

## **Arancha Goyeneche in the *Bois d'Amour* Landscape**

‘On his return from Pont-Aven in October 1888, Sérusier told us about Gauguin, and showed us, not entirely without an air of mystery, the lid of a cigar-box on which one could make out a shapeless landscape synthetically expressed in violet, vermilion, Verona green and other pure colours straight out of the tube, almost without any admixture of white. “How can you see this tree?” Gauguin was asking in the *Bois d'Amour*. “Is it really green? In that case, use green, the prettiest green on your palette. And that shadow, is it not somewhat blue? Then don't be afraid to paint it as blue as you possibly can.”

Maurice Denis

Shadows in the work of Arancha Goyeneche tend to be blue or green, red or grey. Her daring and inventiveness is unafraid to offer us an original vision of landscape where the subject is dematerialised in the face of the significance of colour and the viewer's gaze.

I suspect that the meaning of her work is a revelation of the expressive powers inherent to the formal elements of pictorial design. Her works – characterised basically by the use of industrial colours, by their presentation as cut-aways of vinyl and photographs, by a preference for the horizontal as the line of force and by an apparently chaotic composition that conceals an inner rhythmic order – create a poetics of landscape that harks back to the reflections of those early pioneers of contemporary art, who, like Denis, were fascinated by the possibilities of working outside the strictures of painterly rhetoric.

A pioneer is someone who explores, gets to know and masters a territory. Arancha Goyeneche has struck camp in the pictorial domain and, unlike much of the art produced by her generation, her work is not self-referential. Her particular visions are external landscapes where the objectivisation of a visual, technological and contemporary environment is brought about under the auspices of modern pictorial tradition. I don't know whether this artist aspires to be a scientific painter, as the divisionists claimed to be. In any event, her works reach our retinas and are imprinted on our brains, in the visual pleasure zone.

Maurice Denis's well-known reflection on the meaning of a pictorial work, whereby 'a painting – more essentially than its being a warhorse, a nude woman or any other anecdote – is essentially a surface covered with colours distributed according to a particular order', brings us a revision and simplification of pictorial work that lies at the root of modernity. Goyeneche explicitly calls herself a painter. Her spaces of non-narrative colour reverberate by means of superimposition of chromatic planes, accumulations that break up the flatness of tones so as to create a play of fragmented visions, an ephemeral snapshot in which form retreats before the compositional force of an original juxtaposed brushstroke. The vinyls, so bright and intense, and the fragments of her photographs, make up images that do not distinguish between background and foreground figures and, apparently, deny composition its significance. Her works are accumulations of glints and glisters of colour/light that develop a theory and practice of seeing.

Vinyl tape emerges as a stylistic element apt to express modern experience. Its being fixed in horizontal layers works as a bodily referent. The Western viewer has inherited a vision of landscape that confers privilege on the panoramic gaze: a fragment of the real where the body effects a rotating movement in an attempt to appropriate as broad a scene as possible. Arancha Goyeneche's images belong in the sphere of landscape: palimpsests of woods, delightful gardens or huge conurbations. Sometimes, the landscape is merely an allusive reference, an intuited visual presence where mimesis is disregarded and a different correspondence between natural form and artistic sentiment is made manifest.

Arancha Goyeneche's work, like jazz, creates a rhythm out of an erratic succession of notes, which in this case are chromatic notes. I don't think this painter's sweeps of colour are brought forth at random; her control over the evolution of the work places something, which we might call the motif, at the centre or at the periphery of the image, which thanks to its visual ambiguities becomes poetry. Harmony, proportion, intelligence: these are the expressive qualities of Arancha Goyeneche's work.

**Mónica Álvarez Careaga**