

## CONVERSATION WITH CURRO GONZALEZ

For me everything is simply a question of time. When I try to write, my head works at one rhythm and the words flow as fast as they do when I talk, and yet my hand can't keep up with it, and something just doesn't work. I always end up having to think backwards, which becomes an exercise in anxiety. Only when I draw do I manage to synchronise the rhythms of both things; perhaps that is the reason I do it.

Curro González, 1986

Kevin Power: Curro, this is the second time we have talked about the importance of drawing in your work, but twenty years have now passed since that first conversation. So I'd like to ask you, how do you understand the role of drawing in your work at this point in time? Have there been any substantial changes in attitude, process, or methodology, or simply even in your working habits with regards drawing?

Curro González: Without a doubt there have been changes...I consider drawing to be a substantial element of my work, even though it often manifests itself in different ways. Some drawings turn out to be a conduit to something else, but -why not?- we can also consider them to be independent entities, like a series of interconnected rooms inside a house. The problem, however, arises when we try to determine why we decide to call a given work a 'drawing' and why, at a certain point, we begin to think of it as something else. Because of this, I have a difficult time establishing a specific boundary between drawing and painting. I don't mean to get into a nominalist debate, which only confuses the issue even more, but I do think that we use the word 'drawing' for different things, perhaps because these things often happen simultaneously, superimposing themselves within a work of art. If, in addition to the physical object itself, we understand 'drawing' to be a quality that is an inherent part of pictorial work, one that affects any and all works in which vision intervenes, then we would have to acknowledge that the notion of a painting cannot be separated from the necessary presence of the drawing, which helps to create it in the first place. In this light, I think this separation is impossible, and it becomes a futile controversy to try and debate about how much drawing and how much painting make up a given work of art. It is quite an old debate, however, which emerged during the Renaissance, in the famous and tactical dispute between the Florentine and Venetian schools, revealing a confrontation between the value of drawing versus the value of colour, and the value of line versus the value of the stain. In the academic realm this controversy, somewhat absurd in the end, continues to play itself out quite strongly, I suppose

because this type of pointless argument has been and always will be the eternal fodder of certain artistic circles.

For many years, I have avoided this question entirely, and now it is rather perplexing to have to decide whether or not I need to establish those limits at all. If, for example, you don't consider those boundaries while looking at a painting on a Chinese scroll, it is because our interpretation does not incorporate the cultural connotations that we apply to other works of art. We know that our interpretation of such a work ought to be global, overlooking neither the poem alongside it nor the fact that it is presented in the form of calligraphy, something that those of us who are unfamiliar with the Chinese language perceive in a kind of rhythmic arabesque, a sort of discreet hieroglyph that contributes to the composition of the image. If we transpose this digression to the field of literature, and agreed that what we call a 'drawing' is analogous to what we call a 'poem' then I think that it would be very difficult to establish any kind of boundary between their prose and their poetry, at least for certain authors.

K.P.: I take your point but I was also wondering if there were not a whole series of evident factors, both psychological and social, that separated the two acts. I remember, for example, that Tom Phillips used to draw during lunch! It can be seen as something carrying specific implications - namely that he was feeling relaxed, disposed, physically comfortable. It did not, of course, mean that he was engaged in a minor art but it did imply different social practices. Fernando Bryce, the Peruvian artist, draws for hours a day sitting at the table and this surely implies and produces a different relationship with his immediate world. I'm not sure what Pettibon does but his work engages us in a very different way than painting does. Perhaps I'll return later to some of these issues. For the moment, however, what you have been saying brings to mind a work, highly related in itself to drawing, that I'd like you to comment upon. I am referring to *Canción* (Song) (1988) that appeared on the cover of *Arena* - a magazine that played a small but peculiar role in the climate of the eighties - where you deal with a number of questions that are recurrent in your work: the idea of creating an autonomous space, perspectival play, optical illusion, and even through the letters that spill out repeatedly all over the work a playful interest in esoteric theory, such as the writings of Llull.

C.G.: With respect to this issue, I feel like something of a hostage to tradition, with whatever positive or negative connotations this may suggest. As I said before, I have wanted to get past those kinds of classifications or boundaries, so that I might feel freer to act on my own. But I am also fully aware that there are social and, necessarily, psychological factors that differentiate between one thing and another. With one of the artists you mention, what may be happening is that his work has

formalized and advanced exclusively with a series of media that are traditionally considered part of the realm of drawing. There may be many different reasons behind this decision, but it is clear that the majority of his work is carried out in this medium. Interpretation, however, starts to become problematic as other factors come into play, and this is a typical issue that has been raised in the art market, given that it is frequently within the art market that these differences become categories. There are differences, albeit subtle, between Tom Phillips's point of view and Pettibon's.

Drawing involves an activity that, in general terms, is more economical than others. In that sense, oddly, the notion of a 'limited' medium permits a more agile, effective evolution of the expression of certain ideas and sensations, with a minimum 'expense,' so to speak. These expressions might seem to manifest themselves with a kind of nudity, almost stripped of unnecessary adornments. One piece that I think is a good example of this boundary issue is the one that you mentioned before, the piece that appeared on the cover of *Arena* magazine. This piece really shows the evolution of my work, especially in the second half of the 1980s. *Canción* (Song) is not a drawing, but maybe it is; maybe it just depends on how much you feel like arguing the point. It was intended to be a kind of sequel to a previous piece, *Escalera* (Staircase), an oil on canvas from 1985, which created a psychological tension that was activated by the dizzying perspective of a staircase that closed up and into a kind of rectangular spiral, with the silhouette of a person at the far end. Initially, this piece was conceived as a kind of journey within, a path to a personal, private world, an inaccessible labyrinth of sorts. The 1988 version is more aerial, with a subtler treatment, and I would say that the idea has grown deeper, richer. The staircase is still there, but it is modified into a square format, which reinforces the idea of a spiral, without fully achieving it. This piece also presents a problem of perception, which is intended to slow down the viewer's 'reading' of it. This is where we see Juan Ramón Jiménez's verse, 'Yo solo vivo dentro de la primavera' (I only live within the springtime), treated like a labyrinth of letters in that, if you want to read the entire verse, you have to find the central letter that allows you to read it in four directions. This labyrinth is based on a Beatus illustration.

K.P.: But beyond these hazy limits, some of your drawings seem to have emerged from an almost playful and unheeded moment, what we might call the classic point for the origin of a work of art, if it makes any sense to continue talking in those terms. They seem to have that characteristic fluidity, intimacy, and communicative capacity that is so natural to drawing: that is to say, effortless ...

C.G.: We like to think that a drawing reflects something of the original moment of the creative act, the moment at

which the piece was conceived—an almost pornographic desire, which takes us into the private space of the artists at the very moment when he spills his essences. This idea is inextricably linked to the increasing value ascribed to spontaneity at the beginning of the modern movement, perhaps as something inherited from the Romanticism. Before that point in time, drawings were hardly ever displayed at all, usually remaining behind in the workshop; only occasionally did they ever find another home. Probably as a reaction to this disdain for the unfinished (and as such for the spontaneous), the pendulum has now swung the other way, and as such we now tend to overrate spontaneity, which has been and continues to be a determining factor of the tastes and, as such, the evolution of the majority of art of the past two hundred years. Anything that is spontaneous is now seen as an indicator of sincerity, of authenticity, but this is in fact a double-edged sword, because the artist who now feels obliged to be spontaneous, can never be spontaneous for the simple fact of that obligation and, given that his work will be judged according to those standards, he will reproduce them through a natural mechanism of artistic coherence. And so the artist then feigns a spontaneity that no longer feels, among other reasons because he can't; in a way he has to pretend to be sincere in order to be understood.

This 'spontaneous style' has considerable influence in the broad consensus that certain art forms have achieved, to the point of becoming a standard of taste, something that I feel is connected to what I've heard you describe as the 'hedonistic position' of the artist, though I would go even further and describe it as an onanistic position since, from my perspective, the artist who adopts this attitude produces a kind of art that is not at all transitive, and really just spends a lot of time admiring his own reflection the mirror, never achieving any kind of real, effective communication. During my education and evolution as an artist I was very close to this position, but when I reached a certain point, I no longer derived any satisfaction beyond the inertia of the work. Sort of in the same way that after a party, the day after, the lingering taste of tobacco and alcohol fumes become unpleasant -I'm like a cow chewing on its cud, plagued by chronic acid reflux. That was how I realized that I had to do something different with my artwork. At that moment it became critical for me to produce something more reflective and also more economical. I'm talking about the period between 1986 and 1990, the years when those boundaries between painting and drawing became more diffuse.

K.P.: Many of these works seem to work like sequences from a film or a loosely developed script. This is especially true, of course, of any large drawing series but it also applies to a work such as *La Herida* (The Wound) (1987) that consists of 36 small pieces, beginning and ending with an image of a toby jug - a characteristic image o that

exploits a mocking and strange distortion. This work moves from dark to light and throws up along the way a whole sequence of images: a pipe, landscapes, a bridge, a window onto the world, a room, a pair of shoes. We can bring them together into our own narrative structure but, at the same time, knowing that it does not truly hold as a coherent unit. The images are set in a kind of abstract field and seem to use different techniques or pictorial preoccupations. The title, I remember you telling me, comes from one of Theo's letters to Van Gogh and stands as a metaphor.

C.G.: This piece is another good example of how an artist's work can bring together a number of disparate elements that eventually link up. When those pieces fall into place and assume a kind of relationship in one's mind, everything seems very fortuitous and even pleasant, I would say, but it is actually the result of an often lengthy process. I tend to say that all I know how to do is place things next to each other and hope that they somehow work on their own. *La herida* is the result of one of those 'works' over time. Van Gogh once said something that for me came to be pivotal in my own articulation of that piece, and around which various associations and derivations sprung up. The quote comes from a letter the artist wrote to his brother Theo after the dramatic episode of his ear amputation. He says, "Physically I am well; the wound is healing very well and the massive blood loss is levelling out." When I tried to envision a piece that could transmit the same sensation of peace that can come directly after such a terrible incident, I thought about how there are times when we feel as though we are seeing life as something that occurs between parentheses, lapses of time separated by cathartic occurrences that serve as punctuation marks. In this piece, the scenes come, one after the other, as if in transit from one state to another, from shadow to light, leaping from order to chaos and then back again. The images are what emerge in these leaps, like wounds that are necessary in order to understand life. Because, as Michaux pointed out, to understand, intelligence must be wounded.

K.P.: Reading again the catalogue that we made about your drawings at that time, I found the following affirmation that seems to me so close to you as person and as attitude: "As far as I am concerned they correspond to what I felt during those few days I spent in Cazalla ... I have known this countryside since I was a child, but I had not been back there for at least ten years. It is not for me simply a matter of landscape but rather of the sensation we get from things: to see again things that we saw through different eyes, to feel things that we felt in a different way. A valley, an irrigation pipe-line, a spring, a tree, a mine, a quarry, a mine-truck, a pile of earth, all have their particular meaning for me. It is something that I try to discover when I am alone here in the studio and it goes way beyond any simple anecdotal or landscape interest. They are things that are directly related to my life and that finally give it meaning. They return to tell me that I am

alive because I have seen them and been able in some way to feel that they are there. When I succeed and achieve what I proposed is on those occasions when I feel that I have painted myself in the things or landscapes that I am doing and when I fail it is because I have simply painted a landscape." Would you modify anything of this statement?

C.G. Leaving aside the bucolic part, and a few very categorical remarks -perhaps age has a way of making a person more sceptical- I find these words to be very reflective of the feelings that inspired my work at that time. Insofar as they relate to those works, those words are still true. In those days I felt a very urgent need to capture the experience of the moment of the work's production. In other words, I was still unaware of the purpose of using a filter, which I could use to place some kind of distance between me and my work, so that I might analyze both my work and my feelings in a more effective way. Without that filter, I think, you end up producing work in a situation akin to blindness, simply because you aren't able to clearly see the things that are too close to you, right under your nose. A situation of supposed transcendence, in which only the enthusiasm of the beginning gives you faith. A very unhealthy situation. There is a very thin line separating the sublime from the absurd, too thin for you to be sure that you're on the right side of it. I don't believe in the transcendental qualities of the artist's work. It would be too easy to label old works as 'naive' and new ones as 'seasoned,' and I'm sure there are plenty of people who would say that the early freshness and ease were much healthier. Perhaps it's the vengeance that comes with years.

K.P.: There is an untitled series of drawings from 1985, with a style that might have some vague relationship to the pictorial language of Van Gogh, somewhat agitatedly expressionist, and at the same time manifestly emotional, as if derived directly from experience. What were you attempting to do in this series?

