

Sensitive Paradoxes

Buzzing noises upset us all. Today, almost 17% of the world population suffers from a chronic buzzing noise, which is nothing but the perception of sound not produced in the environment. Rather it is a sound perceived but not caused by any external source.

The buzzing sound may be a screech, the whistle of a pressure cooker, a trickle of water, a shrill whistle, a tapping noise, a fly. In most cases, it is highly disturbing. Depending on the intensity of the sound or the disturbance, the buzz may become unbearable, having the most far-reaching consequences for the sufferer.

Buzzing may result from psychological, metabolic, hearing or cardiovascular disorders, and exposure to noise, among other reasons. We can seldom tell the cause or effect of the buzzing.

The truth is that buzzing is upsetting to the extreme. We cannot possibly enjoy a constant buzzing—it might very well push us to insanity.

When the buzzing is caused by a fly, it is even worse. In addition to its disturbing sound, a fly is a disgusting insect. Landing everywhere, it carries bacteria and disseminates diseases.

The first reaction of anyone to a fly is to aim a crushing blow at it to have it disappeared once and for all, as if one could possibly put an end to this repulsive creature.

Silvia Rivas manages to do so with her poetry, though. In her series entitled *Zumbido* [Buzzing], a fly flies in and immediately starts upsetting us all. We feel the urge to shoo it away, but we miss our goal and instead we end up swatting it. In this interplay of sound and dance, the battle rages on and we get trapped in the scene. We stop and look in wonder and delight. A true choreography of hands that warps a loom in a hunting dance, as if it were child's play. And the more flies fly in, the more infected we get with their movements.

Then in a second moment, we find ourselves in a dark space with the sound of thousands of flies around us. At first we react in disgust, utter revulsion and despair, as if our bodies would be entirely covered up by these flies. Once again we stop and look in awe and joy.

How can we stand in front of these elements and feelings that stir up such an aversion in us and still appreciate them? How can we possibly want to keep on standing still and undergo the experience all over again? Silvia Rivas succeeds in doing exactly this with her work. She not only transforms all this in a visual and sensorial exhibition, but also addresses some issues she has been raising in her work as a video artist.

Time is another element proposed in this art work. Time is revealed in the repetition and intensity of movements, in the speed of actions and even in the reaction of the audience. Reflex actions of the public are purely the result of a set of issues brought up by the artist. They are a testimony of our senses and the impressions aroused in us when confronted with her artistic production.

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Zumbido (trama incesante), 2010
Still de video