



ADN GALERIA & PLATFORM

Avelino Sala– *Walk to the end of the world*

From May 23rd to June 26th 2015 (ADN Galeria)

From May 23rd to October 23rd 2015 (ADN Platform)

"In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics.' All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia". George Orwell, 1984 (1949).

Written more than half a century ago, this reflection by Orwell in one of the most essential dystopian works of literature, predicted what the future would be like, a future that has already arrived. Not without a certain dose of authenticity, it shows us a society dominated by some kind of totalitarianism – capitalist or governmental – where emotions are increasingly filtered by the machine.

In times of crisis, within the context of late capitalism, something is crumbling and the human being is looking for a balance, a response that gives a sense of the present and global situation; he seeks, in short, not to fall, and he fights, positioning himself as a resistance to power, to the capitalist system, to the dominant class.

Within this context, we could state that the projects presented by Avelino Sala at ADN are manifestations of resistance that, from a certain aesthetic sense, consider ironically how one can adopt a critical stance based on questioning and opposition to reality, both through thought and through the visual. But waking up is not enough, and neither is being angry: we must take action. A clear example of this position is *Block House (2012)*, the work that occupies the gallery's main space: the viewer is confronted with a sort of barricade made of black lacquered books, a metaphor for the cultural barricade, a kind of intellectual bunker. The artist builds a space of resistance which offers protection and in which, at the same time, the struggle can be prepared and the counterattack put together.

But before bumping into this roadblock, there is the conceptual and historical basis that Sala presents in his *Clandestino* project (2014). In this case, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is carved with the point of a compass onto 40 classic Bic ballpoint pens, as was done with school cheat sheets before advances in technology turned this into a mere exercise of technical naughtiness. At first glance, the reproduction of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not perceived, just as in reality societies and their subjects neither perceive nor believe that their social and political conduct should be guided by such rights. Just as technology has eliminated the Bic cheat sheets, our society is in the process of removing human rights. The viewer certainly does not notice the writing, but the video showing how the work was done highlights the irritating sound that was made during the action of scratching the skin of the pen.



Clandestino (2014)



Avelino Sala adopts a stance in relation to the belief that we are getting closer to the dark future that dystopian works predicted and continue to predict, although the future as such has already arrived. The *Otros mundos* installation (2014), formed by a series of hockey sticks in which the titles of dystopian novels are engraved (including the one that provides the exhibition's own title, by Suzy McKee Charnas, 1974), exhibits the novels themselves which, in turn, have been subjected to intervention by the artist. Avelino Sala shows us a world in which the artist is fully aware of the cracks that exist in the structures of power, structures in which the moral and ethical awareness of the controlling classes does not exist or, at least, is not perceived, and in which the concept of democracy is completely corrupted and very far from its original meaning.

The installation *DEMOCRACY* (2014), made with a material that absorbs sound, speaks of this empty and corrupt democracy. For the artist, human beings no longer have even the right to speak out anymore; should they do so, their speech is absorbed and cancelled by democracy. But that which does raise its voice is power, or those who aspire to power through the cancellation of democracy, as presented in *Amanecer Dorado* [Golden Dawn] (2014) which, taking the name of the extreme right-wing Greek political party that does not hide its neo-Nazi ideology, consists of gold-painted baseball bats that symbolize the main global powers (United States, Germany and China) represented by their respective flags. These objects are no longer pieces of sports equipment, and have become an expression of vehemence and violence. The bats may not be for sports, but they are nonetheless accompanied by a ball – the pyrographed silhouette of the globe – which acquires presence only through heat: the heat of the blood and the fire of the cruel reality that shakes the world today.



Amanecer Dorado (2014)

The violence of blood and fire is opposed by the delicacy of the material of which *Cocktail Molotov (2012)* is made: a sculpture made of Carrara marble, a marble much appreciated for its whiteness, used ever since the Bronze Age, and with which Julius Caesar built the city of Rome and Michelangelo carved his heartfelt Pietà. The beauty and delicateness of this material stands in stark contrast to the discourse of the piece itself, not only for its title, but also because the Carrara quarries also represent their own people, who boast a strong proletarian tradition, and their anarchists – a people which has understood how to preserve various dialects and cultures. Carrara's outcast laborers, workers who deal with extracting the precious white treasure, are the real authors of the piece.

Faithful to his interpretation of the situation of today's society and to his critical consciousness, Avelino Sala exhibits two works at the ADN Platform space: *La Tortuga* [The Tortoise] and *Museo Arqueológico de la Revuelta* [Archeological Museum of Revolt]. *La Tortuga* is an installation consisting of police riot shields: a symbolic representation of the State, both transparent and inscrutable. The title refers to the tactics widely used in sieges by the legions of the Roman Empire, a military practice which – thanks to the strategic positioning of the shields – allowed armies to defend themselves from their besieged enemies with a degree of comfort, favouring a slow but overwhelming advance. *Museo Arqueológico de la Revuelta* is a kind of archive of universal memory, a chronicle of revolts that leads us to different places of resistance. It is a gathering of stones used in demonstrations around the world that the artist places ironically in classic glass cabinets; in short, an archeology of human revolt.



La Tortuga (2014)



Museo Arqueológico de la Revuelta

Avelino Sala states his outrage and stimulates a raising of awareness and the taking of a stance, constructing an archeology of power symbols, of actions and reactions, of totalitarianisms and resistances, providing artistic devices of opposition that incite a necessary reflection.



DEMOCRACY(2014)