C.G.: Around that time, my work was very clearly connected to Expressionist painting, though with derivations that brought it rather close to artists like Bonnard or Ensor. Ever since I began to paint, I always felt a special affinity with the work of Van Gogh; as I studied I grew obsessed with the idea that I had to simultaneously produce the representation of a landscape (or whatever other subject) with the expression of a feeling—a feeling that might guide the representation, even beyond the thing itself. In that way, I espoused a kind of Expressionist principle, which obliged me to project myself through everything I created, given that this projection was, in the end, the real objective of the work, the real subject of the piece. This emotional implication in the work was always brought about by an experience that was somehow related to the subject being represented, something that had to happen through a process that I think of as an epiphany: an apparition that allowed the work to become

something real, and which necessarily came about in an atmosphere of especially heightened tension, given that the success or failure of the execution depended, to a large degree, upon achieving that emotional state. In this series of drawings, the medium is a very rapid one, and the charcoal pencil does an excellent job of registering the effects and accidents produced by rapid hand movements. Charcoal dust is very volatile and allows all sorts of subtleties, which in turn allows for some very sophisticated embellishments, and adaptations to other graphic treatments. The uninhibited treatment, full of imperfections, underscores the value we ascribe to the gesture, and as a result the central focus of the work is that impulse to capture the moment. Impulses that come in succession, in a kind of trial-and-error, an interrogation, with the form along with the sensation you are trying to capture.

K.P.: I am thinking with regards what you have been saying of that series of charcoal drawings that you did in Cazalla in 1985, before *La Herida*, that takes a church as its protagonist. The church changes from being the sole subject-matter to the same building seen, as it were, from different perspectives to create a multiple image. You focus on different elements such as the door, and you also draw it from different distances. Can you specifically recall the experience and what it meant to you?

C.G.: These drawings are organized in series that suggest an ordered reading, like vignettes that unfold according to a kind of script, an embryonic script. *La herida* uses this same system, but the idea of the comic strip is more present in these drawings. To configure that strip, or sequence, I devised a series of drawings that, in this case, focus on the representation of a building, a hermitage, that appears successively in various different positions until it is multiplied, and at the same time it is transformed in such a way that we can begin to associate it with the view of the church of Auver-sur-Oise that Van Gogh painted. It is kind of like putting yourself in the situation of seeing through the eyes of another person or, rather, expressing that 'way of seeing' with the eyes of another. A very obsessive behaviour. When I have a subject in front of me, I am aware that my interpretation is necessarily incomplete, and I work as hard as I can on the visual aspect, but always with the greedy desire to capture that other, invisible aspect, even though this process may end up being an exercise in frustration. We can only approach form insofar as we can approach feeling.

K.P.: What is it that interests you about drawing as a medium? I am thinking, for example, of qualities such as immediacy, intimacy of touch, scale, and perhaps a certain emotional or psychological register?

C.G.: When we describe a painting, we often tend to add dynamic and temporal elements that the painting itself does

not possess, or at least only has the potential to possess. The exercise of painting and drawing is born, to a certain degree, out of an internal negotiation with the frustration that goes along with limitation. For a long time, I felt that I had lost the rhythm of my discourse, because the ideas were flowing faster than I was able to express them. And so it occurred to me that drawing might offer me a better chance of achieving synchronization, of overcoming that lapse in time. Drawings can be rapid and economical, and they have certain qualities that are somewhat analogous to writing. To a large degree, drawing continues to offer me the illusion that, at some point, I will be able to close that insurmountable gap.

K.P.: You often work in terms of series. But the sources for these series are very different, sometimes they are literary, others autobiographical, and occasionally from some kind of narrative impulse?

C.G.: If we were to admit that one single idea can be expressed through various media, we would have to accept the idea that at least one part of its original essence remains unaltered, and that is something I don't feel able to defend. Very often, what happens is that each medium offers a distinct set of interpretive subtleties that may be more or less appropriate to one's subject matter. Because of this, they have the power to shape and alter the idea being expressed. Our problem, then, is that we have to select the medium that best fits the expression that interests us, knowing that the medium we select will offer a level of unity to a number of elements that may be disparate. Something similar happens if we invert the direction of the process and consider what you call the 'sources.' The ideas that inspire work can appear in a variety of ways, and whether or not they become connected, they eventually reach a kind of critical mass that allows the work to happen. Everything is a question of relationships, of mental connections that very often work together and take place in a semi-conscious state. Some ideas ricochet from one side to the other, and set off a chain of idea-associations that, in turn, lead to new works of art. This is something like what happens to us when we enter into a dialogue and what we say and listen to work as prompts that call out for another sentence. This is the mental behaviour that is at the root of the series, and it is something that, in my case at least, occurred naturally, through the simple dynamic of thinking.

On the other hand, I also know that absolute precision in expression will always be unattainable, which inevitably makes me doubt the solution I choose. And so, I return to the work and the idea, over and over again, and one way to assuage that feeling of uncertainty is by attempting variations. Something like changing the focal point and looking around the original idea to see what might have slipped through the cracks. When we draw, in a way, we act like someone who throws stones in an attempt to hit a specific target. It's never easy to hit that target the

first time around, and only by making mistakes are we able to correct the trajectory of the stone the next time around. I don't trust people who get it right the first time, because I always end up wondering if maybe it was just a lucky coincidence that the stone happened to hit the target that first time. In that sense, in a work of art conceived as a series you can maintain a reasonable variety of solutions within an acceptable level of coherence.

Nevertheless, I do think it's important to point out that, out of habit, we have come to use the term 'series' for any group of works that only share a temporal or procedural relationship. In this sense, I do think that this term is frequently abused.

K.P.: It is clear that narrative has once again become a central focus and that drawings, works in series, paper are now very much in vogue. There is a social need to return to story. Society looks to see itself reflected and needs a mirror for its own peculiarities and complexities. We have returned to it from numerous perspectives ranging from a fast urban take, via the comic and pop culture, to a fragmented narration that resists the reader and his desire to appropriate as quickly as possible a meaning, from complex metafictional procedures to the epic that seeks to include it all. How do you envisage its possibilities? And what, for example, were you attempting to do in a series of works, such as *10 dias de Agosto* (Ten days in August)?

C.G.: Nowadays it is generally accepted that a universal discourse that effectively centers and depicts the world is unattainable. The modernist discourse made many attempts to give art a global vision, but the world is much more complex than a few very determined geniuses could have imagined. Now that the drunken reverie has passed, the postmodernist hangover has left us in a kind of self-satisfaction that has started to become unbearable. I think we feel a need to continue seeing ourselves reflected in what we create, even if only as an attempt to understand ourselves. The need to narrate our stories is too old to just disappear suddenly because of some short-lived crisis, and so what's happening now, even if it is only one more of the many fluctuations that occur in the art world, can be a positive thing that may help us study the possibilities of continuing to create works of art that are capable of narrating our presence in the world. This is something that I already alluded to when I talked about the need to produce transitive art, art that abandons the self-referential and pointless narcissism that plagued the art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This does bring up a very particular kind of danger, now that the art world is such a powerful machine that is following the path of the entertainment industry. And just as the realm of advertising can certainly produce some very accomplished work, though motivated by spurious interests, some artists who move in the realm of the narrative seem fascinated by the persuasive, communicative capacities of advertising. Painting and, as a consequence, drawing both play a

secondary role in the art world today, and I think that this marginal quality is precisely what will facilitate the advent of new discourses that can evolve more freely. Naturally people will say things like 'well, what else would a painter think?' In a way I feel like a survivor, because for me painting has been a mode of survival, an activity that belongs to the past and that stubbornly persists, to this day.

*10 Días en Agosto* evolved as the narration or metanarration of the feelings I was left with following a number of conversations I had, for a few days in August, with my grandmother, who was quite old and suffering from senile dementia. For this work, I placed, face to face, two lines of ten squares each, which were situated at either side of the space, so that it was impossible to view both of them simultaneously. The light line, like a mirror, faces the dark one, like day and night. The images, heavy with tension and ambiguity, emerged from my grandmother's confused, reinterpreted memories as well as some vague recollections of my own. The piece may seem somewhat hermetic but at the time I felt I had to maintain that distant plane.

K.P.: From this same year, 1985, I can remember another series in which the images seem to construct a similar narration, in the sense that there is some kind of fluid and imprecise relation between one image and another, as if it were a journey by train, where you seem to be playing in a haphazard way with the images seen from the window or those that surge up from a book you are reading. In other words, the role of the imagination in the free creation of images is fully assumed - images that come from the text but whose interrelationship remains loose and not fully determined. It amounts to a kind of non-linear narration. The figure assumes the role of protagonist. As far as I can remember some of these drawings gave rise to specific paintings?

C.G.: It is always very hard for me to maintain the linearity of a narration. I am not always able to concentrate on what I am reading. In some involuntary way, my mind begins to wander, even though I continue reading. And so the reading seems to happen on a subconscious level. Oddly, this happens to me more often with narrative texts, which fills me with anxiety, because I end up feeling that in the end this type of reading is futile. As I began to envision this series, I thought I could do something with this thing that always happened to me whenever I sat down to read in the hopes of having a not altogether unproductive session. These drawings present the sequence of a reading session with all the digressions and interruptions that this exercise entails for me. It's a kind of uninterrupted, fragmented script, which evokes the feeling that I suppose some viewers have also had - or at least can imagine. This is an extremely intuitive, even naive piece, though it represented an important step in the

development, later on, of many of the works we've already discussed.

K.P.: There is group of drawings from this time with an openly sexual content - modest but specific. I am referring to a series where you use figurative images, some of them nudes, and even the occasional self-portrait. They constitute works that are intimately related to specific moments in your life, with a heavy autobiographical load.

C.G.: During those years, around 1984 and 1985, the human figure began to have a more central presence in my work. This was more or less around the time when you included me in the *Cota-0* exhibition, and I remember you and I talked about this, since the pieces I created for the exhibition showed a kind of evolution from very clean surfaces and brilliant colors to other, more textured surfaces, which were achieved through an accumulation of blots that created a more opaque, darker image. And in this way I began to shake off the friendliness of my earliest works. I still have a hard time saying whether or not the change was prompted by the problematic presented by the human form, because I wasn't the first time I'd tried to deal with this issue. In any event, both things happened in a kind of parallel. This concept gave way to a number of solutions that were the polar opposite of everything that had interested me up to then. It was a kind of pendular motion, I would say. With time, I have wanted to see this moment as a pivotal change in my approach to my work. It was like severing ties and breaking away from my early days. It was about abandoning *joie de vivre* and edging closer and closer to the night. Something like jumping from one of Matisse's very comfortable wing chairs into Bacon's uncomfortable cot. I had been keeping the monster tied up for a long while and I had to take him out for a walk.

K.P.: You've made an oil painting that springs directly from one of these drawings that shows you and Carmen in bed - your bodies are under the blankets and a landscape runs across the eiderdown as if it were a dream element, an ornament touch, or merely a thought. There is one other series of charcoal drawings that use the nude figure - a rare appearance in your work as a whole.

C.G.: Some of these drawings managed to evolve in their own, independent way, and I created some pieces as an outgrowth of those. The piece that you're talking about is directly inspired by a Toulouse-Lautrec painting, I think it's called *The Bed*, that always fascinated me, in the way that the lovers' faces -the only visible parts of their bodies- suggested some kind of sexual activity hidden beneath the sheets. For me, the idea of showing something without showing it is terribly appropriate in the sense that the viewer's imagination can conjure up sensations far more intense than what the artist could ever elicit by being more explicit. Because of its shape and dimensions, a bed is a pictorial space, and you can create an

approximation of a life-size bed so that the sensations produced by the painting are similar to those that one feels when gazing at a real bed. There are some examples in the history of art that illustrate this. And in addition, since the bed is the place where so many different things happen, it lends itself to so many different symbolic games. The bed is a place for love and dreams, but also for sickness and death.

K.P.: Do you usually use sketches and previous drawings for your paintings? Or, on the contrary, does a series of drawings sometimes occur as a result of images or ideas that are present in the paintings?

C.G.: If you refer to the term 'sketch' as a preparatory drawing for a piece, many of my drawings do not prefigure a future piece. In the strictest sense, they should not be considered sketches. Many of the drawings that you see connected to certain paintings actually came after the paintings, and I think they should be understood as commentaries, as 'margin notes' of the previous work. When I worked in a more direct and intuitive way, I painted the majority of my paintings without any kind of preparatory sketch. When I began to think that I had to start producing more complex images, which I wanted to appear more like their real images, I found that I had no choice but to work with preparatory sketches. And now, they are absolutely crucial to the majority of my large-scale works. Nevertheless, those sketches are rarely drawings, since I often use photographs and documents that have been digitally manipulated.

