

Momentum

Silvia Rivas

"In vain, we try to control the course of our lives. Maybe, our potential is manifested as an experience, the precise moment just before the outcome, a vertigo condition, the sensation of waking up falling"
Silvia Rivas

The current work of Silvia Rivas has reached a crossroad, a point of convergence; reflections on time that she has been working on since her significant video installation, presented in 2001 at Centro Cultural Recoleta. When at that time, an eternal space was surrounded by an orchestration of synchronicity and divergences; the viewer, fully immersed, was able to feel that experience in a tangible form. Rivas dissembled into multiple layers the sensation of speed, the millenary metaphor of time as water that flows. Nowadays, the artist's research is submerged within the infinitesimal weave of the instant.

"Optical unconscious" is what Walter Benjamin used to describe new possibilities for the naked eye to gain previously unsuspected knowledge, revealed by modern technologies across the mediums of photography and cinema. We are familiar - he said in 1931 - with the multitude of people, but hidden from us is the exact second into which a step begins to unfold. If the painter - he pointed in 1936 - is like a magician who diagnosed watching or palpating a body, the photographer or the cameraman instead becomes the surgeon, penetrating deep into the constructions of fact; or as a psychoanalyst, delving into the language of the self-consciousness, into its mysterious unconscious motor.

If paradigmatically, photography freezes a moment, now Silvia Rivas has utilised video as a media to expand the boundaries of a decisive moment. Every step forward is a step into the void: the artist shows how a decision can push the body into a space full of potential, something still largely ignored. She chose to stop and stretch that instant before the course of its outcome; to create an allusion -situated and ubiquitous- of the existential crossroads, that are deeply inexorable and free.

To communicate to the viewer the intensity and consistence of "momentum" the artist worked with actors and high definition visual technologies. The first artwork shows a small gesture expanding through film movement, put in juxtaposition with a fragile fixity of the same gesture engraved in marble. The sculptural element relates to the act of photography immensely, because, as already noted by Duchamp, impression molds retain a perfect imitation of the original, they are indexical, like a light footprint. The essence of fixing a moment implies the message "that has been" (Barthes), and so every photograph -thanatography- performs a function similar to a gravestone.

In the second work, the ability to capture frames of movement allows Rivas some spectral influence, to expand a gesture into multiple possibilities, as if every moment embodies, to its minimum core, a range of forking paths.

The third piece is key. Freudian cure aimed to free the individual from the shackles of its own certainties, to allow the subject to let go, and again "fall" into the unknown course of their desire. One and the same performer plays a dual action in a specular diptych. Taking into account, that also it is essentially specular unfolding of the Large Glass: they and she, "mar" (sea) and "cielo" (sky), "mar", "cel", the name of the artist who, contrary to the futuristic euphoria for speed, proposed the *rétard* as a conceptual model. Do not be fooled by dreams of movement, proposed Duchamp, but implement dissection. *Rétard en verre* (glass delay) or *envers retard*: a delay that allows us to spy the other side to motion, the hidden plot of a drive towards a magnet.

These three pieces provide us with a glimpse of the future results of a great work in progress, that Silvia Rivas is developing. She is immersed in the flow of time signalling that subjectivity is not constituted, as we believe, through established norms, but in the form of a true "awakening".