

## Mare Nostrum by Júlio Quaresma

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The opening of the ARTEH(R) - Hotels and Resorts sponsored exhibition Mare Nostrum by Júlio Quaresma was held on October 6, 2005, in Valencia, Spain.

With this exhibition Júlio Quaresma conceived one of the most interesting and successful interactions between the space of 'La Muralla' at IVAM, Institut Valencià D'Art Modern, and the plastic elements installed there. A space projected in memory like the Mediterranean Sea, a structuring element of a common experience. The gallery is the Mediterranean Sea, understood as a multicultural and intercultural space whose dialogues or even their absence both reflect the world and are reflected in it.

Consuelo Císcar, Director of IVAM, writes that Júlio Quaresma, like Francis Bacon, begins to use photographs of X-rays in representations of the human figure, she further adds that the sequential characteristics of these also refer to the work of Eadward Muybridge and in conclusion 'in the other hand, Leonardo da Vinci's contribution to the knowledge of anatomy is a scientific feat and a legacy of which we are still disciples and that contains a humanism that Quaresma reflects in all his creative inventory.'

The room, enveloped in a blue light which induces the presence of the sea, functions as a passage/link but also as a barrier. On the wall phrases of religious origin are projected and their dynamic form theatrically renders the image of the movement of the sea whilst on the walls the bodies dialogue between painting and photography. Lyle Rexer, an American art critic, states that the appropriation of photography here is pure daring and 'If Warhol proposed a second mode of being or photography, then we might say that Quaresma has proposed a third'.

Man emerges here visualized as the medium for a message where only devoid of shackles, in a vision similar to Rousseau's good savage, can he influence and transform the chess board into a game without cheque-mates.

The architect, artist, and scenographer, denounces what occurs deep within us all. His work is constructed around the body as a building endowed with life and in the paintings his characters are shown with three dimensions, like athletic sculptures stuck to the canvas.

Quaresma studies the metamorphosis of the body in his permanent quest for happiness and religion which obsessively haunts him. 'Man is a religious animal that forgets God' the always irreverent Baudelaire wrote or as Fernando Castro Floréz states: the subject in this work is a fetish, an inorganic object, 'according to Freud, the presence of that nothing that is the maternal penis and the sign of its absence'. And yet Quaresma draws perfect bodies, albeit characterised by an extraordinary kind of sexual ambiguity...these bodies lack faces, they are decapitated, close to what Bataille called 'acephalia'

Quaresma's men, androgynous and transsexual, symbolise the first man and it is possible that they may find their redemption in the religious rituals that are insinuated here. Like in Klossowski's lived paintings, simulacrum and mimesis mark the game of identity.

With a discourse of ambivalent images expressed through mannerist poetry, drawn out by an accentuated subjectivity, Quaresma allows the intention of bringing out the pressing need for escape of the contemporary human to be anticipated. The desire to disappear, to transmute, to escape from an asphyxiating reality is a constant in his verse/brushstrokes.

Canvasses, photographs and written elements are complemented by a video projected on water within a black cube which refers to other religious icons, from Christ to Allah and the space of dialogue and silence, love and conflict emerges in the Amar(ras) video as a metaphor of communication, drawn between seduction, the love and hatred between the ropes with which we tie ourselves up.

For the Exhibition's closing ceremony, on the 12th of January, 2006, and to accompany the conference concerning water where both Júlio Quaresma and Lyle Rexer will be present, a performance where people in the nude will fill the Exhibition gallery is planned.

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