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*Assassination by Miró**

Antoni Tàpies

In trying to show up some of the more important aspects of Miró's contribution to our generation, it might be interesting today to refer to the celebrity of his famous exclamation «painting must be assassinated». This exclamation, logical then and stimulating now, is still valid for the younger generations, who continue to reflect on the artistic fact in itself.

It is known now that the idea of anti-art originated from the negation, which is characteristic of the Dada movement, of all values. Duchamp, and then Picabia and Man Ray, scandalized Paris and New York because they *disputed* the sense of every «work of art». Dada in Zurich and Berlin and, above all, André Breton in Paris, afterwards channelled this *dispute*. They recognized the continuity of painting and literature and introduced to its aspects till then unknown of the unconscious and of imaginative freedom.

The provocation which Miró threw out in 1929 and took up again afterwards is to do with this last context. It is necessary to say, however - as Jacques Dupin rightly underlines in his biography - that Miró prolongs and goes into it in depth. «Dada was positioned outside artistic expression. It was a sort of bomb thrown by a terrorist under a moving train. Miró never ceases to be a painter even within the anti-art movement. It is the pictorial movement which *contests* itself». Two, as one can see, diametrically opposed points of view and, thus, logical or which should be. Marcel Duchamp is quite aware of this when, not believing any longer in the work of art, he gives up working in order to dedicate himself to playing chess. Today, in the same way, others - if they were at all consistent - should dedicate themselves to politics, to sociology, to preartistic scholastic education or to whatsoever thing. Miró instead making his way in the world, like all the great biological forces in the most unforeseeable ways, gives us a lesson on the existence of a possible new art in constant evolution.

But the effort is more tiring than it seems and we mustn't be surprised if many withdraw even before beginning. We know of the forty days and the forty nights of struggle in the desert for the survival of universal art, embittered by anguish and self-sacrifice. Because the assassination we heard of from Miró repeats itself every day with the destruction of one's own satisfactions, one's discoveries, of all the facilitations and acquired habits. Miró shows us how (as being only an attitude - or a defeat for however worthy it wants to appear) it can be enriched and completed by this troubled but winning struggle, in the course of which it confers on it its material form. It's important not to lose sight of our artist's periods of crisis, rich testimony even though quiet sad, in the years 1929 and 1930. Moments of «anguished impotence», according to his biography in which «after having broken the guitar of others one hurls himself onto his own». Crises which repeated themselves more than once throughout his evolution and which Miró faced rather than fled from, producing works truly «mad», before entering a new phase.

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From this position Miró places himself admirably on the track of the two problems which today appear fundamental for artistic creation. On the one hand, the necessary, not resigned but rather vital and dynamic acceptance of the dialogue with the material chosen by the creator. Miró seems to confirm that within art experimenting cannot consist only in theoretical nuances, nor can it be used up unless in the true confrontation body to body of the author and his concrete realization, mad and strange as it might seem right away, or modest and unsuccessful as it might appear. It is perhaps for this that today he has shown us the need to «be constantly in form». In order to go beyond this we must not expect solutions to spring from books or meetings, and still less believe that inspiration falls from the sky without one having to do anything at all.

On the other hand, the problem which his assassination makes clear takes us right to the heart of the evolution of contemporary artistic language. As is known nowadays art is irreducible to a mere semantics of form, colour and images which objectively move alone. And it is also known that one of its most active ingredients is the psychological shock provoked by the change factor, with all that that implies in terms of originality and novelty. It is not a question of arbitrary changes of fashion for commercial objectives, as some think, but rather of those changes which (and this is seen better in Miró than in anyone else), within the logic of variable elements, must find a correspondence in the togetherness of a function and know how to turn towards the nevralgic points easiest to touch at any given moment in harmony with the desired content and the right form. They are those which, in the end, contribute to form the rare and necessary miracle - whether this idea pleases us or not - of the *personality* which each artist possesses.

One should not be astonished, then, if Georges Hugnet declares that with the assassination of painting, Miró has left us one of the most personal and surprising works of this century.

(El arte contra la estética, Planeta - De Agostini, Barcelona 1986, pp. 97-102; It. tr. L'arte contro l'estetica, Dedalo, Bari 1980, pp. 46-48).