K.P.: Could you give me an example of this?

C.G.: In 1992, when I decided to create some pieces based on the perceptive phenomenon produced by the background-figure opposition, which was widely disseminated through Escher's pattern drawings, I became interested in the possibilities offered by the computer for this type of work. In principle, the space in the work *El pez grande come al pequeño* (The Big Fish eats the little one) was envisioned as a continuous whole, which could be magnified indefinitely and the piece would still function. It is about confronting individuality and totality, and it's also about asking how the idea suggested by the title -borrowed from Breughel- functions in the act of seeing the work when the recognition of certain elements is blocked by the vision of others. In order to create this piece the way I had envisioned it, I had to amass a considerable amount of graphic material -mostly reproductions of animals, as well as people and objects, to a lesser extent. With all that, I created a kind of digital warehouse that I called "Jauja" (promised land). And then I took all these images -around 600- and traced a silhouette using a vectorial drawing program, and I assigned them a number so that I could identify them more rapidly. With this program, I was able

to transform those silhouettes in such a way that I was able to make them come together so that in the end, I had created a kind of puzzle. The entire process took about six months, at which point I finally had an outline to work from. From there the only thing left was to create a painting based on this model. This last phase in the process allowed for a bit of fine-tuning of various elements, as well as the transformations that always come about with painting.

K.P.: In your painting you often use projected images. Do you also do this with your drawings, or does the scale make it impossible?

C.G.: I use projection to transfer the image in the sketch to a larger surface. With a very complex image, like the kind I just mentioned, it is extremely useful, because it simplifies the work and you save a lot of time. For drawings or small-format pieces it doesn't make much sense.

K.P.: What was it that you were reading or looking at in terms of images for these works? You talked about the role of projection in your work in our conversation in the Facultad de Bellas Artes in Madrid. What were the major points that you were seeking to make?

C.G.: After a certain point, I felt the need to create more complex images, and I was intrigued by the idea of creating images that bore a close resemblance to their real image, that is, the image we have of them when we gaze at them. In this context, I became interested in using photographic sources, and various different types of documents, as a starting point for creating paintings and drawings. The moment of projection represents a very brief step in the execution of the pieces and, as I said before, it is extremely useful and agile when it comes to enlarging an image. There are some people, though, who don't favour this technique because, in their view, it affects the result, contaminates it. But those opinions, for me, are a lot like outdated academic maxims. According to that line of reasoning, any tool, even a paintbrush, could be considered an extraneous element that has a determining effect on the end result. This type of debate inevitably leads to an examination of the concept of the work itself, the idea of painting as mimesis, which for a great deal of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been considered to be a kind of inconvenient throwback, a vestige of tradition. And so, as far as the academy of modernity was concerned, those who defended anything resembling such a notion was a dinosaur. In the days when I was just starting out as an artist, I also felt it was important to reject everything related to the traditional representation of space, like, for example, the rules of perspective. Later on, as part of my concern for everything that affects visual perception, my attitude slowly changed, and I discovered a fascinating world in the distortions and abnormal readings that were contained

within the visual projection that the technique of perspective had already analyzed.

K.P.: Are you referring to the utility it provides for achieving greater precision or to the possibilities for manipulating the image to produce exact and controlled distortions that you want, as for example in the case of an anamorphic image?

C.G.: Anamorphosis is a kind of distortion that emerges from that projective space like a monstrous, bizarre child. There was a time when I was interested in using this technique, because it helped to create ambiguity in a piece, as well as a kind of tension between abstraction and figurative representation, which invited a slower examination of the piece. The majority of the images I use in my work have undergone some kind of distortion, or transformation depending on the kind of result I am hoping to achieve. I am interested in the aberrations offered by certain lenses, because they produce a paradoxical sense of space, in a manner that is both unreal and real at the same time. My goal was to emphasize the dreamlike, semiconscious quality of certain images, like the kind that linger after suddenly coming to mind in a disturbing, brief flash. The precision offered by photography is absolutely critical if you want to obtain a decent result, and so it becomes yet another tool for my work, and starts to become part of the process of creation. I think there is a very fertile space for the use of photography in the process of painting, something that already happened with Impressionism, before people began to raise questions about where painting was headed, precisely, because the advent of photography had, to some degree, come to dominate what had once been the traditional domain of painting.

K.P.: We can see this in *El Amargo triunfo de la pintura* (The bitter triumph of painting) that explicitly makes an ironic reference to the critical gossip of the times, to the so-called "death of painting" as a medium inappropriate for a high-tech society. But before the desires and behavioral patterns of such a society it remains an argument that is patently absurd. We have all seen the artefact-orientated obsessions of the luxury consumers that constitute the art-market. No matter how many screens the collectors set up in their homes, the wall, the painting, and the artefact will inevitably continue to predominate. Video and photography are becoming aware of their limitations. Indeed, it would now appear that many spectators are becoming bored by a surfeit of the same. These media need to reread and revise their own discourses. Yet in the climate in which you were producing much of this work critical writing and official recognition had moved towards installation and technological media. *El Amargo triunfo de la pintura* also makes use of *trompe*

*l'oeil* effects and it is true that you frequently opt for visual complexity.

C.G.: The medium that had the most powerful effect on the artistic landscape of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was film—oddly enough, a medium that did not come out of the art world and in fact never manifested any kind of artistic pretensions until much later on. When the art world became aware of this, it began to follow the very unattainable trail of the cinema. But the success of film has also had some consequences that make it increasingly harder to break into production circuits and, as such, promote products with pretensions that are not necessarily those of simple entertainment. Film today is part of the powerful industry of entertainment and advertising. Unfortunately, the art world wants to imitate that model, which makes it increasingly unbearable to maintain any contact with its 'officialdom'. *La muerte de la pintura* (The Death of Painting) is one of those recurring clichés used by the 'officialdom' of the art world because it allows them to move onto media in which that they can more easily control, like new technologies, video, artistic photography, installations...And I think all of this is fine. But the problem remains the same, and the scenario often starts to resemble the primary-school playground, where the little boys trying to play football all run after the ball at the same time, making it impossible to actually play the game. For a very long time, painting was the absolute central focus of the artistic realm, and it is doubtless an essential element of the cultural conception of the Western world. It is an effective medium for communication and, to a large degree, allows a kind of independence that is not so easily achieved in other media. And now, it is no longer quite the center of attention, but that might actually be a positive thing.

K.P.: Do you see drawing as a register of intimacy, or rather as a way of playing conceptually with ideas?

C.G.: The drawing is produced through a conscious, deliberate act, and though it remains very clearly independent of certain automatic or reflexive impulses, the mind that organizes these impulses certainly uses and guides them in some way. Often this automatism is used to create the illusion that the lines drawn are the reflection of the artist's innermost feelings as he creates the work, something that resembles graphology, I suppose. I conceive of drawing as an activity that is the result of reflection on and dialogue with the medium being used, which implies a reliance on something outside of the artist himself. The understanding of that external medium is what makes expression possible. As the artist executes the drawing, ideas flow and change, and those ideas evolve as well. I have never produced a drawing with the intention of emulating a register or a diary of feelings, private or otherwise.

The drawing is a medium that tends to allow a greater level of ambiguity, which is extremely practical for associating and playing with ideas, which is something that can also be done with painting, though this tends to be perceived as more natural in drawings.

K.P.: Do you think that across the years this process has become more cold, interiorized, and mental? Do you find yourself becoming more suspicious of direct emotion?

C.G.: In art, one of the positions or attitudes that makes me most uncomfortable is that of the artist who pursues only one line of work. Ever since I began painting, I have always found it useful never to limit the possibilities of my work. Not just to avoid the tedium of working in the same way all the time, and not even as a kind of defense against the affectations that, logically, crop up when you repeat the same formula over and over again. More than anything I feel this way because I myself feel like a diverse, varied person and for me it is important to be able to manifest, in every piece, the tone or degree that is appropriate to the sensation being expressed. I have to admit that over the years the experience I've gained necessarily has had an effect on my approach to my work and the expectations are different. This is natural, and logical. To complete his work an artist must become his own spectator and analyze what he is doing. Throughout the course of my career, I think that I have maintained a consistent level of rational analysis regarding my work although now I feel more inclined than I did at the beginning of my career to maintain a certain distance from my work and, necessarily, from myself. I think it was Matisse who said that in order to be able to continue a piece the painter had to be able to recreate the situation, the feeling, the next day, the next month. That prolonged sentiment is expressed with greater depth. Think about it: who better than someone on his deathbed to talk to us about death?

K.P.: One thinks here of the role the notebooks have played in your work. Notebook is not the best term since they are more like small projects that you set up for yourself and return to whenever you feel the need to say something particular, even color has on occasion provided the motive for their being together or in another book the use of a humorous figure with a proclivity for metamorphosis.

C.G.: These notebooks, as you mention, are not notebooks with notes, in the traditional sense. They are projects dealing with ideas that become interconnected and transformed page after page. In some of them, the procedure or the method of creation is directly implicated in the topic. In general they have a kind of congenial, marginal quality about them, and so you could consider them digressions within the scope of things I was working on at that time.

K.P.: Drawing allows the artist to deal in a more unconscious or less ceremonial manner with fragmentary perceptions, intuitions, or precisions that act as energy discharges in the construction of the work, and consequently have less need to be understood as a coherent whole. They are there because they have the energy to be present and need no associative justification. I don't mean that they comparable to diary notes, but given the nature of their execution they can be seen as the results of a flexible and open process. In one of these notebooks you focus on the feeling of anger. I am not sure if that is the right term. In all events, there is more ironic and aggressive tone, less lyrical, directed against everything that annoys or disturbs you. These drawings communicate strong, turbulent, and highly immediate emotions. Let me also point out that these notebooks often appear to be inspired by one of the most characteristic sources for your work: the world of literature. One of the notebooks draws explicitly on a quote from Michaux. Were you interested in his drawings or in the experimental world that surrounds them?

C.G.: Michaux's drawings have always fascinated me. His interest in calligraphy gave him a degree of control over the automatism of the gesture that places him pretty far above the other artists of his generation. His oeuvre, as a result, is varied and evocative, at a time when the artistic landscape was quite grey in general. But what most captivates me about Michaux is his literary work. This notebook is inspired by some poems of his that were collected under the title *Freedom of Action* in the book *Life in the Folds*. The quote I mention comes from one of these poems. Some time ago I decided that I wanted to do something with a more difficult feeling like rage. Because it is something so primal, I had a hard time establishing the proper distance I needed to be able to hone down the idea. Rage has a component that is terrible, but there is also something comical about it, too. And there are certain subtleties that are very difficult to capture. When I was

younger, I felt like a rabid dog, blinded and anguished because I felt this urgent need to take a bite out of everything I saw. When I finally calmed down enough, I wanted to explore that feeling, which I sensed was very intimately connected to my adolescence, and so when I read these poems I began to envision a possible approach to the topic, and this notebook is the result.

K.P.: I'd like you to comment a little more on these books. There are two books that deal with your daughter's world and her presence in your life. One of them uses objects, such as toys or a suitcase, that have a relationship to her past, and the other takes off from the scrawl drawings that children do when given a pencil and paper. Was this essentially an emotional bonding or rather something akin to a surreal pretext for drawing?

C.G.: When you have a child, your house suddenly fills up with all sorts of odd little objects, in a kind of invasion, and anyone who has been through it knows exactly what I mean. Many of these objects have a way of awakening your curiosity, reminding you of your childhood and the emotional and psychological relation that develops between child and toy. These elements, mixed in with reality (although they themselves are also real), slowly awaken your imagination with all their myriad and multiple associations--sometimes symbolic, sometimes completely absurd, and always whimsical and fun. Art is similar to the representational game suggested by the world of toys. This notebook, then, was envisioned as an exploration of that world. The idea behind the other notebook is somewhat different, because it was envisioned as a kind of dialogue with my daughter before she was able to talk. Naturally there is something very surreal about all this, even though it is pretty common. First I placed a pencil in my daughter's hand, and then I placed her hand on several different pages so that she could scrawl away, which was the most she knew how to do at that time. Following those scrawls, I did my own drawings, so that the drawings and the scrawls were integrated. I don't know if you could call this an exercise in chance or accident, but the untrained gestures of a child can be very illuminating.

K.P.: Another deals with a trip to New York, with jottings that have to do with the architecture of the city - bridges, streets, industrial landscape, etc. This can, perhaps, be seen as a more classic example of the artist's notebook?

