

Jorge Galindo

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The *free* paintings of Jorge Galindo

Jorge Galindo, Spanish artist who came up in the late 1980s, has been turning painting into an experimental field of expression since the beginning of his trajectory. This aspect is central to all of his body of work, which is also equally fundamental for other important artists today, such as Ray Smith or even Julian Schnabel – since, in all of these cases, we can witness a liberation of the *expressive forces* stemming from a new understanding of the very act of painting.

We could say that, in this regard, the work of these artists freed painting from most of its previous historical meanings – the obligation to represent reality, the Greenbergian issue of permanence on the medium's surface, the shapes of what we might call conceptual abstraction (*post painterly*) brought by Frank Stella, and many other ideas – finding a new meaning in this experimental domain, different from the historical model that Modernism had previously given it, and which made it, throughout the 20th century, a means of expression with its own limited protocols.

This new understanding of painting is now shown as an action freed from any previous formal and conceptual constraints, seeing itself carried out in a plane of pure experimentation within which all approximations become not only possible but even welcomed and necessary, so that painting can be developed freely, constantly reinventing itself.

So, what does this new experimental field, open to the practice of painting, consist of? I mentioned, with regard to the artist's work, a kind of fundamental relationship between his painting and bullfighting, taking the term in the same sense that the French poet and anthropologist Michel Leiris gave it, in order to defend a *non-canonical* practice of literature. I alluded to Leiris' definition to refer to the almost vertiginous dimension that the artist's work revealed from the beginning, as if it were itself bleeding, seeking alongside sensations and pure expressions the impulses of a creativity that almost touches on despair.

Galindo is one of those artists who – in the wake of a very rich tradition that, in fact, began with Goya – learned to bring from the streets an energy that almost impetuously leads directly to painting, made up of impulses, visual elements, ideas, forces, and intensities that are able to brutally confront us with an unforeseen scale of accidents. In his work, indeed, the sense of experimentation and risk is so intense and willing to take on challenges that, with each gesture, the paintings approach the possibility of their own failure, of their accidents and even their own impossibility.

So, he sets out to paint with the confidence of an experienced *bullfighter* who knows he can trust the dexterity of his *faena* (1), despite knowing that he will always and every time face the danger of what would be his own demise as an artist. This *street tradition*, which claims to accept the *unforeseen scale of the accident*, implies an ability to embark on the *creative act* and, more specifically, to face the canvas, cardboard or paper – regardless of whether the scale is large or small. Armed only with a general intuition regarding the confrontation of the surface, which was previously empty or white, he is always willing to project on it a kind of unconscious release of energy, materialized in the gesture and, in many aspects, similar to the one that the jazz musicians resort to in moments of improvisation.

Galindo's work, in fact, meets the famous paradox invented by Balzac, which has the figure of Frenhofer as its central character. In his incessant search for the most extreme point of support, he courageously risks rushing into what would be already of the order of the chaotic. So great is the freedom he seeks – leaving behind every method and every norm, every point of support – that his navigation becomes increasingly solitary and singular. Like a tightrope walker treading on a tenuous, narrow, sometimes almost imperceptible line, which constantly threatens to bring ruin, Galindo's art dangerously draws on a threshold moment in which it could crash, generating the instant of its own failure – as if reaching the edge of the abyss where it could lose itself; or, simply rushing into the destructive horizon of the chaotic.

It is precisely this very rare dimension of a *happening* that makes Galindo's work truly dazzling and that imbues it with a feverish, nervous, urgent quality, which is actually difficult to describe. In front of it, our experience is communicated as pure intensity where language itself is suspended: how can we speak of a sensation? Each painting, thus, demands, on the part of the artist, an intense and active relationship with his own body, which is performative in its nature.

The gesture, the relationship with the surface as a whole, the mediation found by the charging of the body on the surface of the painting, indicate an act of a performative dimension that, in itself, is unrepeatable. The approach to the painting and to the painting's own internal movement; the weight and strength, the speed and intensity poured by the artist in each gesture in the act of its rapid execution; or, the intuitive suspension of that same gesture at any given moment – so that he doesn't end up hurting with the excess that would let the work walk into a chaotic zone –, all of this demands from the artist the same mental, physical and even spiritual concentration that is expected from a performer.

— Bernardo Pinto de Almeida

1. T.N. *Faena*, a word that could literally be translated as *task* or *exercise*, refers to the third part of the actual bullfight, in which the *torero* (bullfighter) sways the red fabric (*muleta*), in preparation for killing the bull.