

(Excerpt, full review in Spanish version)

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Art | Exhibitions

A tender audacity

Three exhibitions reflect on the intimate, the domestic and the familiar, with different aesthetics and without appealing to the serene intimacy that the commonplace assigns home

LA NACION - In one of his essays on English literature, G. K. Chesterton analyzes the work and life of Emily Brontë. With the irony that characterizes him, states that the author of *Wuthering Heights* "was so warm and domestic like a house on fire." That image –both smiling and deeply critical- manages to escape the stereotype thanks to its paradoxical construction, since a person "as domestic and warm like a house on fire" is closer to madness than to the serene intimacy that the commonplace assigns home. That same tender boldness is the force that runs three exhibitions (formally and aesthetically very different), that talk about the intimate, the home, the familiar. They are *Cruz imaginal*, by Catalina León; *Trapo*, by Marga Steinwasser, and *Muy doméstica*, by Marino Balbuena, Alejandra Mizrahi, Ramón Teves and Paula Toto Blake.

Catalina León's installation (Firts Prize Petrobras arteBA-2007) brings together two very different works: a painting on a roller blind (in which we see the head of a man crossed to the neck by a branch) and a huge Hornero nest, under construction. On one wall there is a series of phrases that tell the story of the wounded man. From the distance, these words form an ant trail going from the painting to the nest. While the painting seems to have frozen the image just before the man's death, the nest is alive. Germinating grasses and fungi make their appearance in the damp walls. The nest is alive, but still, for it is impossible to transport.

This nest can be explored, both in a physical sense (you can enter it) and aesthetic sense, to relate it to the bread ovens that raised Victor Grippo or with a work by Marta Minujín (*Comunicando con Tierra*) that also included a giant Hornero nest. In its Pampa like sobriety lies its strength: symbol while object the nest León builds is a trigger for poetic images. Between the portrait and the nest remains a hole: it is the space that houses the bewilderment of the spectator, tugged by the mortal pain reflecting the portrait and the ambiguous promise of a home in process.

[...]

There is always hope: the pursuit of pleasure can make all stereotyped life, all subjectivity produced in series, all intimacy shaped according to the rules of mass consumption, explode into pieces. At that moment when pain and desire confuse, the domestic can venture into the unknown. DATA. *Cruz Imaginal*, by Catalina León, at

Daniel Abate (Passage Bollini 2170) and Trapos, by Marga Steinwasser at Elsi del Rio (Arevalo 1748), until Tuesday 22nd. Muy doméstica, by various artists, at Arte x Arte (Lavalleja 1062), until July 31st.