C.G.: Yes, I would agree that this might be the closest thing to what we would call a true 'sketch book.' This collection of drawings came about very soon after I returned from a trip to New York, and so it worked as a kind of a *posteriori* souvenir. Perhaps for that reason it produces a combination of recognizable and abstract elements, like images that grow faded in the memory and recall other shapes and contours. In any event, it is definitely a rather odd sort of sketch book.

K.P.: When you are drawing, do you follow what is taking place in the act of drawing itself - in other words, is it a process of discovery, a finding out as you move forwards - or is there a preconceived idea?

C.G.: It all depends on what we mean by the term 'preconceived idea.' The ideas in a given work appear in a confused, haphazard manner, unfinished, and they only gain coherence during the execution of the drawing. But there is a direction, an impulse toward which the piece leans. Apropos of the 'stone-thrower' example mentioned before, you refine the trajectory with each successive throw, but you still have to point yourself in a specific direction. You know that the target will not be easy and that as the stone travels through the air several external factors will come into play, like the wind, for example. Chance exists just as wind does, and we have to know that it's there and learn to be flexible, to live with it. Drawings are a way of negotiating with that uncertainty.

K.P.: When you choose your medium - charcoal, watercolour, or whatever - do you think about the relationship between materials and content? Or are you more concerned with the reaction produced in the person who receives the image, or alternatively is it a question of the range of emotions that the medium itself offers you and the connections that can be established with what you wish to say or communicate?

C.G.: The medium has a very decisive impact on how the idea will be read by the viewer. There are certain ideas that seem especially appropriate for a particular medium or a procedure, but there are others that can be executed in various different media or methods, and this makes the election of the medium much more crucial, because you really have to think about how you want to express your idea. There cannot be any distance between the thing I want to express and the emotion offered by a particular medium - they are part and parcel of the same thing. This process evolves very intuitively, and it is extremely difficult to even identify these distinctions - I, myself, can't really do it.

K.P.: But if we look, say, at three images that use different techniques - *Casa del sueño* (House of dreams), *Contradanza* (Contredanse), *Cómo acabar con los sesenta* (How to put an end to the 1960s) - how would you see the specific medium providing an answer to your needs?

C.G.: In these particular series you mention, the decisions were affected by the result I wanted to obtain. In pastels like *Casa del sueño*, the work is very close to painting, and the finished piece turned out very opaque, very dark, and the drawing is filled with ambiguities, to allow the image of the room to become a ghostly face. And, nevertheless, paradoxically, the materiality of the pigment adds a corporeal presence that is focused on the image of

the peyote, breaking with the plane of the rest of the painting, in this way creating several levels of interpretation. In *Contradanza* and *Cómo acabar con los sesenta* I used a similar working method, with some minor differences. Both series were created by superimposing several layers of paper, creating a game of transparencies. In the first case, the superimposition is more rhythmic and linear, reducing further and further into greys and black. In the other series, the colour and the surface of mylar -a kind of polyester sheet- actively play off each other and produce a much more histrionic result, which jibes with the idea of characters that are always overacting.

K.P.: I don't want to mythify the process, nor force an answer, but drawing is conditioned by and has a very particular relationship with paper. How can we talk about this?

C.G.: Except in the case of certain special papers, paper is generally a very absorbent surface, and this is a quality I like to take advantage of in my work. The reason I prefer absorbent surfaces is that, for the most part, they are simple and straightforward to work with. This does, however, bring along with it the challenge that, after a certain point, out of saturation, you can exhaust that quality and then everything stops working. This means, then, that you have to try and maintain a balance between the various elements contained on one surface. To do this, I don't mean to imply that you have to enter into some kind of special state, a mystical rapture. I just mean that you have to try something as simple as exercising a kind of rational control that helps keep you alert about what is going on in the piece, and what the surface needs. In this sense, every brushstroke should be seen as part of a process that will ultimately be reflected in the work. This journey is, depending on the support, a very fast process, in which you leave your mark in the space of a few brief seconds, and you have to make your decisions with equal speed. There are fast papers and slow papers, just as there are fast and slow processes. As for me, I prefer the kind that offer me the feeling of speed. For me it is a kind of challenge, it gives me that feeling as if I'm about to place all my bets on my next move, in a vertigo of sorts.

K.P.: How do you see these ideas working out in those series of drawings in which you use rice paper or absorbent paper?

C.G.: Rice paper offers two very interesting characteristics: it is very absorbent and it is also very translucent at the same time. Both qualities interest me and I have taken advantage of them in various different pieces. Since the paper is semi-transparent, if you work with layers you can superimpose different elements so that they appear textured in a way that you could never achieve in another medium. In addition, its high level of absorbency creates wrinkles that also contribute to those textures, adding a peculiar variant to the piece. I have

also used -in *Contradanza*, for example- a paper known as 'onionskin' which is similar to rice paper, though much less absorbent, which allows you to use tools like the fountain pen to make finer lines.

K.P.: In 1988 you go to work on a series called *Atlas* where we find a certain tension between an image anchored in reality and another of a more abstract character. What was that mattered to you on this occasion? We can see how different images begin to flow giving rise to an evident ambiguity of meaning. But what exactly were you after?

C.G.: An atlas is a collection of maps, but it is also a compendium of images that work like a card-catalogue, a storage house. As we studied atlases as children, certain places became etched in our memories forever, and even though we may never visit these places they nevertheless do have a life of their own in our minds, a fixed point on one single faded image. Paradoxically, the places where we have indeed lived tend to occupy our memories in a much more confusing way, as different levels of sensation and multiple angles become superimposed upon each other. Because of this it tends to be effective to describe these places in more ambiguous terms that don't have anything to do with the hard precision of the images in an atlas. Living images don't seem to have that need for verisimilitude; their presence is so powerful. This tension is visible in the pieces, which present a kind of continuous shift between the two modes of conceiving space-figuratively and abstractly. This, in turn, gives way to a kind of fusion in which the imagination takes over entirely. These pieces could be considered an attempt to 'map' the imagination.

K.P.: When you talk of mapping the imagination, what precisely do you mean? I understand the metaphor but could you be a little more precise about its meaning for you?

C.G.: The design of a map is the result of an abstraction. Cartography is only possible if we acknowledge that a series of conventions are acceptable representatives of a space that the human eye is not able to fathom. That, at least was how it was before aerial and orbital vision allowed us to see things from the sky. As a child, I remember being obsessed by the idea of a global vision-no doubt this was fuelled by my religious education, which could certainly be castrating in many ways, but it did force you to think about impossible dilemmas, the kind that can only be solved through the imagination and a certain dose of humour. One of the conundrums that most occupied my thoughts was that of divine vision, the eye of God, menacing you every time you committed a sin. And so I would try to imagine what this could be like, this global vision they were all talking about. I imagined the classic version of God the father seated on his big chair made of cottony clouds, holding an amazing magnifying glass through which everything was reflected simultaneously, a space without

time into which many of us earth dwellers piled in a kind of four-dimensional omnimax. Or sometimes, the vision would be much more sophisticated, and I would see myself being bombarded with millions of lenses, like tiny, intangible particles, that invaded the universe, recording everything that happened. I imagined how tedious it would be to watch a tape of that, like a Warholian behemoth in which the only gratifying thing is the feeling that you are the protagonist of it all, since you were being recorded all the while. As time goes by you begin to realize that only inside the imagination can the world be described in such a way. The more modest, pragmatic endeavour of science functions with a household budget and is willing to accept visions that are more limited, more familiar. The imagination cannot be charted or mapped, but it is hidden behind every point on the map, behind every star in the night; Van Gogh said something to this effect to his brother when he remarked that the black dots on a map inspired his dreams as easily as did the stars. There is something contradictory about the idea that the imagination is mappable-it's a kind of oxymoron, much like the divine vision that occupied so much of my time back in primary school.

K.P.: Why, for example, do you use graphite powder and oil paint on an old paper where can see the watermarks? What is it you are looking for when you choose these elements?

C.G.: Graphite produces a very special kind of grey, with brilliant subtle variations that change depending on your angle of vision. I don't tend to use the graphite pencil, which many people use for drawing, because it is a medium that I don't particularly identify with. When I did use it, I decided to mix graphite powder with oil, which allowed me to use it with a paintbrush, like any other oil. The paper was a very old type of paper that I had had for a long time, and it seemed appropriate for this work because it reminded me of the tonality of the worn-out pages of an atlas.

K.P.: *Piso Ideal* (Dream Apartment) is the title you gave to a group of drawings you did in 1989. A certain critical intent can be seen in them and they also appear indicative of what would come in later works. Are these perhaps the first works to point in this direction?

C.G.: It's hard for me to say whether or not these are the first of my drawings to manifest a critical intent, which had probably been latent in my previous works. Without a doubt, *Piso ideal* was a piece that put forth some ideas that I would further develop later on. When I created it, I felt very connected to the feeling, slightly melancholic, I get when I look at certain suburban buildings, the kind of buildings some people might call 'architectural rubbish.' It was in that context that other works emerged as well, such as the pieces in the series entitled *Hacia el final de la jornada* (Toward the end of the work day). *Piso Ideal* was

an attempt at a kind of architectural joke, with regard to *functional* forms, impoverished by real estate speculation. My buildings rise up like absurd gibberish, in the same way that the pure shapes of architectural rationalism end up exploited in this newfangled type of city that is being imposed upon us. Nowadays, the buildings built during the expansionist years of the 1960s and 70s seem almost friendly when we compare them to the pastiche that looms before us now.

K.P.: Could you talk a little more about the series *Hacia el final de la jornada*? What does the title mean? And how do you see the function of that small insert set within the disastrous urbanscapes that constitute the edges of all our cities, indisputably affecting the lives of all those who live within them?

C.G.: I grew up on a street that was situated right between the city's old quarter and the suburbs. My memories, as such, are comprised of both urban zones, which in the case of Seville have very differentiated characteristics. The majority of those areas were built as working-class neighbourhoods, with poor-quality buildings that were already quite dilapidated by the time I was creating these pieces. The city had slowly lost its rural character, although at that time it was still possible to find a milk farm or a garden tucked in between apartment blocks. *Hacia el final de la jornada* is a title that I borrowed from a piece by Miró, which has several semi-transparent figures against an ethereal background that changes from blue to yellow. One of these characters has a facial expression that seems to combine sadness, melancholy and comedy, all at once. I wanted to do something with the sensation that workers feel when they return home from work. I imagined the fleeting sight of the buildings as they whizzed past them on the bus and continued on to the next stop. I thought about how that feeling might work as a tiny handkerchief tucked away in the heart of the city until the city eventually disappears.

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K.P.: In 1998 you made a series, *Pabellones y Fábricas* (Pavillions and Factories) where you also make use of a collage technique. What is it that you wanted to do on this occasion?

C.G.: These works are analogous to those of *Piso ideal*, in that they are also impossible constructions with a deep underlying irony, but they take the themes of *Piso ideal* a bit further. In this case the buildings are representative buildings that parody the type of constructions built for cultural events and media-driven fairs like the universal-expo. The use of collage is very apt, since it uses an extraneous element that is eventually transformed into something else, but it also offers a symbolic reading that, as I mentioned before, is a parody. The titles suggest a very ostentatious kind of pretension, which jibes perfectly

with the vanity and egos that drive certain architects use to torture the innocent citizenry with their projects. Fortunately these buildings are impossible and only exist on paper.

K.P.: The series of the *Siete Lámparas* (Seven lamps) also exploits collage elements. We find a number of highly ornate chandeliers, some more defined than others, and then an alien superposition that sometimes includes a figurative element or even a fragment of a piece of furniture. What is at stake here?

C.G.: The lamps symbolize the days of the week which, in turn, are a reference to mythology, a Christianized Roman legacy. These complicated, inverted lamps remind us of flowers. In that position they are even more ambiguous, and I take advantage of this to include other elements that are related to the symbology of the day that each case represents.

K.P.: You use collage technique in different ways. What is it that appeals to you about the medium? I recall Robert Duncan saying that collage was the most significant technique of the last part of the twentieth century. And certainly the whole notion of fragment has opened up major possibilities in the aesthetics of Postmodernism.

C.G.: Without a doubt the chance to reuse an image in another context is like being able to utter words in English or any other language while still speaking in Spanish. As I said before, its use is economical and effective, and gives the work certain symbolic possibilities, depending on how the images are used. I would say that a significant amount of my work is articulated as a collage. The fascinating thing about this, though, is how such a simple medium can lead us into a very complicated conceptual game, to the point of transforming the image into a kind of Babelian language, a language that knows it can no longer be universal and, as such, throws its untranslatable quality in our face, forgetting the Biblical curse, as if the Pentecost had just happened.

