

(Excerpt, full review in Spanish version)

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ART > PETROBRAS AWARD OF THIS YEAR

Don't waste a lifetime being cool

Since 2004, the Petrobras award, whose winner projects are presented in ArteBA, has increasingly become an excuse to meet new generations of young artists. So Radar provides a look at the eight works presented in this year's edition, and that show, as heads and tails of the artistic map, a moving claim for intimacy and gestures of sarcasm before the trinkets sold by contemporary art.

By Leopoldo Estol

The recent Petrobras award insists with some issues as it does every year: What materials do novice artists use? What are their strategies and ways of relating ideas? How do they thrill the audience? If these questions resonate much it is because these days, the Petrobras award is one of the few platforms, perhaps the only one, for thinking emerging aesthetics and trends. In part because it is the only contest that chooses yet finances the production of specific projects by artists with less than 5 years of artistic career. The first edition was in 2004, when the Brazilian oil company decided to support ArteBA foundation by financing projects by artists who would appear in parallel to the fair. And that society still enjoys good health today, resulting in ambitious projects for artists that are both challenging in scale and development and presentation of a personal language. While the eight selected artists have been presenting solo and group exhibitions, the fact of being selected will force them to a synthesis to which no other exhibition circumstances has them accustomed.

To an audience that begins to feel numb after several dozen exhibition stands arriving to the Petrobras award premises was a kind of oasis as the protocol of sale (merchandise-on-paneling) stayed behind to give place to these strange micro-worlds that each artist generated.

[...]

The fertile land

It is neither a wasteland nor a garden. Nor is it strictly painting since the figurative is always interrupted by accidents of reality, be it plants that emerge from holes, snails that wander quite unpunished leaving trails of slime, a huge pile of soil irrigated with chicken bones or pieces of canvas that very naturally resurge from the vegetation. León invites us to a universe that is not proposed under the seduction of the multiple as in the case of Villar Rojas or Bianchi, nor uses narrative as Gomez and Nicanor; her bet will be more abstract: the total organic

work. And in that search, the corruption of the different parts seems to be absolutely inevitable. That is why through a quick look this work does not seem to be very special, but gains unexpected density once you have already stayed inside for a while. Some fruits are halved open with the seeds out. In a kind of intimate ritual, Catalina blesses her paintings with seeds giving fertility to her images and rest to those who after seeing so many images dared to enter.

Out of competition

A fair are hundreds of images and objects that for some reason are looking for another home. A casual visitor could very quickly get dizzy in this multitude of stimuli. Petrobras Award, citing the excuse of a competition, serves as a refuge for much of the journey. The diversity and commitment seen in this year's edition, coordinated by Victoria Noorthoorn, are a sign of good health to the local scene, and exploring the selected projects is one of the most exciting moments of the annual art calendar. It is true that competition generates an unfriendly atmosphere for thinking art-works because it forces the one exposing and the one looking to wonder fairly unpleasantly if one thing is better than another, unproductive question if any. A dangerous projection of market over the artistic community: Who is better? Which personal language is in better shape? Art is not capitalism but communion. It is not about who executes more accurately a technique but the meeting of two people's gaze. Therefore, it is expected that in future editions, the project will echo the place it is taking within the scene and generate a freer dialogue platform where competition yields its role to something much deeper and true, in the happy meeting between young artists and its also young and growing audience.