberalism, freedom means the multiplication of the possibilities of choice. But it doesn´t allow us to make way for any option that is worth sacrificing all the others. Such an option is mentioned in the Gospel: the treasure in the field and the valuable pearl that which the one who finds them sells everything. It was this treasure that gave European culture its vital center. Those that really sold this treasure were all saints. Christian Europe was not made up predominantly of saints. On the contrary. But there was no doubt that the saints had chosen the best part. They were the ones who represented the range of values that were ultimately valid. When Europe loses this treasure, she will only be left with banal nihilism, that is, the end of any culture worthy of that name.

José Antonio García Hernández
painter
Teacher of the Facultad de Bellas Artes San Carlos.