K.P.: If we look at *The Gaslighter's Nightmare* (1999) we can feel a parodic bite as you depict the false glamour of contemporary society, whether that of the art world or the fashion industry, or simply that of the so called famous people who litter *Hola* or spill over vacuously in endless hours of television programming. You are shown in an inset living the nightmare! Superposed we can see the lights, balloons and perhaps even firework displays of this razzmatazz!

C.G.: The idea behind this piece also works as a collage, and in some way that is what we perceive on the pages of those fashion magazines where we see the characters that make up the scenes. The idea of doing something with this came to me through a print entitled *The Gaslighter's Nightmare*, which features an image of the very troubled

dream-life of a man who lights gas streetlamps. Now, this man who is plagued by nightmares of the discoverers and inventors of electric energy. This poor man is seeing how his work will soon have no meaning at all. And the way I see things, the society we are becoming has begun to look a lot like a nightmare, different from that of the poor gaslighter, given that the threat in this case is not the result of scientific progress but rather the excessive power of the press, that monster of media and advertising.

K.P.: Does this critical dose that appears in your work usually carry the same kind of ironic distance that is present in your self-portraits?

C.G.: It's funny, but I have to say no. Thinking back to the kind of feeling that motivates me to create some or other piece of artwork, I would say it's harder for me to keep a distance from certain external things that irritate me, than from myself. This idea was the basis for *Doble Dirección* (Double direction) and I think that in the exhibition and the publication that went with it, I have already spoken enough about this topic. One reason for this could be that whenever I focus on one of those themes that you call autobiographical, I always become very aware that the first thing I must do is hide behind a mask. And then from there, everything is much easier. The reason this happens may have to do with how very difficult it is for us to recognize ourselves-in the same way that we are barely able to identify our own voice when play back a recording of it. Our gestures and expressions are not interpreted the same way from the outside, and the mirror is of no use, either, because our expression in it will always be contrived, because of our own self-consciousness, to look like the expressions on other people's faces. And so whenever I approach a topic that, at the outset, could be considered to be non-autobiographical, the result tends to come to me only after an introspective analysis involving feelings that do not allow me to maintain the same distance that I maintain when I feel able to put on the mask I spoke of before.

K.P.: But if there is one work that serves as a precursor of many other works and marks a crucial point in your development it is, undoubtedly, the series *Collideorscape* - a title that plays with two terms, the Spanish word for *kaleidoscope* and the English word *collide*. It might also be read as "collide or escape!" It is easy to see a parallelism with the kind of Chinese drawing that appears in large rolls, although the narrative process is very different, more fragmentary and postmodern. In these drawings you begin to exploit juxtapositions of different kinds of imagery. It is like a conceptual game and one that you have constantly developed in many later works.

C.G.: During these years I did many drawings, I felt free to resolve the pieces by combining abstraction and figuration without any conflicts at all. This is very clear when you look at my work from that period, and for that

reason I don't think you can talk about a question of medium. All I can say is that it seems the influence of drawing swept everything into that place of deep ambiguity. I remember that, at that time, I wanted very much to find solutions that would allow me to connect very different things simultaneously. The tools were obvious: superimposing and juxtaposing the elements gave way to a sequence of shapes that could be perceived as a whole, but that could also branch out and open up in a variety of new meanings, in every direction. *Collideorscape* was an attempt to combine all these concerns in one work that was able to maintain the right balance between clarity and ambiguity. To make this happen, I decided that I had to focus solely on the juxtaposition of figurative elements, abandoning all other techniques. In this case, I think the economy of media is what gives these works a special appeal. On the other hand, you can really see the influence of Chinese scroll painting, both in the format and the technique. The title of this series is taken from a word that James Joyce invented, which truly and fully defines the intent of these pieces. In this way, you can see how images appear in a kind of kaleidoscopic fashion, filled with collisions and crashes, and escapes, too.

K.P.: And even more evident is the relationship of what you have been saying to a work such as *Soñando Babel* (Dreaming of Babel) that presents a flood of images that somehow jell into a whole. It is an upside down world that serves as a metaphor for the contemporary megapolis or for the individual who seems more and more the willing victim of fragmentary thinking. It is inclusive, detailed, and very human.

C.G.: *Soñando Babel* is a piece that was a kind of outgrowth of the *Collideorscapes*, but only after a period of time. At a certain point, I realized that the kind of work I had done in those drawings could be applied to a painting. My intention, then, was to create a piece that offered a slightly more developed relationship between the various elements, suggesting the possibility of a narrative path. A Babelian path, in which the need for translation was comparable to the symmetrical equilibrium of the parts. As if the possibility of a translation were based on the equivalence of terms found in different languages. This symmetry is impossible, in the same way that absolute translation is impossible. The images, in the end, are fragmentary because now there is no such thing as an image that isn't fragmentary.

K.P.: There are numerous large paintings that pick up on this idea of collage, such as *Soñando Babel*, but I am also thinking of the piece shown last year in Distrito 4 of the car graveyard, or of the work you are now preparing for the Reina Sofía. These pieces always seem to me both an overwhelming image and a psychic mix. How do you see the process of one image leading to another, or is it more a question of fitting together a mass of preselected images?

C.G.: The pieces you mention were influenced by the feeling that chaos is the true guiding force in our lives, that our existence is just a part of a process of universal entropy. This chaotic combination has, of course, psychic implications, since such confusing images seem to beg for meaning, and fight against the uncertainty with which they are perceived. The message of these pieces is built upon the contradiction of a filled space, an all-over space with its redundant uniformity, which seems to call out to the void. In the last pieces, this space is achieved in a way that we can call 'coherent,' with greater verisimilitude. The effect is unreal, too, but more in the sense of what it could be, than what it is in many of the cases.

K.P.: Do you see any relationship between this technique of juxtaposition that you use in *Collideorscape* and Pound's own poetry based on the Chinese ideogram that so effectively exploits the concept of superposition?

C.G.: I'm not really sure. I think you are more qualified to answer that question than I am. What I can say, and very clearly, is that when I created these pieces I was very affected by the Chinese paintings I had recently seen in New York. It wasn't until much later that I began to look at Pound's poems-or rather his transcriptions from the Chinese, in works like 'The River Song,' but that was in 2001. In any event, I see the *Collideorscapes* as being much more connected to certain river poems by Allen Ginsberg, like 'Plutonian Ode,' for example, and Bob Dylan's songs, so insistent and packed with images. I remember having that feeling inside my head as I worked on those pieces.

K.P.: *Plutonian Ode* marked Ginsberg's return to peaceful protest. It deals specifically with a moment when he and a group of friends gathered outside a Plutonium Bomb factory and successfully prevented a train carrying nuclear waste from circulating. It is a bardic piece, like *Howl*. In my opinion, it remains a strange collection that includes poems that have a disparate range of sources and influences - from blue grass or punk-rock influences, mantric rhythms, or Neruda's tearful Lincoln ode retranslated to U.S. vernacular oratory, to Nagasaki Bomb anniversary haikus! How do you situate yourself in the midst of all this?

C.G.: Despite the geographical and generational distance, and the fact that all of this information arrived here long after the fact, as an adolescent I was very influenced by the culture that was coming out of the United States at the time, especially through music, of course. During the

second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. went through a kind of golden moment, culturally speaking. In any event, the United States has more and more of an influence in our lives, and not always in the most positive sense. Nowadays it is very hard to feel disconnected from certain cultural archetypes that originate in the US, and I have tried to consider this in my work, come face to face with them. Ginsberg is one of those poets who offer some very interesting reflections that help make sense of the world. His work and his life are a model of independence and universality.

K.P.: You make use of a lot of photographic material in *Collideorscapes*. What were your sources for these images?

C.G.: All of the images I used in these works came from photographs that I myself took at different times, in a variety of situations. None of these photos was taken with these pieces in mind-they were simply photographs from my own personal collection.

K.P.: But do you notice any repetitive tendencies in your selection of images - certain areas of interest or obsessive subject matter that the eye selects that might be seen as constants in your work? I remember looking at some of Usle's photos, revealed on many occasions years after he had taken them, where we can see the same kind of formal preoccupations that consistently occur within his work - concerns with surfaces, plays of light, geometries of buildings seen from the studio window etc.

C.G.: Photographs are what the modern man sees. This implies that though we may lose part of our memory of the experience of vision when our memories come to rely on photographs, the photographs themselves work as very precise, external engrams that can help us build an image, a painting, as an element of reflection about the world. Today we use photographs in the same way that long ago, artists collected etchings to help them work on their own images, and of course we focus our gaze on the thing that we are obsessed with. The photograph as a result does not interest me. For my work, I tend to use rather poor-quality photographs, family photos that came out bad and were headed for the trash can, absurd shots in which nothing happens.

K.P.: In *La construcción de un sueño* (The construction of a dream) you take a look at the idea of chaos and chance procedures, and the way in which they relate to the process of fictitious dream elements. They achieve a kind of airy effect due to the lineal rhythm of the silhouettes. What were you trying to do with this superposition of planes?

C.G.: I did *La construcción de un sueño* when I was working on the outlines for *El pez grande se come al pequeño* and *El país de la cucaña* (The land of the cockaigne) as I mentioned before. To complete these pieces I had to amass a lot of documentation so that I could incorporate enough

different elements that would make up the puzzle I had in mind. Then I traced the silhouettes of these elements so that they would be easier to work with. This series emerged fortuitously, as I superimposed some of those silhouettes that reminded me of the trajectories of certain flying insects, like bees or flies. With this, I found myself once again facing the question of chaos versus order, and how this can give way to the illusion that certain clearly chaotic shapes can possess a kind of order. It seemed to me that all of this was connected to the way we sleep, and the way those little nuclei of rationality emerge from the structure of the subconscious.

K.P.: There is a whole family of images that keeps on repeating itself in this ironic construction of a dream?

C.G.: Of course, images are repeated. As I said, we're talking about silhouettes that I was using at that time to draft an outline of the works mentioned. This series functions as a kind of metastasis of these more important works and reproduces -on a smaller scale and in another order- the associations that emerge in the larger pieces. This is the reason that the title is so meaningful. The dream, as such, is not constructed--rather, it is usually perceived as a kind of destruction or deconstruction of conscious, pre-existing reality. Here, we find ourselves facing the chicken-and-egg issue: which came first, conscious or unconscious reality? Are images like ghosts of real objects or are objects only real insofar as they are products of a dream in which they were first envisioned? The silhouettes here correspond to objects produced for consumption, otherwise known as 'commodities' in English. They were part of the *País de la cucaña* or *Jauja*, if you will, that we dream of and in which we are constantly immersing ourselves with the hope of realizing our dreams.

K.P.: At the beginning of the 90s you produced a number of drawings related to museum display cabinets that so often contain totally disparate objects. You did it at a time when the role of the museum in contemporary culture was being questioned and also the problem of how precisely things should be shown in a museum context. You have frequently taken photos of display cabinets in museums, but how do you situate yourself in this argument? What is it that can be seen in your drawings of all this?

C.G.: I never meant to get caught up in that debate about paper in museums. I like museums just the way they are. For me, they function like a library of images. If we have some kind of order in our memories, we can quickly find what we are looking for. I love going back to a museum and finding the pieces more or less the way they were when I first saw them. The tendency to update or redo everything is something I find deeply disturbing. With these pieces I was trying to explore the relationship that emerges with certain objects after they have become 'museum-able'-I'm very interested in people's perception of them when they

are encased in their glass vitrines, and I'm also interested in their sequence, the order in which they are placed, and especially, when these tools acquire a symbolic value above and beyond whatever useful value they may have. I felt drawn to the idea of giving some of these objects from the past a new life, their own life.

K.P.: You did a set of drawings on the kind of wrapping paper used by the distributors of the Encyclopedia Britannica - does this choice imply some kind of statement on the kind of classic encyclopaedic knowledge promoted by the Western world, or is it simply a practical aesthetic choice?

C.G.: That encyclopedia wrapping paper was the perfect base for me, because it had a series of folds and a number of printed bands that were sort of analogous to a glass case. All of them were printed with a warning that read 'open this end' which is easy to understand when the book is wrapped up in the paper, but once it is opened and the paper is spread out, and you translate the phrase literally, it turns into something very suggestive.

K.P.: *El mundo cabeza abajo* (The world upside-down), from 1996 is an ironic and mocking series that talks with a light but often acid bitterness about a world whose orders and priorities are upside down. What is the relationship here between the drawings and the paintings? Some, although not all of the elements in the drawings are incorporated into oil paintings, but I am not sure what came first.

