

RESTLESS CONFINEMENT: ALDO CHAPARRO'S ESCAPE

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Escape is Aldo Chaparro's (Lima, Peru, 1965) new work. Its title induces us to the idea of abandoning a certain place, breaking free from confinement or from a controlling power. The idea of escaping implies a dislocation, a movement and action that deny a previous condition, searching for a better situation, either physical or mental.

Structured around three pieces, Escape also deals with the antinomy inside/outside, suggesting that the 'outside' dimension is so much integrated and active in an interior space that it prompts an endlessness of the exterior in the interior and vice versa. Therefore, the different variations of this 'escape' (being it a verb, 'to escape', or a noun, a means of getting away from something or somewhere) determine an eternal development of this work and of this concept, transforming it in an endless and constant evasion.

This struggle, an almost visceral need to break the rigid barriers that are implied in the idea of 'escaping from...' is much perceived in the title of one of the three pieces that compose this work: a big mural made of black acrylic, which supports the neon sentence: 'YOU AND ME AGAINST THE WORLD'. This call-out message, written in thin, pink neon, reinforces the art of running away, as if Chapter was asking the viewer to take part in his evasion plan, in this act of total rebellion against the world. Remembering J.L Austin's theory about the power of written language, resumed in his famous book *How to Do Things with Words*, this neon piece perfectly fits in the British philosopher's definition of «performative utterances»: sentences that although not being true or false, persuade the reader to do a certain kind of action; these sentences are not only "saying" or "describing" something: they are a true summon.

This utterance to join the artist against the world, as well as the title of the whole work, is taken from «Escape», a homonymous song that is part of Scott Walker's last album: *Drift* (2006). This musical reference adds up another layer to the deepness of Aldo Chaparro's work. He is not only proposing an escape and summoning its audience to follow him in this liberating act, but he is also assuming the influence of pop culture, and especially of music, in his creations. References from the musical world are a constant in Aldo Chaparro's practice; on one hand, he demonstrates how a displacement of context and background totally changes the way in which sound material is perceived and interpreted; on the other he proposes a concrete, palpable form of these sentences that belong to our collective imaginary. A similar act of quoting song's lyrics and titles was used in the last exhibition the artist presented at OMR in April 2008: *It must be nice to disappear*. In this case, the exhibition was named after Lou Reed's song «Vanishing Act». It is curious to notice that not only *Escape* and *It must be nice to disappear* shared a musical influence but also that they partake a common meaning: both of them make reference to the act of elusion, of abandoning the actual place and time, inviting for a slip through the net.

Chapter is not trying to find a home or a shelter in the outside world, a quest that could easily fall into easy and shallow neo-archaic references. He is not even worried about defining dissemination, nor in reflecting about the nomadic condition of contemporary lifestyle and artistic practices, condemned to a constant escape from something: in this case, the multiplicity of heterogeneous, chaotic, and discontinuous elements presented by the artist lacks the consistency to depict this «derailed» time of ours. Thus, *Escape* does not intend to perform an analysis of our society or a description of our times. Its sense lies in a much more confined area of research: that of place and that of the relations established between two orders of space: the intimate and the public one.

Escape suggests a continuous restlessness, it alludes to something that tries to run away from everything, that struggles to avoid any boundaries or definitions: Aldo Chaparro's *Escape* is, above all, an attempt to destroy conformity and normality.

The third part of this 'triptych' is a scale model of the artist's future studio made by Predictor, an international architecture studio based in Mexico DF that has a wide portfolio of collaborations with the art world.

The project consists of a cube made of concrete with no windows; this sort of container is only opened to the exterior through its ceiling, from which a neon rainbow is propelled towards the outside of its thick, opaque walls. The architecture of studio recalls a black box, and reassembles a darkroom, or any sort of incubation space: everything happens in its interior, to which access is denied by the single definition of its concept. This project, establishing a complex and imposing relation with its surrounding environment (how do we react to the impact of having a concrete cube, completely hermetic, in the middle of the urban landscape we inhabit)? Reflects about the whole essence of the artist's creation area, as if the artist's studio was a magic place, with its access denied to everyone but its owner. The fascination by this space is enhanced with the inclusion of a representation of a rainbow, an odd and mysterious phenomenon that occupies our childhood memory and that, coming out of this enclosed atmosphere, reveals itself as an epiphany of the non-seen.

It is through this relation between colours (those of the rainbow, produced by the reflection of light in the 'invisible' water suspended in the atmosphere) that we arrive to the first work of Chaparro's Escape trilogy: it consists of a long, narrow opening on a wall through which one can see a black pyramid made of acrylic, containing thousands of white LED lights. These lights are connected with an audio piece specially composed for the effect by Gorka Alda, an electro acoustic composer who researches the relations between matter and space through his practice. The reflection of the LED lights onto the black, shiny surface of the acrylic generates an endless reproduction of the original luminous spark. This effect enhances the deepness of the entire structure, as it is perceived from the external observer. There is a clear tension between exterior and interior: on one hand the physical access to the inside of the installation is denied and we can only look at it from a fissure; on the other, it seems that everything is happening in its interior, with all those small fiery particles that are thrown off from the light sources in an endless twinkling effect. The Escape proposed by Chapter is an invitation to a constant disquietude. A dialectic dialogue between an inside that is more external than any outside because it is pulsing and vibrating with energy, almost about to explode.

It is this restlessness, this continuous movement between the inside and the outside that is fundamental for the reflection on the articulation between artistic creation and space. Chaparro's inversion of spaces (of an 'outside' that expands itself 'inside' and that generates a permanent and paradoxical movement), his experimentation, his coherence, and also the coexistence and combination of heterogenic elements, constitute the central axis of this work.

The formulation of an oxymoron that defines the complex and contradictory relation between the interior and the exterior assure the continuity of an expansive movement that seems to have just started, on this act of temporarily materializing the disquietude of an escape, a movement that always bares in itself this tension between inside and outside.