Jacinto Lageira

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- 1 Jacinto Lageira calls himself a 'general practitioner'. Observing the range of the works produced by this Professor of Aesthetics at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, looking at the diversity of the areas of knowledge running through his theoretical thinking, noting the eclecticism of the art praxes coming under his critical attention, and, last of all, understanding the degree to which his great erudition predisposes him to dialogue, we can easily believe him. The title of his dissertation, supervised by Dominique Chateau

(Paris 1), *Miscellanées esthétiques : psychanalyse, sémiotique, phénoménologie : de quelques influences sur les théories des arts plastiques*, already revealed an intellectual signature set beneath the sign of these scholarly mixtures which he is still fond of, and which are the basis of his book *L'Esthétique traversée : psychanalyse, sémiotique et phénoménologie à l'œuvre* (Brussels : La Lettre volée, 2007). But let us make no mistake, far from giving rise to mere generalizations, these miscellanies, quite to the contrary, form complex epistemological configurations. His philosophical studies, then the instruction from Rainer Rochlitz, have furthermore lastingly transformed the way he approaches aesthetics, art criticism and art history.

- 2 As a polyglot aesthete, and an associate professor at Coimbra University in Portugal, Jacinto Lageira has been involved in major art-critical activities since the late 1980s, in tandem with his research into aesthetics. He is among those whom contemporary art praxes—those in particular of Michael Snow, Jean-Marc Bustamante, Andreas Gursky, Ger van Elk and Gary Hill¹—are continually questioning. Because these works are seen from the angle of linguistic theories (*L'Image du monde dans le corps du texte*, vols. I and II, Brussels : La Lettre volée, 2003) and the latest advances of the cognitive sciences (*Regard oblique : essais sur la perception*, Brussels : La Lettre volée, 2013), and because the media examined are as diverse as painting, photography, video and installation, a staunch bond links them to the body, to language, to the senses and in fact to the human element, which, when all is said and done, is the main subject of this author's philosophical and aesthetic thinking.
- 3 This is where the powerful ethical dimension of his thoughts comes into the picture. This dimension is especially obvious in *La Déréalisation du monde : réalité et fiction en conflit* (Arles: Jacqueline Chambon ; Actes Sud, 2010), where Jacinto Lageira shows himself perplexed in the face of the excessive aestheticizations of reality, above all when the representation of the pain of others is in question, which is where he joins forces with Susan Sontag. Here he sees the symptom of a denial of reality, reinforcing, as did Karlheinz Stockhausen's declarations about the 9/11 attacks in New York, the sinister formula: *Fiat ars, pereat mundus* ("Let art be, even if the world must perish"). In refusing aesthetic moralism and moralizing aesthetics, Jacinto Lageira calls rather for a re-definition of the notions of reality and fiction, an undoubtedly ambitious endeavour, but one that is a match for this great 'general practitioner'.

NOTES

1. We invite readers to consult the complete bibliography of Jacinto Lageira, which is accessible on the website of the Archives de la critique d'art (www.archivesdelacritiquedart.org) in the "Ressources documentaires" menu, then in the "Base des critiques d'art", http://www.archivesdelacritiquedart.org/ouils_documentaires/critiques_d_art/309