C.G.: *El mundo cabeza abajo* is one of the pieces from the 1990s based on works by Breughel. Breughel's work reveals a very special way of looking at the world and that was what I was aiming to recapture in my pieces. The series is based on the twelve Flemish proverbs in Antwerp, proverbs that also appear, along with others, in another piece entitled *El mundo al revés* (The world backwards). The drawings you mention were based on the second piece, which turns out to be more complex and contains more elements than the other. I created these pieces with the idea that, when reproduced, a game of transparency might emerge between them, and so the best way to look at them is exactly the way they appear in the catalogue. The pieces follow the twelve proverbs, which serve as individual titles for the pieces, as well. This explains the differences you notice between the two series, even though they were executed at around the same time.

K.P.: In your exhibition *El Mundo Cabeza Abajo* there was a work, not catalogued, that picks up on two of the themes we have been talking about - museum display and the idea of the Tower of Babel. Why bring these two images together?

C.G.: *Pequeña Babel* (Little Babel) is a piece that emerges as a kind of reflection about the increasingly uncertain role of the museum at a transformative moment in which it

seems to be turning into a refined version of the theme park. In this piece the distorted image of a museum space is attenuated, like the background where you can see an inclined spiral tower, taken from an amusement park attraction. That tower recalls Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International*, like a little Tower of Babel.

K.P. And there are other concepts that have always interested you that reappear - the question of sight and blindness as, for example, in that image of a crowd where only a hooded figure looking straight at the spectator is able to see, or the kind of visual teasing with the spectator that you so enjoy in the work where you create two distinct scenes that are forcibly related but without any logical validity for such a relationship.

C.G.: I had already dealt with the theme of vision loss in earlier pieces, but never in such an explicit way as I did here. The piece you're talking about is about people who look without seeing, spectators without eyes, just empty sockets. The only gaze that the piece suggests is the one that the real spectator finds in a hooded figure at the center. It is a metaphor about the impossibility of communication.

K.P.: This same scepticism can be found in the works where you make use of an image of a large foot. In one of them you make a playful reference to Duchamp by paraphrasing one of his titles *In advance of the broken leg*. It seems like a joke on the absurd situations and behaviours of the art world, something that *El pequeño triunfo de la escultura* (The small triumph of sculpture) also picks up on with those Japanese tourists taking photos of a huge foot. What were you trying to say here?

C.G.: That exhibition included several pieces that were focused on the space of the museum--museums that have had an effect on me. There are odd images in which characters - the security guards in *La Conversación* (The conversation)- appear in absurd situations; strange images of ornamental objects that decompose, revealing their representational frame, like in *Lujo, Calma y Voluptuosidad* (Luxury, tranquillity, voluptuousness), which give you the feeling that they were left unfinished. Others, like the pieces you mention, look like grotesque sculptures, an unreal conglomeration that finishes off with a foot with six toes, works of art that are combined with objects from amusement park attractions. All these pieces exude the same feeling of disenchantment, with something bitter mixed in deep down. This is a feeling that I have been negotiating with inside, trying to keep it from dominating me entirely, because that could lead me to total paralysis. The art world is a reflection of society. It isn't a clear, precise reflection but we can certainly say that it serves as a mirror whose surface has slowly deteriorated. Many of the things that interest me about art don't seem relevant nowadays. We live in a time in which the tastemakers of the art industry care only about spectacle. To be able to live

with this, and survive, we can only rely on our sense of humor. This is the objective of these pieces.

K.P.: In 1997 you make a series that goes under the title of *Al Margen de Giordano Bruno* (At the margins of Giordano Bruno). It clearly picks up on some of the ideas expressed in the texts of this philosopher. What is that you derive from his work and what ideas most interested you? At a certain level the series appears to be an homage to the philosopher's life. I am thinking of works such as *El recuerdo de muerte* (The memory of death), *La habitación* (The room), *La sombra de las ideas* (The shadow of ideas), and *Doce noches* (Twelve nights). Yet, on the other hand, there are suggestive titles that take us to his thinking *El olvido* (Forgetfulness), *Lo visible* (The visible), *El tiempo perdido* (Lost Time), *El germen* (The seed), *La memoria rota* (Broken memory). How do these ideas take shape in your work, and what are the new approaches that you want to open up)?

C.G.: I consider these works to be fragmentary reflections, the result of a process that brought me closer to Giordano Bruno's philosophy and, especially, his memory arts. I have always been concerned with the fragile nature of memory, its impermanence, perhaps because many times I have found myself in situations of deep frustration and anguish when I realized that I no longer remembered certain elements or details of a certain episode in my life. This is a contradictory feeling, because while on one hand we couldn't possibly live if it weren't for our ability to forget, we also could never live without our memories. As I grappled with this notion, a book on memory arts by Frances A. Yates found its way to me, and in it I discovered an absolutely fascinating new world, although it went far beyond my initial purposes, since many of these systems are not at all practical methods for memorizing. They do, however, offer a curious interpretation of the world, ordering it in a way. Now, naturally, we don't live during the Renaissance and we cannot think of ourselves as living in a coherent, unequivocal world. Well, among the memory arts, those of Giordano Bruno reach such a level of complexity that they are practically indecipherable today, and become a kind of talisman that opens us up to the abyss of the magical realm. The conclusion I was able to draw from all this was that they work as a kind of machinery to awaken the imagination and, in this sense, to create image associations. These drawings, then, are my very liberal interpretations of the aspects of Bruno's thoughts that I found particularly provocative, and which manifest themselves as enigmas, or talismans, if you like. They are not notes that have anything to do with his life or his personal story -which also happen to be fascinating-- but with some derivations that a close reading of his texts seemed to suggest.

K.P.: Let me ask you a little more about the extraordinary figure of Bruno and what you propose in your text in that catalogue. Bruno was interested in the nature of ideas.

Here was a man who at the close of the 16th Century, closed in on all sides by the authority of a priestly tradition, makes what might be termed a philosophical survey of the world that was being disclosed by the science of the time. His texts, *De Umbras Idearum* (*The Shadows of Ideas*) and *The Art of Memory*, argue that ideas are only the shadows of truth. In the same year as the latter text a third book appeared: *Brief Architecture of the Art of Lully*. Lully had tried to prove the dogmas of the church by human reason. Bruno denies the value of such a mental effort. He points out that Christianity is entirely irrational, that it is contrary to philosophy, and that it disagrees with other religions. He argues that we accept it through faith and that so-called revelation has no scientific basis.

It is not difficult for us to imagine the kind of reputation Bruno had created both for himself and in the minds of the clerical authorities of southern Europe by the year 1582. He had written of an infinite universe - of a universe which left no room for that greater infinite conception which is called God. He could not conceive that God and Nature could be separate and distinct entities as taught by Genesis, by the Church, and even by Aristotle himself. He thought of the Bible as a book that only the ignorant could take literally. Bruno wrote: "Everything, however men may deem it assured and evident, proves, when it is brought under discussion, to be no less doubtful than are extravagant and absurd beliefs." He coined the phrase "*Libertes philosophica*", by which he meant, the right to think, perhaps even to dream, and to make philosophy.

His answer when sentenced to death by fire was an equally threatening phrase: "Perhaps you, my judges, pronounce this sentence against me with greater fear than I receive it." He was given eight more days to see whether he would repent. But it proved to no avail. He was taken to the stake and, at the moment of his death, he was presented with a crucifix, but he pushed it away with fierce scorn. A visionary outsider, a highly attractive figure! How did you centre your own conversation with his work?

C.G.: The text I wrote for the catalogue is entitled *La sombra de las cenizas* (*The Shadow of the Ashes*), paraphrasing the work *The Ash Wednesday Supper*, and it is conceived, as the text explains, as a conversation about a number of topics related to the creative act, like chance, memory, vision, etc. I also mention that the text itself, and the works that accompany it, should be regarded as margin notes, and that is why the exhibition was titled 'Al Margen de Giordano Bruno' (*At the margins of Giordano Bruno*). My goal was not an academic understanding of Bruno's philosophy-I was just trying to pore over his texts to find some thoughts that might be useful for my own reflections. Since it is sometimes very difficult to jump over the cultural barrier of four centuries, it is possible that some of my considerations may only be an approximation of that world, but I think that the important thing is what we do manage to see, and Bruno's texts work a bit like a

pair of binoculars that allow us to peer into both the future and the past.

K.P.: *Las Tentaciones de San Antonio* (The temptations of St. Anthony), where you use vegetable paper as the support, was made in 1998. It consists of a series of drawings traced over images taken from newspapers and then manipulated in the computer. It is, perhaps, the first time you make use of the computer to "shape" images in your work? What is it that interests you in this theme of the temptations?

C.G.: The drawings of *Las tentaciones* came about as preparatory drawings for a collection of prints. I had already worked with the computer previously, mostly in putting together outlines for some works. So this wasn't the very first time I had incorporated printed images that had been manipulated on the computer. These pieces must be understood for their connection to the pieces that were shown in the *Soñando Babel* exhibition. In those pieces, I had already used images taken from newspapers--even in the drawings in the *Rorschach* series, which used press clippings in a game of specular symmetry that gave rise to the photographic collages that we see in the background of *Las tentaciones*. The idea was to create a pattern of regularity which might function as a catalyst for suggesting new shapes, in such a way that the shapes that comprised the framework of the collage could either disappear or dissipate somewhat, until forcing our eye to project new images to try and find some kind of meaning or logic in what we see. This perceptive phenomenon, in part, is the basis of the Rorschach test, which I used as a starting point for these pieces, largely because it was useful for illustrating the thoughts about the influence of the chaotic in the creative process.

K.P.: In the group of works you call *Pesadilla-Rorschach* (Nightmare-Rorschach) we find once again the collage technique with an encrusted image of gesticulating hands encrusted. These same hands form a kind of puzzle in a strange work called *La obsesión de Carroll* (Carroll's Obsession). What is the relationship you want to establish with Carroll's richly imaginative world. Why do these gesticulating hands appear in these works?

C.G.: *La obsesión de Carroll* follows the division of the trilateral diagram that Lewis Carroll, in his book *Symbolic Logic*, proposes as a system of logical analysis of thought. These cells feature a series of reproduced images of my hands, making gestures that are similar to gestures we use when we talk. Hands are important for somatizing our apparent symmetrical structure. Some gestures, like the kind you see in these paintings, have an internal function--they are not the kind of gestures you make to emphasize some or other expression for the benefit of an external interlocutor, but rather they are the kind we use to reaffirm our own sense of self. There is something in them that suggests a connection between the two sides of the

brain, like tying a knot around a thought. I find these gestures fascinating, and I think they are very intricately related to the issues I was dealing with at the time, on language and the impossibility of communication.

K.P.: Rorschach is another fascinating and strange figure. He died prematurely and he postulated a number of definite formal categories which can be organized into a tridimensional scheme (without taking content into consideration) that allows a psychological analysis of the responses to his plates. His followers have tried to complete his theories but have produced highly complex arguments that are difficult to follow. You seem to have been attracted to his idea of system but how exactly did this work for you?

C.G.: Rorschach discovered a very intriguing field of inquiry, far beyond simple diagnosis. I find it amazing that his flash cards are still used, although nowadays, naturally, more sophisticated evaluation methods are used. Rorschach's test is almost a kind of hieroglyphic for the mind, and is based on a very simple fact. When I first became interested in the topic, I did a very careful reading of his book *Psychodiagnosis*, in which he explains the protocol for the test and also presents other derivations and studies carried out while carrying out the test. I find it interesting, as well, that Rorschach was fascinated by artists' responses to his test. He considered his method a very good system for gauging creative capacities, which is very Swiss of him, I suppose. But, of this entire topic, what interested me the most were the things he said regarding the differences between perception and interpretation, which he considered to be individual; he rejected the idea that they could be homogenized. In this way, interpretation came to be viewed as a specific type of perception. This is very important in the articulation of a language like visual language which is based on perceptions that cannot elude the interpretation of the viewer. And this of course led me back again to the question of Babel.

K.P.: I also think of a couple of remarks by Arnheim that are related at a certain level to Rorschach's concerns and that seem to me to have a relevance for you. I am, of course, aware of the fact that he is a critic who has always interested you. Arnheim notes in an essay in 1974: "If one wishes to be admitted to the presence of a work of art, one must, first of all, face it as a whole. What is it that comes across? What is the mood of the colors, the dynamics of the shapes? Before we identify any one element, the total composition makes a statement that we must not lose. We look for a theme, a key to which everything relates. Safely guided by the structure of the whole, we then try to recognize the principal features and explore their dominion over dependent details. Gradually, the

entire wealth of the work reveals itself and falls into place, and as we perceive it correctly, it begins to engage all the powers of the mind with its message." And then again earlier in 1951: "Why is balance an indispensable factor of aesthetic composition? One of the reasons, which is often overlooked in discussions of the subject, is that visually, just as physically, balance represents the state of distribution in which all elements have come to rest. In a balanced composition all factors of shape, direction, location, etc. are mutually determined by each other in such a way that no change seems possible and the whole assumes the character of "necessity" in all its parts." What are your reactions to these ideas?

