Portrait. Luis Pérez Oramas

Jacques Leenhardt

Translator: Simon Pleasance

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/8320>

DOI: 10.4000/critiquedart.8320

ISBN: 2265-9404

ISSN: 2265-9404

Publisher

Groupeement d'intérêt scientifique (GIS) Archives de la critique d'art

Printed version

Date of publication: 24 June 2013

ISBN: 1246-8258

ISSN: 1246-8258

Electronic reference

Jacques Leenhardt, « Portrait. Luis Pérez Oramas », *Critique d'art* [Online], 41 | Printemps/Été 2013, Online since 24 June 2014, connection on 30 April 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/critiquedart/8320> ; DOI : 10.4000/critiquedart.8320

This text was automatically generated on 30 April 2019.

Archives de la critique d'art

Portrait. Luis Pérez Oramas

Jacques Leenhardt

Translation : Simon Pleasance

EDITOR'S NOTE

Translated from the French by Simon Pleasance

Luis Pérez Oramas

2012 © 2012, d.r.

- ¹ Luis Pérez Oramas (born in Venezuela in 1960) belongs to that family of critics trained in art history (his doctoral thesis on Velázquez¹ was supervised by Louis Marin and Hubert

Damisch). As the author of collections of poetry and essays, *La Cocina de Jurassic Park y otros ensaios visuales*² deserves special mention. He taught art history at Rennes, Nantes and Caracas before embarking on a curator's career, focusing on the work of the Venezuelan painter Armando Reverón³ (1889-1954); he then addressed the issue involving the inclusion of South American artists in international collections and in major international shows: *New Perspectives in Latin American Art, 1930-2006* (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2007), *Latin American and Caribbean Art: Highlights from the Collection of the Museum of Modern Art* (Albany, New York State Museum, 2009), *Tangled Alphabets: León Ferrari and Mira Schendel* (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 2009) and, in 2012, the General Curatorship of the XXXth International Biennial in São Paulo.⁴

- 2 His critical work involves a very constructed debate against those who give too much pride of place to iconography. The fact is, he posits, that neither in Titian, nor in Velázquez, nor in any of the important artists, is the pictorial spectacle worked out in this iconic dimension. Based on an analysis of *Las Meninas*, Luis Pérez Oramas demonstrates that well before the crisis of representation occurring at the end of the 19th century, its allpowerfulness was contested by the inclusion of the onlooker in the pictorial arrangement. There then emerged, alongside the *representational value*, an *exhibition value* which has been poorly examined by art history. Luis Pérez Oramas provocatively calls it *installation*, insofar as the onlooker is installed in the arrangement as a condition for effecting that spectacular dimension of all art, to which he wants to attract attention. Connected with a spectator, any work of art perforce occupies a *place* where the shift from the *work of art* to the *aesthetic experience* is achieved. We thus more clearly grasp why Luis Pérez Oramas talks about *installation*. In his book *La Cocina de Jurassic Park*, the analysis of *Las Meninas* immediately leads to an analysis of Christian Eckart's installation *The Power Chord Cycle* (1993), which enables him to posit that art can be thought of both as *artwork* and as *aesthetic event*. So it is in the objective conditions of the presence of the work, in its phenomenology, that the viewer takes cognizance of art's two sides. He is faced with the impossibility of the mimetic truth, but he sees himself offered, over and above the false evidence of *mimesis*, the possibility of existing as an onlooking subject, as an onlooker. If the illusions of semiotic transparency are done away with, an area of self-reflexivity is, conversely, established in the *place of the installation*.
- 3 We can clearly see how the critical idea, originally expressed about 17th century figurative painting, culminates in the contemporary situation. The installation takes note of the shipwreck of the illusion constructed by easel painting, in accordance with which there might exist a fully autonomous world of images, a *per se* of the icon. By making it obvious that, from the end of the Renaissance, artists realized that things could not be this way, and that at that time, already, the onlooker was included in the picture, they have constructed an epistemic field of reflection. Nowadays, *installations* are pursuing this line by proposing an alternative to the picture, and by setting up systems and arrangements where art no longer claims to be escaping from its *place*, and where it even lays claim to it as a self-reflexive dimension of its praxis. This epistemic dimension of Luis Pérez Oramas's work roundly underwrites his critical engagement.

NOTES

1. *La Circulation du spectateur : autour des trois tableaux de Velázquez, la Reddition de Breda, les Menines, les Fileuses*, (Doctoral thesis, Art History), Paris : Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1994
2. Pérez Oramas, Luis. *La Cocina de Jurassic Park y otros ensayos visuales*, Caracas : Polar Foundation, 1998
3. See, among others, his essays:
Armando Reverón, de los prodigios de la luz a los trabajos del arte, Caracas : Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Sofía Imber, 1990
Armando Reverón. Luz y cálida sombra del caribe, Caracas : Fundación Galeria de Arte Nacional, Fundación Museo Armando Reverón, 1996
La Construcción de un personaje. Imágenes de Armando Reverón, Caracas : Proyecto Armando Reverón (PAR), 2004
4. *A Iminência das poéticas / The Imminence of Poetics*. 30th São Paulo Biennale (7 September-9 December 2012), São Paulo : Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2012