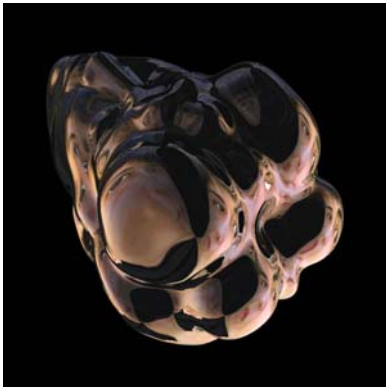


MUSAC to host *FIN*, an exhibition by Palencia artist Marina Núñez on post-humanisation and the limits of the body



Title: *FIN (END)*

Artist: Marina Núñez (Palencia, 1966)

Curator: Tania Pardo

Venue: Halls 2.1 and 2.2

Dates: 31 January – 21 June 2009

On 31 January 2009, the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (MUSAC) is to unveil an exhibition by the title of *FIN (END)*, showing the work of Marina Nuñez (Palencia, 1966). This site-specific project including over 20 videos and a large visual installation approaches post-humanisation, taken as the process whereby we transcend certain features of our humanity that have become obsolete. Resorting to an aesthetic that echoes the episodes by John Bosch, Núñez plunges the viewer into a world of desolation haunted by eerie ghosts, micro-organisms and lifeless seas – hellish scenes that project us into a post-human future; i.e., what will be left once it's all over. The show reflects upon the death of what is human and the idea of the body's transformation and collapse.

Marina Núñez (Palencia, 1966) is possibly one of Spain's most acclaimed artists. From the very outset, her work took a bold ideological stance in terms of gender discourse and representations of the female body, later evolving towards her current concern regarding the human body's progressive mutation and ultimate annihilation. In the artist's own words: "*Hysterical women, Medusas, mummies, she-monsters and cyborgs, who belong to that crowd of weirdos, are clearly redundant; an added twist of madness, perversity, disease or monstrosity for women in general, who are already defined as having limited and murky brains and grotesque and unrestrained bodies. In this sense, they attempt to expose the extent to which the female body and identity are abnormal under the male gaze that constructed them. Representing the monstrous, the discordant, the repudiated is, as Remo Bodei explained, a way of denouncing the violence that excludes some from the canon, which under the appearance of beauty and harmlessness hides the implacable persecution of all that is different.*"

***FIN*. The exhibition**

The show's title references the idea that the human body is seen today as an organism reconstructed via mechanical or electronic devices, transplants, xenotransplants, compounded by all sorts of chemical substances or even budding genetic therapies, which make it increasingly difficult to uphold an image of bodily integrity. Marina Nuñez thus underlines how the image of a body-collage is imposed: hybrid, unstable, metaphorical, artificially viable, where boundaries (with the world, with other beings) cease to be unbreachable to become porous and fuzzy.

The exhibition *F/N* is structured around four main axes, connecting the five pieces on display. The transition through *F/N* begins with a projection, on four plasma screens, of mutated skulls in black glass that return distorted reflections of different gazes, challenging the viewer to reflect upon the fragile limit between normality and deformity.

Next, the video *Ocaso* shows a seascape revealing certain iconic features linked to the myth of nature as Utopia. Body parts sealed in glass columns or test tubes spread out in neat lines, forming an endless cemetery. Further exploring the theme of this post-human ruin, we move into the following installation, made up of eight video projections where Vitruvius or Leonardo's Man, transformed into an anomalous being, is presented in flames. Thus, the *ideal man*, warped into a monster by the artist, is seen in flames, as a symbol of the demise of an ideal model.

The fourth installation is a set of eleven video projections, where again we see misshaped human skulls, fossilised and eroded by the passage of time. Inside them we find latent microorganisms squiggling around - since even in our obliteration we can sense a new and different form of life emerging. Peering into these translucent lumps of rock, viewers are intrigued by their discovery, as if they had come across vestiges of a future past.

The exhibition closes with a large piece conceived as a visual installation and executed in digital 3D, where a massive landscape based on John Bosch's paintings plunges the viewer into a universe where humans are no longer present and cities lie in ruins, bearing witness of our devastation.

As a whole, *F/N* resorts to an aesthetic combining PlayStation creatures on the one hand with echoes of Classical and particularly Baroque painting on the other in order to spark off an interrogation on the human body and the post-human age. This gaze cast back on the past from a grim future ultimately leaves us facing up to our very present.

If literature and film have inquired into dehumanisation in the context of science fiction, this exhibition lures us into a universe of ambiguous recreations, voiced in a language neighbouring the organic that explores a whole range of issues on being human. In the artist's own words: "New technologies, particularly IT and biotech, are driving humans towards an unprecedented crossroad of change. Sensory organs extended into space and time thanks to the web, prosthetics and genetic alterations that transform us into hybrid and artificially viable beings, a new paradigm that defines us as information flows... some of the clichés of science fiction are amongst today's realities. But despite the fact that all these films have made us familiar with the vision of spectacular physiological changes that reconfigure the human body, they seldom enter into speculation on what these changes will imply -are already implying- in terms of our subjectivity. Swinging between technophilia and technophobia, between desire and fear, we are building up a new way of understanding our identity, which some philosophers and historians have come to label posthuman".

***F/N*. The book**

The exhibition is accompanied by a book that is to be taken as a key component of Marina Núñez's project for MUSAC. Designed by ACTAR, it will include four stories by Estrella de Diego (Contemporary Art Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid), Enrique Marty (artist), Rafael Doctor (MUSAC Director) and Pilar Adón (author), each related to the four major pieces that make up *F/N*.

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