

March 4 - April 17, 2021.

Los 7 del Barrio Colombia +2 invitados

Andrés Arango
Carlos Carmona
Camilo Correa
Danilo Cuadros
Diego Díaz
Andrés Layos
Hernán Marín
Jeison Sierra
Alejandro Tobón

*"We are a sign that is not read,
We feel no pain, we almost have
Lost our tongues in foreign lands"
(Friedrich Hölderlin)*

The exhibition entitled 'Los 7 del Barrio Colombia' (plus two guests) brings together a group of artists from Antioquia who have organized themselves into five workshops in the central Medellín neighborhood, characterized by the presence of a large number of workshops that revolve around the automotive sector. It is an active neighborhood of artisans in various trades, near the current MAMM, an area of mixed uses, diversity and economic activity.

The '7 del Barrio Colombia' do not have a formal agenda in common; what characterizes them is the interest in developing productive techniques within the group, self-managing their work, in most cases, and opening space for other artists who, having their workshops in other places, gravitate like planets around the group. The 'Bunker' and the 'main headquarters', origin of the group, are distributed in several floors, with real artisan workshops that complement the great offer and diversity of the sector in terms of metalworking, cutting and bending, casting, lathe and carpentry, etc. At the end of the evening there is not long to wait for wine and music, friends and conversation.

The group evokes the 'urban' generation of 'Eleven Antioquian Artists', whose first common exhibition was organized by Alberto Sierra in 1975. Of these (Umberto Perez, Rodrigo Callejas John Castles, Marta Elena Velez, Hugo Zapata, Alvaro Marin, Oscar Jaramillo, Juan Camilo Uribe, Javier Restrepo, Dora Ramirez and Felix Angel Gomez) it was said that their marked interest in the urban then constituted a renewal of the regional art scene, advancing on the costumbrismo and the exaltation of 'la raza' of the so-called Antioquian school

of the fifties. This generation "turned to the city both as a place of creation and as a favorite subject of representation".

The interests of the 7 and their guests reflect a varied panorama of interests. They differ from the previous ones in almost everything; they come from higher education centers; they are diverse, but there is a great sense of solidarity, which is scarce in these times, and in general, they do whatever they want, in the best sense of the word. The change of interests and perspective is evident; perhaps they are marked by the signs of the times. They have in common, with other artists in Medellín, the deepening of the possibilities of drawing, but there is also excellent painting and video.

Alejandro Tobón explores the urban myth, notably from the 1950s in North America, of the tradesman, whose leitmotif was 'do it yourself'. This ideal of masculinity was geared towards skill in the use of tools, self-improvement and autonomy; these skills and goals were necessary to confirm the success of suburban life, the love of nature and the idealization of the American family, apple pie and all.

Jeison Sierra and Andres Layos choose to review the landscape from two related gazes. Sierra continues his series of looks on a rural, dark and mysterious landscape. With black oil and quasi-black backgrounds, one can glimpse the mysterious night of Zaragoza, the native place that animates his work. This town in Bajo Cauca, marked by the presence of the river, gold mining and the violence produced by the bloody struggle for natural resources, appears mute and distant like a

memory, far from the epiphanies of Pedro Nel Gómez, for whom the Antioquian landscape was mystical and heroic. Layos, on the other hand, presents a cold nature and a technological landscape of explosion and emptiness. The magic is in the absence of human connotations, in landscapes as artificial as they are probable, symptomatology of the contemporary.

Andrés Arango and Hernán Marín, artists invited to the group of the 7, are linked to the previous ones in their search for excellence in drawing and painting. Arango tricks us with 'table books' about the universe, while a small installation in a house shows the transformation of an eraser into a dinosaur; everything is a matter of scale, from the minuscule to the infinite. Marín's drawings evoke sacred mountains of cold earth; sacred landscapes outside of time and alien to the hand of man.

Carlos Carmona examines the technological effects on color: how does a spectrum pixelate or deform under the effects of pollution? How does color disappear from nature? It is interesting to see how contemporary abstraction has shifted the focus from 'pure abstraction', i.e., lack of referents, to abstraction as a result of processes of analysis of nature-culture interweaving. The works 'Color-coral' and 'Pantone glich' are an example of this.

Camilo Correa creates three-dimensional works from common elements such as children's construction chips. The construction of artworks from repetitive pieces has a long history in modern culture, from wooden construction sets as children's educational games and prefabrication, to the Bauhaus and modern

movement's interest in repetitive building blocks. Far from innocence, Correa's constructions refer to the repetition of violence.

Diego Díaz assumes his own skin as the basis for experimentation. Carne Autorretrato represents the skin with the exquisiteness of the Spanish golden century. Only it is a hanging oil canvas, with its throat slit, but it could be a piece of cloth like the one resting on the legs of the young man in Velázquez's 'The Triumph of Bacchus or the Drunks'. Examining one's own skin: a good task for the present time, with its extremism and complacency.

What to do now? A question posed by Danilo Cuadros with his assemblage of objects, forms and materials, which he arranges and rearranges in search of a sense of meaning. What does this collection of prototypes, samples, objects of meditation mean? This is the work that closes the exhibition, and at the same time opens it since, without realizing it, it paraphrases Heidegger when he asks: What is it to think? Or, more precisely, what is it that must be thought?

Ana Patricia Gómez Jaramillo, Director La Balsa Arte.
February 2021.

1. "El arte en Antioquia y la década de los setenta. Una interpretación"
<https://www.elmamm.org/Exposiciones/Exposiciones-Pasadas/Id/1298>