

EDGARDO NAVARRO, A CHIMERICAL PAINTER

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«When you look at the roofs of Paris, you just see grey tiles, while I see the skin of a serpent, that of Quetzalcoatl (a feathered serpent), my culture...» so the painter Edgardo Navarro confides to me in his studio in Paris. Architecture is one of the sources of inspiration for this young painter originating from Mexico, but who's been living in France for some years now. He grew up with muralists like Orozco, Siqueiros and Rivera ... all of them artists who coloured his history books. « Those men have made the revolution. The idea of art for art's sake belongs to modernity. However, to Mexican muralists and many artists of East Germany art is rather a vehicle to exclaim their political values. » When he arrived in France in the 2000's, Edgardo Navarro first studied at La Villa Arson, where he tried his hand at the language of the conceptual. Afterwards, he went on to study at Leipzig where he plunged into the architectural context of East Germany and he formed himself together with Neo Rauch. At this city charged with history, he



«Dissonance», detalle, 200 x 200 cm, óleo sobre tela, 2013.

learned about the rigid construction of space and abandoned all political fancy. Ever since his return to Paris, where he still lives and works, Edgardo has to cross

the entire capital every single day from North to South to get to his studio, which offers a fantastic view over the roofs of Paris.

Being an alchemist, Edgardo Navarro makes his own colours. His chromatic range goes from black – deep blue, according to him – to an olive green, owing to charred chromium. But it also includes steel blue, burnt sienna, ...Upon the mixture of oil paint and tempera he uses for his first coat, the artist himself puts a sublayer, « which is an important step for the tenability of the texture of the colours so that they last longer through time », clarifies the painter.

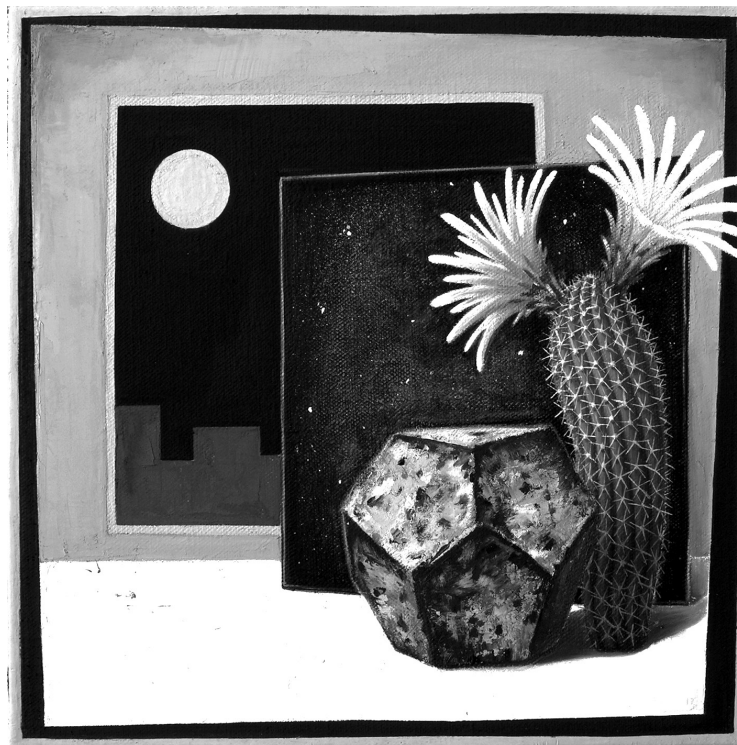
His paintings are allegorical, imprinted with the stamp of the Flemish masters of the 17th century and endowed with architectural hybridisation, a synthesis between the urban scenery of Leipzig and the cactuses and deserts of the « Mexican cliché ».

On his large formats, there are often two universes that intertwine, confirming the line between reality and the imaginary is porous... The near genius way by

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«Contrepoint III», 40 x 40 cm, óleo sobre tela, 2017.

which Edgardo Navarro constructs his settings, captures our attention: be it the arranging of the circle within the square that draws our eye, the perspective and the geometrisation of space, the play of mirrors, a painting within a painting unfolding into infinity... all these suppositions that give rhythm to his pictorial constructions.

Magritte, as the reputed father of surrealism, isn't too far off, although the painter refuses to be pinned down to that art movement. Instead, he evokes a melting pot of influences, swinging between symbolism and hyperrealism, between cosmography and shamanism, which gives his paintings a curious sense of contemporariness in a world becoming more and more digital. It seems as though time has been

suspended; there's a silence settling into his paintings that is esoteric. Here, much like reading a plan, it's all about careful consideration and taking the time to analyse what is happening. In Dimensional middle time, two children in the foreground, one of which is blindfolded and leaning on the other who has his eyes closed, are walking towards the beholder, who can't help but be intrigued by this unreal architecture of checker boards with its infinite perspective that is constructed as a theatre set next to a desert landscape. The characters move through poetic fantasy sets. Edgardo Navarro breathes life into beings, embracing a certain dreamy sensuality. On top of being simple extras, they embody an inner presence reminding sometimes of Luis Buñuel's icono-

clastic cinema but without ever giving attention to the beholder. Take for instance the man in a dark costume and tie inhaling a Datura with his peculiar little details like his trousers that decompose into a multitude of algorithms. A real being or something artificial? Or what to think of the woman in a traditional american indian costume kneeling and pulling a ripcord into infinity? Elsewhere, a bit higher up in the painting, a child is looking at a cactus that's taking the shape of a toy while his feet are balancing on the contour of a circle!

«*To paint is an act of resistance*», says the artist. And to the art-lover going to see his paintings, it's broadening his field of view and making it more illusive. Now that's magic realism!