

## INTERVIEW to Jesús Palomino

### Wei Ling Gallery\_Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

June 2015

#### 1. How has your residency been so far?

Well, I think the residency went very well! I should thank Wei Ling and the gallery staff for the success of the experience. I should congratulate as well Wolo's Hotel owner for his generous collaboration with the project. It is important that the support to the Arts happens in this generous way. I guess, both, Wei Ling and Wolo's Hotel owner, are professionals in their respective fields doing a great job supporting Contemporary Arts in Malaysia. We must not forget that a society eager to generate culture and cultural events is a more human and open society, a better place to live; we must not either forget that culture is a matter of pleasure oriented to life, of humanistic understanding of life through aesthetics, beauty, participation, curiosity... and so on and so forth! You know, all those things are important for a more human society. So, I guess, the Residency, because of its international open character, brought a little bit of that to Kuala Lumpur, to Malaysia. And because this happened, we should congratulate us!

#### 2. Was it what you expected?

Well, I did not expect anything explicitly... You always expect reasonable conditions, challenging and encouraging enough for a positive fulfillment of your artistic project. I already told to Wei Ling that if I have reasonable artistic margins and professional conditions to work, I am satisfied! And, in this sense I am happy, because that happened to me here thanks to Wei Ling and the WOLO residency. It has been my first contact with Malaysia and Malaysian society. I was before a couple of times in Mongolia, and three times in China... but, Malaysian society was a great mystery to me because I did not know much about it! Despite my hometown's football team, Sevilla Football Club, wears on its shirt the slogan: Visit Malaysia. They won the Europe League this year, so many people in Kuala Lumpur when I said to them that I was from Sevilla, Spain, they knew already my city because of that slogan of Visit Malaysia on the Sevilla FC shirt... They knew more about Spain and Sevilla than myself about Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia.

#### 3. What did you hope to uncover in Kuala Lumpur?

Great expectations are always the matter for disappointment... no expectations at all are, in fact, the matter of stupidity! We all expect something... You know, I have travelled a lot in my life with my artistic projects. I am running into a family of travellers and curious persons of culture. Still for me to visit a place, and to know it as much as I can as an attempt of enjoying is one of the most enriching and pleasant experiences that life can reward you. It is in fact a sweet delight when the encounter with the "Other" and the "other culture" happens positively... This experience has to

be of course as well with meeting people, with understanding another approaches to culture, with tasting another flavors, etc. For me this is what life is about. I head every place I visit with my basic reasonable and flexible expectations... here, in Kuala Lumpur they were fulfilled! I could not give a list of things that I discovered here now because it takes time to have this process of understanding smartly and properly digested... but, I should say that I grasped something important that I do not know still what it is!

#### **4. Tell me more about your work(s) produced here?**

Yes, the project that I did here in Kuala Lumpur is titled Atlas of Abandoned Objects. Well, as you probably know, an Atlas easily explained is a volume of prints, maps or plans that systematically illustrate a particular subject; or a collection of diverse objects grouped together or considered as a single entity. My Atlas is a very peculiar one because it comes from a very simple activity which consisted of wandering around the city on long walks. That's the main thing that I did here in Kuala Lumpur. After one month I had visited most of the city's different districts: Kepong, Ampang, Brick Fields, Pudu, Bukit Bintang, of course... and my aim was to get the feel of the human and social diversity of Kuala Lumpur. I walked around, visiting places of interest although I also let myself wander at random or drift towards less central and not so well known areas. During these wanderings I took photographs of the objects that I encountered on my way. My interest in documenting this encounter with all those things on the street was artistically intentional since I woke up every morning here in Kuala Lumpur with the will of mapping them, registering them through photographic documentation. And every day on coming back to the Wolo Hotel from my walks I observed with surprise the enormous variety and uniqueness of the objects I had encountered. Atlas of Abandoned Objects arose from this wandering experience of observation within the city. I should add that this is not a new artistic method; in France the surrealist did it, the Dadaist too, afterwards in the 60s the situationist guided by Guy Debord did it... and now myself here in Kuala Lumpur, I do it! You see, it is not something completely unknown or just awkward... Let's say that it is peculiar and challenging!