C.G.: As you say, Arnheim has had a tremendous influence on the way I approach art. His book *Art and Visual Perception* was practically a reference book for me in my early years, and after I read it, it confirmed my affinity for issues relating to perception. But his contributions on the function of order and disorder in *Entropy and Art* are what have had the most direct influence on my work. Arnheim suggests the possibility of arriving at a simple structure through the intervention of chaos and an increase in entropy. The tension between the uniformity of perfection and unconstructed diversity (which nature offers us), is what creates the equilibrium that allows a work of art to become a truly effective representation of the world. For this reason, as Hauser said, art is both a game with chaos and a struggle against it, and in this struggle the idea is to gain or reclaim territory from chaos.

K.P.: Was there something in particular that interested you in the theme of the temptations, or is it simply a matter of your fascination for Bosch's work of the same title?

C.G.: Naturally I was interested in the painting, and the paintings of Bosch in general, as well as those of other painters who had explored the same topic. But this series really came to life after I read the book of the same title by Flaubert. In this case, as with Bruno, the relationship is established in function with its capacity to generate images. Monsters, deformed beings, have to do with a kind of infantile urge to transform images in school books and news articles into something else. These apparitions or temptations appear in all different kinds of traditions, as Baltrusaitis explains so splendidly in *The Fantastic Middle Age*. It has to do with Oriental painting, in which a number of fabulous creatures visit a character who is meditating and also, a bit closer to home, the ornamental figures on the Renaissance façade of the Seville town hall.

K.P.: In 2000 you produce *Greguerías de la Habana* - a succulent and suggestive title. What is the relationship between the title and the content of this series?

C.G.: After the trip we took to Havana for 98, *cien años después* (98: One hundred years later), an exhibition I curated, I was left with a number of unfinished

impressions, as if there had been some mistake with all of them and I had to give them some kind of closure. I don't think I had ever felt anything like that before. It had all been pretty predictable for me, like something you see in a dream, in a deep sleep, it was like a pillow in the summertime, and then it became something more or less real, like a theatrical set. I remember how some of these impressions pounded away inside my head and bubbled up in the form of images that began to appear before my eyes, one after the other, on our way to the airport. I don't know why, but for those few moments, time seemed to stand still or at least advance in a different way, and while I sat there looking out the car window, watching the avenues and streets go by, I felt the need to find answers, answers to nonexistent questions. One of the subtitles of the series, *El siglo XX en el balcón* (The 20<sup>th</sup> century on the balcony), may give you an idea of what I'm talking about, since it comes from the name of a small, seedy bar that I saw from the car as we sped past a street whose name I don't remember anymore. I'll never forget the silhouette of Havana from the castle of Morro-Cabaña, like a massive ship run aground, waiting to go to the junkyard. I don't know if that's what it would feel like to wait for the end of the history of the world, but that's what it felt like right then. These pieces were what emerged from all of those sensations, and of course their function could only be that of expressing this condition of senselessness. That was the reason I adopted Ramón Gómez de la Serna's term 'greguería.'<sup>1</sup>

K.P.: In this group of drawings the images appear ambiguously against an abstract ground or alongside abstract elements that occupy the same space. It is a kind of journey notebook of your trip to Havana, as you have been saying, but done through memory recollected rather than through immediate impressions. The images are of things that meant something to you on a variety of levels ranging from the personal, such as Gertrudis Rivalta in her kitchen, to the cultural, such as a classic image of the grounds of the Instituto Superior de Artes or museum vitrines, as well as occasional concessions to the tourist industry, the yellow motor-scooter taxi, the mulata, a wet street in Centro Habana, tourists having their photo taken in front of Che's statue. Why is it that you contrast these specific images with the abstract? Is it a kind of desire to separate them from mere reality?

C.G.: The combination with abstraction has to do with a circumstance similar to something I spoke about when we were discussing *Atlas*. In the memory, there exists a kind of intersection between remembered images and images that come from photographs. I think they coexist better in the ambiguous space of abstraction. This doesn't mean that you remove them from reality, but rather that, given their

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<sup>1</sup> Greguería is a term coined by Ramón Gómez de la Serna, meaning 'an image in prose that presents a personal, surprising, and sometimes humorous vision of some aspect of reality.'

senseless nature, they work better in the space of the absurd.

K.P.: *Contradanza* is an earlier series but at the same time clearly related to *Las tentaciones de San Antonio*. In this instance you opted for pen and ink. What does the title mean and why did you settle on this technique?

C.G.: These pieces were envisioned as a colophon to an exhibition entitled *Baile-Maratón* (Dance-Marathon); at that time they served as a kind of final counterpoint to the other pieces, filled with color and quite explosive. Against these colourful pieces, they were a point of interiority, privacy. With *Contradanza* I am talking about a couples' dance, generally elegant, if we think of it in terms of the French *contredanse*, and perhaps a bit less, if we go to its real origins, the English country dance, a peasant dance. In Spanish, though, it seems to signify something contradictory, like an element opposed to dance, something that fights against it. Curiously, this very series served as a kind of launching pad for another exhibition, in this case entitled *Strange Fruit*, adding a luminous, clear quality to a rather somber subject matter.

K.P.: And where do the images come from?

C.G.: A wide variety of sources: some have to do with objects from my collection of kitsch figures; others use images from scientific magazines; some, like in the case of the family 'eye,' are derived from some characters my daughter drew when she was eight years old. In this combination of elements and of shapes that are superimposed upon the different layers of paper, you get the feeling that this is a kind of *laboratory of the senses*, a mechanized system for codifying languages.

K.P.: You have just mentioned *Strange Fruit* that proposes a tangential relationship to Billie Holiday's song of the same name. It is a darkly committed song directed against the lynching that went on in the South. An all black protest song but paradoxically written by a white! You underline this relationship through the title of another work, *Cantante de Blues* (Blues singer), and perhaps even through *Crepusculo*, the title of a famous Thelonious Monk composition. Yet it is not easy to work out the relationship. There is an atmosphere of woods and darkness that might correspond to the negro's predicament, pierced by the clarity of light that might reflect the degree of self-awareness present in the words of the song. But how do you read it?

C.G.: The song is about something terrible, the lynching of a black man, and the words jump from the most ambiguous to the most utterly gruesome of images, an astounding mix of things. The feeling that Billie Holiday transmits is achingly beautiful, in a contradictory way. Overwhelmed by it all, I think of a singer who walks out to face her audience to do her job. Performance involves a lot of

pretending. Many times I myself have said that art is possible because it allows you to lie. The pieces that make up *Strange Fruit* revolve around the idea of identity and how it can be feigned. In this exhibition, I was searching for an atmosphere, the kind that's right at the edge of penumbra, around the dawn hour, when everyone and everything has the possibility to become something else. The tree that the man hangs from is like an immense body that calls out to us, it might be death, but remember, nothing is what it appears.

K.P.: I organized a show in Valencia in this same year that centred on the difficulty yet, at the same time, the necessity to address the issue of ethics in times such as our own. It is a difficult term since there is very little consensus as to what it means and how it can be translated in terms of social behaviour. Yet it remains abundantly clear that without clear ethical values the social fabric disintegrates and we fall back on primary reactions. You produced a series on the seven capital sins that was full of ironic asides. What did you want to communicate?

C.G.: It's so hard to talk about ethics these days, but I'm afraid that has always been true. In other times, the imposition of an ethical discipline was based on a principle of religious or political authority which prevented people from actually talking about ethics, unless they couched their comments in normative, repressive terms. I think that ethics can be resolved in praxis, in which behaviour is determinant. As a system, I do not trust any system that talks a lot about ethics and assesses people's behaviour. In general, it is just another way of hiding their own flaws. If you have ever experienced vertigo, for example, you know that the most shocking thing about it is that the body produces a series of sensations that actually hurl us into the abyss precisely as we are trying to keep from doing so. A similar thing happens with ethics. Beyond all the typical, pointless arguments we could have about ethics, there does exist a general consensus about certain things that are necessary for coexistence, which are beneficial for everyone, including ourselves. Naturally, this has cultural implications, which are always present, but above and beyond them we ought to let reason play a part in all this. Now that the ruling classes, in sinister collaboration with the media, have successfully engineered a revival of the debate regarding the classic dichotomies of good and evil, we have to make a real effort to situate ourselves at some kind of rational point of balance. *Los pecados capitales* (The Capital Sins) was intended to be seen as part of that effort, of the idea that we have to tease out the subtleties of a world that others would like us to view as black and white.

K.P.: In 2002 you started work on a series called *Canción del Río* (River Song) where you use rice paper to create a complex play of transparencies and superpositions. In other

words, you paste one piece of paper onto another to form different layers. Where did this idea come from?

C.G.: These pieces, in terms of technique, are related to *Los pecados capitales*. In this case, though, I worked with different superimposed papers that were transparent so that you could see what is underneath. Since they don't match up entirely, they cause vibrations and blurriness that offer even more nuance. As I mentioned before I have become very interested in the techniques used in Chinese and Japanese art. Occasionally, for fun, I have copied plates from the book *The Mustard Seed, Garden Manual of Painting*. It's funny, because I've never really liked copying illustration prints as a way to perfect my drawing, but I found this exercise particularly relaxing. *La canción del río* was inspired by a selection of Chinese poems that Pound transcribed and collected in his book *Catay*. The titles of the pieces are verses that I borrowed from a number of the poems in the book, which gives the art a spirit that, I think, is very close to the spirit in which Pound reinterpreted the poems.

K.P.: *Cathay* was, in fact, one of the three so-called war books that Pound wrote during or before the First World War, along with *Cathay* written in 1915 came *Homage to Sextus Propertius* in 1917, and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* in 1920. In all three texts, Pound flaunted masks or made use of personae. In *Cathay*, he sounded, for the first and last time in his work, notes of warmth and humanity; in *Homage to Sextus Propertius* he shows us, and it is something equally unique in his work, touches of humor and sexuality. The fourteen poems in the first version of *Cathay* represent Pound's workings of transliterations that he found in the notebooks of the sinologist Ernest Fenollosa. What Fenollosa had transliterated were, for the most part, poems by the eighth-century Tang poet Li Po, that he adapted to his own needs, using a Japanese form, called Rihaku. It is Hugh Kenner, a splendid critic of Pound, who puts the case for *Cathay* as a war poem: "Its exiled bowmen, deserted women, levelled dynasties, departures from far places ... were selected from the diverse wealth in the notebooks by a sensibility responsive to torn Belgium and disrupted London." Pound's diction, full of laconic sobriety and decorum, remains in these poems miraculously supple and delicate. I am, of course, talking about a specific literary context, but what was it that appealed to you and that you felt you could use for your own purposes?

C.G.: I like to think that this series exudes that delicate air, like the work of insects. A clean, economic result, that seems easy, as if born out of habit.

K.P. Could you talk a little more about this relationship between poetry and drawing, and about how you actually proceed in your re-reading of a literary work?

C.G.: Unlike other forms of art, drawings are rapid and agile, and this makes them analogous to certain types of

poetry, especially the kind that is not too intricate and obscure. And in addition, the use of metaphor and certain rhetorical devices is perfectly exportable to drawing or painting. Poetry -certain kinds of poetry, at least- invites an open reading, which functions as a source of feelings and images. But as often happens with literary interpretation, there is always the danger that your work may turn out to be nothing more than an illustration of the word-unless, of course, that is what you are intending to do. My intention is to interpret the idea or, perhaps more accurately, the feeling that is inspired by a few words that I sometimes connect to the piece through the title. This, for example, is what happens in *La canción del río*. In any event, I don't have a specific method for this, and not every poem can be interpreted in this way. Sometimes the poem, like a chance encounter, appears just after the piece; it may be a poem that I read and forgot about, but that left something inside of me, as if it were waiting for me to create a piece so that it might show its face again.

K.P.: For many years you have been working with the technique of pastel - not so common amongst contemporary artists. These are highly suggestive works that produce a balance between the graphic and the pictoric qualities, in some instances the colour is very austere, black and white, in others you break up the grey background with explosions of colour. Tell me a little about what you wanted to achieve in this group of drawings.

