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Solitaire's Saga

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Solo Show **Tulio de Sagastizábal**

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Argentina, Buenos Aires
Institution:
Diana Lowenstein Gallery

Eva Grinstein

Tulio de Sagastizábal's show was, no doubt, a magnificent farewell for Diana Lowenstein's gallery, a pivotal dealer in the Argentinean circuit who has, for personal and professional reasons, decided to close its local operation in order to focus on its successful Miami subsidiary. Four years ago, and in the Lowenstein-owned Der Brücke halls, de Sagastizábal presented a prior series titled Pinturas indolentes (Indolent Paintings), which consolidated his preeminent role among the younger artists. Refusing to engage in intellectual speculation—at a moment when, slowly, conceptualism was beginning to reappear—the series proposed a kind of pure pictorial celebration, highly suggestive in an artist of refined education and just when more necessary it seemed to comment on political realities. Like many other artists in the 1990's, de Sagastizábal turned abstraction into an attitude; indolence was a sign of the times—a sign certainly closer to tedium than to condescension.

The year 2000 was one of strong impressions for this artist born in Posadas, Misiones, in 1948. Invited by the Basque center Arteleku, he left for several months his study (where besides painting he conducts a densely populated art analysis workshop for emerging artists) and moved to Spain, searching, perhaps, for experiences that could question that referential position he occupies in Buenos Aires. The result of his sojourn in San Sebastián is titled Pintura existencial (Existential Painting), and he showed it at the Diana Lowenstein closing event. Post-journey works result from curiosity, from mental and emotional shock, from meditations conducted outside the place of belonging.

The show included acrylic-on-canvas pieces of different sizes, volumetric works, and drawings on cardboard. If the Indolente series could be read as a sort of mise-en-scene of apathy, this existential production comes across, contrastingly, as a declaration of overflowing energy. The curatorial scheme proposes a sum of interests flowing in changing formats, which amplify, without lessening its intensity, the reach of the core. One could imagine one or two charged questions, very basic, governing the artist's explorations; questions around the representation of volume on flat surfaces. One wall entirely covered by ink and acrylic drawings on passepartout is perhaps the most gigantic and disquieting expression of this search. Under the title Mundo grande, mundo pequeño (Big World, Small World), de Sagastizábal deploys a multiplicity of fragments that engage in a dialogue much like the terms of a disjointed equation. The clumsy attempts at discourse of an engineer who forgot how to project structures; imaginings of a non-engineer who plays at finding science in the chaos of forms.

Another fundamental piece in this series is Genealogía No. 1 (Genealogy # 1), which incorporates small pieces of chain mail glued to a painted and drawn-over surface. The grid (reminiscent digital language images) is a constant through the whole show; it appears in those canvasses that develop

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color combinations and variations, in the drawings, and in the stand-alone objects that quote in some aspect two-dimensional figures. In Genealogía No. 1, a crude, almost child-like fusion operates between the wall (painted in orange), the framed painting, and sculpture. The point of departure is located at the most veiled level, created through fine tracings of black ink. Over that, a linear drawing in white chalk seems to delineate a second, denser attempt, while, lastly, there appear nets of a rigid material resembling reliefs, with the strange likeness of a non-materialized dream. If to a degree this show reflects about the projective qualities of art, it does so without the clichés that so many other artists use. De Sagastizábal reveals his lucidity by taking on the projectiveness as a poetics, not in its relationship with asepsis, pulchritude, and comfort in design of its more commercial variants.

The logo for ArtNexus, featuring the word "ArtNexus" in a bold, sans-serif font. The "Art" is in a dark grey color, and "Nexus" is in a lighter grey color, both set against a dark rectangular background.

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