

DANCE FOR FOUR
RHOMBUSES AND A YELLOW
TRIANGLE

BY MARÍA BERRÍOS

I'm here, I said, with the romantic dogs

And here I'm going to stay.

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Sometimes I think that rather than writing an essay about the work of Felipe Mujica, it would be much better to publish a long list of all the titles of his work. It would be a narrow, thin list just like the geography of Chile, and it would go on for several pages. A concrete poetry version of his oeuvre, with a few moments of visceralist lyricism. If I limit myself to only those pieces he exhibited in the summer of 2018 in Santiago, the list might start off as follows, bearing in mind the arbitrary nature of memory:

flat tetris

wood shadow

dark snow

dripping pixels

yellow walls

orange table

steel lacquer

blue Dog Eyes

I acknowledge that these transcriptions/translations done ad hoc –several of these titles were originally in English—are not entirely satisfying, and that sometimes I engaged in minimal interventions. For example, by mistake, an adjective used to describe a work was incorporated into the title, going from “*Tetris, plano*,” to “*tetris plano*,” among other cases. There are other mistakes to be found in the extracts I present herewith of this still nonexistent list, but when I became aware of them, I felt that they were very much Mujica in nature

and left them as is. That kind of list would hopefully be quite long, with titles of all kinds, including names of drawings, texts, exhibitions, curtains—which, by the way, would make an excellent playlist of popular geometrism. I don't know if a musical genre of that name actually exists, but I think it could include groups like the now legendary Colombian Malas Amistades, the divine Dominican Rita Indiana, or the *mexicanísima* Odissea Ocotepéc. Compiling such a list of songs—or artists' works, depending on your point of view—is not about underscoring the literary quality of the titles. The purpose of these piles of words is that their random accumulation serves to reflect a body of work in motion. Words used to name a diversity of compositions, color interactions, formal variations and interventions in space, that allow us to envision the constellation of Mujica's work. A color that behaves this way or that, interacting with things and incurring in alterations doesn't have to do with the science of optics or the intrinsic properties of color or form, but with its social relations. The key lies in the relationships of those colors and those forms with his friends, with the songs they like to dance to, with the videogames they share with one another. Basically, his interactions with his neighbors, his neighborhood, his context. These words are invitations to observe those movements close up, to choreograph them, to dance with them.

doors on the wall

tetris contact

hey you, why me

untitled in Valdivia

studyo, block

exam, the thing

the bird, the caravelle
cables, collage
when a dog meets another dog

These lists could also be scenarios, of the interiors of certain luncheonettes in downtown Santiago — the kind that serve tall, cold glasses of *cola de mono* and that celebrate surviving August no matter what time of year it is—; magnificent set designs for the Viña del Mar music festival, potential backdrops for accompanying the concerts of Pancho Relámpago and his band Los Neochilenos on their tours of northern Chile. As I write this, I realize that Felipe would make an excellent set designer, and it suddenly occurs to me that maybe he is, and that we will all learn of this in some future exhibition in which he decides to open another one of the small folders he stores in his workshop. Like those labeled “sketches” that he decided to remove from their drawer for last summer’s exhibition in Santiago. Papers that appeared despite the reticence about talking of student life, or bringing up his frustrated microbusiness of colored papers (which could be considered the entrepreneurial seed that later evolved into Galería Chilena, but that is another story...), going back for periods of time to his mother’s house to experiment with the furniture, friends from childhood, faithful as stray dogs. But the truth is that these seeming banalities are in fact essential, and this essence appears in Felipe’s work like a table turned upside down. A tilted table that both joined and separated other songs or —excuse me— other objects from one another. Doors resting against the wall, as if indicating other possible directions, doors turned into malleable panels until their permeability

leaves them so soft that they can fold, be saved and move around at will. Drawings became spatial and turned into support structures. Songs became curtains. Micro-curtains of everyday life.

Carla and Runo
one day, all this will be yours
untitled 23
untitled 24
untitled 26
shadow 1
shadow 2
shadow 3
lonely and abundant heart
triangular collages

On the other hand, piling up these words offers a more elongated perspective of the work. In these things that the artist did not want to show for a very long time —his work as an art student and his notes and studies for future works— there is also something that is hard to describe without sounding a little pretentious. Mujica is someone who carries with him all the places he’s ever lived; all these things are present in his works in an atonal fashion, so to speak, perhaps this is where we may note his training as a printmaker. These tiny gestures are imperceptible at first glance, but they add up in the clandestine state of those seemingly simple forms, in an elongated rhombus, in an achromatic gray that is so typical of Santiago, or in the ochre yellow taken from a New York street corner, some circles in Brooklyn. Certain colors, for example, settled into his work like temporary guests that ended up hanging around indefinitely. It is possible that these

relationships can be mapped to his childhood, to that permeable language of exile, to being a little boy who listens in one language and answers in another. To a childhood of cohabiting with his parents in one place, even though they, to a certain degree, live in another country that no longer exists as they remember it. An unknown country for these children, one that exists only in the imagination. An imaginary place that one also begins to live in, just a bit. A multiplied life in which a parallelepiped is not, and never will be, just a parallelepiped. A composition by Mujica always brings with it other dispositions; in the figures he proposes there is always at least a double potential that inhabits elsewhere. A twin life, an astrophysical connection. Those other dances.

María Berríos is a sociologist, independent writer and curator living in Copenhagen. Her work explores issues traversing art, culture, and politics with a special interest in collective experiments and the ways they expose themselves to the world. Berríos has published extensively on art and politics in Latin America—and beyond—, and has been engaged in several collaborative art projects. She was a founding member, along with the artists Ignacio Gumucio and Francisca Sánchez, of the collective *Vaticanochico*. Among her recent projects are the research exhibition *The Revolution Must Be a School of Unfettered Thought*, together with artist Jakob Jakobsen for the 31st São Paulo Bienal (also exhibited in the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art 2015 and Peace Treaty, San Sebastian, 2016), and the exhibition, co-curated by Amalia Cross, *Alberto Cruz. "The Body of the Architect is not that of just one Man"* (MAVI, Santiago, 2017). Since 2016 she has been a steady collaborator of Hospital Prison University Archive, a project space and radio station run by the artist and organiser Jakob Jakobsen in a room in the building where they live together with their three year old son who believes he is a ninja.