C.G.: The grey pastels that have a colour stain that represents a blob of oil paint, like the kind you see on a painter's palette, were made for an exhibition called *Party Final*. The idea of representing festive occasions, after-dinner conversations and celebrations just as they are winding down, suggested a kind of disenchantment to me. I am never especially happy at those kinds of occasions, I generally grow bored during social events and, as a way of fighting off the tedium I feel, I distract myself by observing the people around me. I like to imagine how they have been eating and drinking by examining the plates and glasses near them; I watch them as they repeat certain phrases when they talk, and I analyze their arguments as their voices grow louder and louder. This series reproduces a number of situations that inspire me to enter that moment of final reflection, when the party ends and you sit there just looking at the leftovers on the table. That big blob of paint on top of the distorted image of the party is like those leftovers that nobody knows what to do with.

K.P.: The monotypes deal with the idea of metamorphosis or journey. Everything changes bit by bit. As a process it might be compared to the development and evolution of a single image. What were you doing here?

C.G.: The method I chose for these pieces is completely responsible for the effect of the result, which comes out looking like a chain of shapes. To create a monotype, you

work with the inverted image on a sheet made of metal or some other material. Later on this sheet will be sent through the press, and you don't really know what the final result will be like until it emerges from the press. The idea to create these monotypes occurred to me when I was at Dan Benveniste's etching workshop. I remember I was working on an etching and we finished ahead of time, and so I suggested that we try something out with the monotype technique. These pieces barely took two hours to do, I remember it as a very intoxicating experience, because everything happened so fast. I would be working on one sheet just as another one was being printed. When you take out a sheet after it has just been pressed, it still retains some of the colour from the piece you've just printed, and so it occurred to me that I could use these traces of paint to build on the original, distorting it. From there, I decided to prepare an exhibition focused around the idea of metamorphosis and the symbolic meaning it carries in our culture. And so it was entirely appropriate to have a rooster turning into a caterpillar, or a forest transformed into a grotesque human figure. It was a way of completing the circle.

K.P.: Metamorphosis is, of course, a literary concept. We think inevitably of Greek literature or of Kafka. What draws you to this concept - one that is very present in the history of contemporary art. I am thinking here specifically of numerous works by Sigmar Polke.

C.G.: The two ideas overlap, inevitably. As I was telling you before, the reason I thought about calling the exhibition *Metamorfosis* was because a considerable number of the pieces I was working on revolved around that idea. And while we may never find Kafka's level of anguish in the works of Ovid, that may be because in Ovid's day the world was *culturally* prepared to understand such stories about gods and men, without finding them contradictory. Kafka's world, though, is pure paradox and we see it as a kind of attack against rationality, even though ultimately it all feels terribly real, so real that it is quite frightening. In this exhibition I included a self-portrait as a peddler representing Ahasuerus, the errant Jew who, for his mockery of Jesus, was condemned to wander until the end of the world, a world as absurd and incommensurable as his punishment. In this image of me, the errant Jew, a newly-born dove sits on my shoulder; some insects seem to die and then they re-emerge in their new form, as if living another life, and, though we know they die, we fool ourselves into thinking that it isn't really a death.

Art, and painting as a result, are also a kind of transformation. The artist can work as an actor who plays different roles and, in that sense, the work is sustained on the structure of a fiction. Representation comes about through the acceptance of that fiction and from there we go, almost without realizing it, from rooster to worm, to use one example.

K.P.: There is a series from 2003 on the subject of Theme Parks. It is not only comic and ironic but also parodic and very much rooted in personal experiences. You construct it through accumulative layers of images. Can you contextualise this series for me?

C.G.: At a certain point in time, I found myself with an important group of pieces that all revolved around the world of entertainment. To put these pieces together I collected images and tried to examine certain experiences that might illuminate me in some way about the issue. A number of elements related to the parade cropped up in this collection. I seemed like the kind of manifestation that lent itself very well to the ironic expression I was looking for. Most of the images came from the context of Disney, because in addition to being the theme park *par excellence*, Disney offered the added feature of being a kind of imperial propaganda, a cultural promoter of entertainment. In 1979 I travelled to the United States for the first time and was able to visit Disney World, and despite my initial misgivings, it turned out to be a very surprising experience. One of the main attractions of the entire world of Disney is the parade that takes place on the so-called 'Main Street USA'. I had learned about this through a series of slides my father had taken a few years earlier, and in fact these slides served as the basis for some of these pieces. Then, after visiting a web site called Yesterland, I was able to see the way the spectacle had changed throughout the years, and this was how I slowly became aware of the formal evolution of the politico-cultural message implicit in these parades. My pieces inject irony into those archetypes.

K.P. Are there other works related to this same theme?

C.G.: Dealing with this specific topic there are several pieces I did on canvas that were exhibited in *Parada melancólica* (Melancholy Parade), and a couple of large canvases that went with the piece *Perdido en USA Main Street* (Lost on Main Street USA), along with another collection of pieces I did on paper. The treatments are similar, with the obvious differences that result from the different media, but the idea they present is the same.

K.P.: There is a series where you refer to a character, Soldier Schweik, drawn from Hasek's magnificent novel of the same title. It's a work about the absurdity of war and the equally absurd strategies used by the soldier "hero" to survive. What was it that called your attention about this figure?

C.G.: The series you're talking about is called *El sueño de un patriota* (A patriot's dream), and for this, I did use the image of Hasek's character. He appears several times in these drawings. Curiously enough, I was drawn to this character even before I read the novel because I had seen it in the form of a marionette. The face of this good-hearted fool, this irritatingly simple character, left such

an impression on me that even before reading the novel I incorporated him into the crowds in *Perdido en USA Main Street*. Good old Schwejk adds a touch of tenderness, like an anti-war protest, and also fits very well into the absurdity of a world that has become a theme park. It is a spectacular world, in which reality is reduced to something terribly simple. With all the consequences this may imply, Schwejk ended up in *La última salchicha americana* (The Last American Hot Dog) like a parody of Velázquez's depiction of the God Mars, meditating on the senselessness of war. This piece served as the closing statement of all the pieces I created around this topic.

K.P.: There is a group of works from 2002 based on mental phantoms and torments. It conjures up a strange world that incorporates a wide range of images that include images taken from the world of the circus or simply enigmatic figures and objects. You called one of these works the *Waning World* that makes us think of the obsessive world that underlies so much of your work. Does it have to do with personal thoughts and emotions or is it more a product of literary and pictoric sources?

C.G.: They have to do with the way certain useless objects, like toys, or souvenirs, have a way of opening our imaginations...This particular project is focused on the little things as a way of achieving a parallel with real life, which it represents. Some of the pieces are, as you suggest, the product of personal obsessions and can be interpreted as a form of exorcism; others, simply, are a starting point for an ultimately open-ended narrative. They are done on blotting paper, which creates a particularly unusual, hazy effect, since the background remains sort of formless. There is a series of drawings that deals with subjects relating to the circus, which is strange for me, since I've never been to the circus myself. Nowadays, the world of the circus feels like an archaic type of entertainment, with very decadent connotations that were very appropriate complements to the exhibition in which they appeared, *Parada melancólica*. And so the interpretation of contemporary society as a kind of theme park is heightened by the inclusion of these outdated, tacky elements.

K.P.: The following year you make a series of eaux fortes and pastels. The former are rapid, light and seductive, but all of these works are based on erotic themes or on the role of the voyeur. What are you looking for in this series?

C.G.: Under the generic title of *El intruso* (The intruder) I exhibited a series of canvases and drawings that illustrated, from my personal viewpoint, the theme of the eyewitness and the gaze in the history of art. For a long time I had wanted to create new versions of some classic paintings that were related to this idea, works that had had a great influence on my position regarding art, and painting in particular. I am referring to my fascination

with the gaze and its passionate origins, and the articulation of the picture as a consequence of its existence. With these works I was able to offer a tribute to certain scenes from the history of art that had influenced me, from a very young age. That was how works like Tintoretto's *Susana and the Elders*, or etchings like Rembrandt's *Potiphar's Wife* found their way into this exhibition.

K.P. There is a poem of Wallace Stevens related to this theme of Susanna. It is a beautiful poem that narrates, through a carefully orchestrated musical form, the visual violation perpetuated by the Elders as they watch Susana bathing naked in the river: that is, the rhythm, rime and musicality of the verses or sections of the poem change tone according to what is taking place in the poem, a light music accompanies the laughter and conversations of Susana and her maids, and something more tempestuous and dramatic is used to denote the moment when, from their hidden viewpoint, the passion-filled eyes of the elders are indulging in the pleasures provoked by the sight of the naked woman, etc. What is it that you saw, however, in Tintoretto's work that captured your attention?

C.G.: The unsuspecting look in Susanna's eyes, her personal reverie as an invitation to observe her. The crisscrossing game of subtle penetrations, like the one suggested by the cloth that slides casually down her thigh. The impossible positions of the elders, especially the one at the lower left hand side of the painting, contorted and twisted around themselves because of the understandable lust they feel for her. This odd plane, like a flowered curtain, both hides Susanna from the elders and exposes her to them at the same time. But most of all, the most incomprehensible aspect of the scene is that the old men's eyes do not seem to be focused on Susanna's luminous body. These old men actually look ashamed of themselves and seem to be averting their gaze just as they are caught -in this case not by Susanna, who doesn't seem to notice them, but by the gaze of an eyewitness, the painter-spectator, who participates like a privileged voyeur of the scene.

K.P.: These works continue to relate to recent series where, as you say, the distance from the events has become bathed in layers of protective or proven irony. There is a critical distance that has a cutting edge. I am thinking, specifically, of *Cómo acabar con los 60* that looks back at a much mythologized period where alternatives were being proposed at all levels of our living - in religion, in social patterns, in sexuality, and in a burst of artistic movements that have been much in vogue throughout the last few years, Body Art, Land Art, Fluxus, Conceptual Art, Happenings, etc. A decade that in Spain had Franco as its backcloth and where these alternatives had only a minimal impact and tended to be lived vicariously.

C.G.: I was born in 1960, and have always had mixed feelings about that decade. On one hand, because I can

barely remember anything specific from that time-many of my memories have become mixed in with things I learned later on, and so I think of them as 'memories through hearsay.' And on the other hand, because whenever I think of those years I imagine it as the fascinating age that was the basis for the construction of a cultural mythology that I am very aware of. They say that the first few years of your life have a decisive impact on your personality and, paradoxically, I am unable to make those memories tangible, which is frustrating. Perhaps for this reason the title of the series is *Cómo acabar con los 60*, which uses images from the news media of those years. The images appear and disappear like ghosts, until you end up feeling a kind of unbearable hangover. Sometimes I think I myself have had a massive hangover from those years, and with all the indigestion it gave me, my one remedy has been to forget it all. I suppose all of us have been through something like this. Nowadays we look back at those years and think of them as this explosive, innocent era, the moment of the last revolution, when the world finally was going to stop being the same old boring world, full of antiquated priorities and rules; after a few years, everything began to fall apart until it was all nothing but a faint figure traced in the sand. In Spain, all of that enthusiasm came alive very belatedly in the 1970s, in sort of a weak version of what the 1960s had been like in other places. Now, it seems, the time has come to take a look back, and almost like a kind of revival, many of the things we've been able to observe now seem like fads, a simple pendulum of trends, like the bell-bottomed jeans and psychedelic blouses sold in exclusive designer boutiques. The only sensible way to look back is by laughing, and I do think that many of the artists of those years had much more of a sense of humor than their imitators nowadays.

K.P.: Finally there are some works that you have done this year that I would like you to comment - almost a surreal group of works using bizarre images where there seems no nexus between the images, and thus the spectator is forced to imagine or build in the meanings. There is a clear relationship with the *La Herida* series. I am thinking of a specific group of images - of a dog dancing on a supermarket trolley, a parodic monkey with a palette, a patient lying on a table with tree-trunks, a sad sunflower, or a lamp in a street with a ladder. Is it just a question of strange juxtapositions, of the surprise of the unexpected, or are there more personal meanings held within these confrontations? They also make me think of that disturbing series that brings together a human figure with a fly and an abstract scrawl - where the fly might possibly serve as an image of the man's desperate flight. It is an image that suggests obsessive thought, a kind of constant buzzing in the brain? They seem like nocturnal nightmare images.

C.G.: These drawings are, in a way, digressions from the central theme of the exhibition entitled *La herida*, in

which I wanted to express how the accumulation of knowledge brings with it a kind of wound, the awareness that, to a certain degree, intelligence and thought are part of a traumatic process. These drawings explore certain aspects of *1984*, by George Orwell, a book that tells the story of a struggle to discover truth, the experience of freedom and its consequences, and I focused specifically on themes like fear, terror, deception, rage...In the end they are like transparent, luminous scars.