#### **5. What is the main idea/message behind the found objects?**

Well, let's say that there's no explicitly a message. There's a process, a method, a postproduction, a particular aesthetical approach, etc... but, not a message. The idea is built by the process of signifying. If I collect a series of abandoned objects through my walks using photographic documentation, and I considered them as signs, I am signifying. Because in fact signifying means to use signs, to combine them in order to get a meaning. But the meaning or the message has not to be an explicit one. This is specially suitable for Visual Arts. But, for instance, music. When you combine sounds with silence and you organize those sound material in a accurate way applying rhythm, volume or different timbres, then you get music. But, what is it the meaning of music? Music is a non semantic practice. And that means that you do not translate the musical experience directly into meaning or, let's say, a message. The meaning hopefully comes with the reaction to it, the feed back provoked by music, the feelings, and so on. My practice is attempting to become non semantic in order to signify. Because we basically think with signs that allow us to build and express meaning an ideas. That's Visual Aesthetics's concerns, and I am into this process of using visual signs oriented towards aesthetics.

## **6. Instead of bringing the found objects back, you photographed them. Why?**

Well, my interest has nothing to do with a fetishistic pursuit of observation; and neither with the surrealistic love for the *objet trouvé* as a natural or discarded object found by chance and held to have aesthetic value.... My interest is focused in the collection, the grouping of the diverse and scattered. Let's say, the classification of the scattered around. For this purpose, photographic registration and documentation is perfect because allows you to have the whole experience of the multiple encounters easily registered using a small Canon digital camera. All this digital information afterwards can be postproduced in different ways because in fact the archive of the Atlas of Abandoned Objects is huge. I have to take really a lot of pictures in order to select 48 for the poster edition. But the Atlas comprises too a varied series of photographic images titled Abandoned Chairs, Abandoned Wheels, Abandoned Bottles of Water, Abandoned Vertical Objects, and so on and so forth. Some of those photographic series were shown in the opening at the Wolo Hotel.

## **7. Describe your experience as you go about completing your work.**

Exhausting! And hopefully, positive to offer a happy feed back to the public!

## **8. How long did it take?**

One month of walking intensively in the city; six days per week, six or seven hours per day average. Some days the walks were longer... One day I reached Bathu Caves just walking at random. I do not plan in advance and I do not use maps of any other orientation information or device. I just walk carrying my small camera and go in the city. After this month of documentation, it took one week to design the poster and another week more to print it. The Atlas of Abandoned Objects Kuala Lumpur 2015 is an edition of 500 four-colored process on matt art paper 128 grs. (84x60) cms. each one. The poster was designed to be distributed for free among the audience present at the opening at Wolo Hotel. It is an artwork planned to be free distributed. So, that means, that the success of the poster edition is to disappear from the gallery space. This should mean that the audience took them home...

## **9. What did you encounter? Did anything surprise you?**

Well, the most surprising was not an object but an animal. A wild animal in fact that I found not far from Bathu Caves. It was a big lizard that was coming out from the sewer system. It was there just walking in the water when I saw it because there was a big hole on the asphalt that allowed you to see a big sewerage pipe. The lizard was gently there. Indeed, a really beautiful animal.

## **10. Is there a particular way/order the viewer should go about viewing the work as printed on the paper?**

No, there's no any particular way the viewer should go about! The spectator could feel as free viewing the poster as they should experience viewing a painting. It is about visual experience and aesthetics through photographic documentation and printing matter, no more no less. But, the freedom remains the same as you were just watching a painting. The poster is very ordered and structured; it is true that I use minimal codes to define some of my artworks; but the imagination and the understanding of the viewer, I hope remains free, to enjoy visually my proposal.

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