

# PALABRAS A LA DERIVA

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Lea como quien escucha música  
(Agustín Fernández Mallo, Postpoesía)

If at some point the world of contemporary artistic creation was able to assume the logic of the positivist model and take as its battle standard a hope in reason and a desire for the future, the house of cards upon which the avant-gardist utopian model of social, poetic and political transformation was shaken, in less than two decades, by a gale whipped up by theorists of post-structuralism, deconstruction and post-modernity.

Although the debate remains open, and although recent re-readings of the climax of '68 may have sought to breathe new life into it, the hot air from the late seventies and early eighties warmed us up for an eventual cooling down that assumed the end of metanarratives (Lyotard) and the appearance of micronarratives, minimal fictions and micropolitics (Foucault): everyday acts of resistance with which to make this world the best possible place to live.

The laws of chaos (Prygogyne), of accident (Virilio, Ballard), and of affects and desire (Deleuze and Guattari) are henceforth some of the handles onto which we cling in times of storm and stress, faced with the uncertainty and the fragility of any structure, which, as Elmgreen and Dragset said, may be altered, changed and exchanged.

Appropriation (Levine, Sturtevant, Prince), interdisciplinarity (W.J.T. Mitchell), samples, mosaic culture (Cazeneuve), postproduction and relationality (Bourriaud), cut-up writing (Burroughs), open networks and the expansion of frequencies are just some of the terms and concepts that form the short-circuited account of these, our "last days."

Within this cultural context, broadened and amplified, we might begin a re-reading of the work of Aldo Chaparro; a re-reading that carries along with it something that Douglas Crimp wrote at the beginning of an anthology of his texts: I don't want to assimilate my writing retroactively to a coherent trajectory of an analysis of the political dimension of art. It's not just that my critical work has a history – and further a prehistory, as I suggest here – but that the orientation of the historical circumstances I have lived, both big and small, has influenced it unpredictably, to the point of making it appear incoherent. Incoherent, as all subjects are. Incoherent, however we distinguish this from our profound ambivalence. Incoherent, because it is impossible for us to say, in the last analysis, what is primary for us, and whether that primacy is truly original. Or to say what could come next...

This incoherence could be the place from which to begin a journey through a trajectory like Aldo Chaparro's, whose principal path is the use of language, the mise-en-scene of words and their performative utterance (in Austin's sense), inscribing the tabula rasa of the avant-gardes and of minimalism's polished artifacts with those questions that affected the supine corpse of the author and brought about an excess of transmitters.

In a world ever more saturated with words.

Through this process of decontextualizing words, extracting phrases originally from the world of pop music (The Cure, New Order, Nina Simone, The Smiths, Visage, Lou Reed, Queen, Radiohead, Roxy Music or The Velvet Underground), Chaparro follows the model of a DJ whose needle seeks out the grooves wherein to find the perfect mix of meaning, a place where the later Wittgenstein's dictum "the meaning is the use" might be fulfilled.

It is through this use of resources appropriated from minimalism – neon (Flavin, Judd) and words (Weiner, Holzer) – perverted and covered, to use Gerardo Mosquera's phrase, according to the cultural, political

and social context in which his work develops, that Aldo Chaparro's pieces unleash a more open narrative, broad and hypertextual, wherein the circulation of signifiers and the transformation of signifieds is key for some of his most familiar works, such as PUTA or TABÚ.

In the middle of the sixties, Robert Indiana summarized the spirit of the decade with LOVE, staging and "performativizing" with this sculptural and graphic image something that burned out after the revolts of Monterrey to make for the subcultural discourses that would put an end to pop and usher in punk and New Wave. In the eighties, the anesthetized America of the Reagan era would be shaken by the proposals of groups like Gran Fury or Act Up, who converted Indiana's LOVE into AIDS/RIOT, exposing the same image, years later, to reconstitution by artists such as Kendall Geers (BOMB, 1996) or Marc Bijl (PORN, 2002), or to being used for merchandising by groups like Rage Against The Machine (RAGE, 2002).

In this sense the circulation of signifiers and the loss or error in the chain of cultural transmission – as seen in some of the theoretical writing on youth subcultures – is addressed by Aldo Chaparro's installations, sculptures and prints, an element that leads him to act in the manner Bourriaud described as postproduction: as a programmer whose sculptures usher us equally to a constructivist proud in a "nu-rave" key and to the fragile voice of Nico, swaying between the tambourines and guitars of Cale, Reed and company in Warhol's favorite song, "I'll be your mirror."

Ever since I saw that particular piece by Chaparro, some of the tensions I experienced with his work were unveiled. Contrary to how a writer would make use of words, Chaparro's works turn the ignition on the mechanism of experience, requiring the complicity of a reader who might want to attend all tomorrow's parties. A game of mirrors and reflections, neon and shadow, cut-up words and short-circuited discourses. Lights, language and action. It's time to come on stage and give it your all. The audience is waiting, and as with Genet's tightrope walker, they're waiting for you to fall. Typical me / Typical me / I started something and I'm not too sure.