

"To reinvent oneself or to die". This is one of the most recurrent mottos that the recent crisis has left. That is, to change radically in order to start a new life of open possibilities. An idea of considerable ambivalence like most of the mottos transformed into oracle: it is the answer to a common and current question: "What can I do now?", which is logically posed in that ambivalent manner shown by oracles: on one hand, a moral invitation to individual transformation, to take the reins of our destiny as opposed to the debacle of the context. On the other, any individual change motivated by need ends up hiding a certain social violence: it is not so much an invitation as an imposition. A golden opportunity of voluntary regeneration transformed into the only possibility for survival.

With "*Criaturas. Procesos regenerativos (Creatures. Regenerative Processes)*", Ruth Gómez alludes to the current need of reinventing ourselves to not surrender, changing to overcome inaction or fear, by drawing a metaphorical arch between human social reality and biological regeneration and resistance. Her vision is optimistic: not just for the forms used, but also for her personal and careful style that mixes together hyperrealism, pop art and the colorist idealization of Japanese anime. The artist encourages us to watch the change, either imposed or voluntary, as a vital bet towards a new beginning, where fortune is invoked as the ideal travel companion. Regeneration is the capacity of some living beings (animals and plants) to reactivate their development to restore missing tissues. This is the trait that allows lizards to recompose their tails, or infinite or unlimited life in certain types of jellyfish, by renewing their entire being (all of their cells) every now and then. Resistance is the capacity to deal with attacks from biotic or abiotic agents: from plagues and parasites to extreme environmental changes. It is sometimes associated with hibernation, that is, to resist for reviving in more appropriate circumstances. Here, it is included as a symptom or stage from which to start to the desired change.

It has been said, quite rightly, that Ruth Gómez's work always addresses the relationships between individuals. The specific singularity of her artistic work derives from the way she copes with this: in first place, because of her metaphoric nature integrated in the comparison between that which is human and animal. In second place, because of the way she approaches sociopolitics: not from a logic linked to the rational analysis of the events, but from an openly emotional perspective. What Ruth Gómez really seems to be interested in is empathy as the engine for individual and social change. She even admits to be a social artist more than a political artist. In third place, because of the primeval, atavistic nature of the choreographies that she applies to those beings in their relationships: her previous works track the possibility of establishing a group and a community, but also resistance and fight and, equally, concealment and escape. Now she seems to suggest an illusory, poetic and evolutionary change. Referential facts of the configuration for that which is human in the dawn of time, when circumstances were particularly adverse.

If Ruth Gómez's early works encouraged individuals to show alienated attitudes, her recent projects reveal an inverse process: animals used as metaphor for that which is human. This exhibition portrays a particular and fascinating zoo of species that are capable of reinventing themselves, regenerating, resisting, and surviving. They act as amulets or fetishes of an enriching change that is yet to come. Among them, for example, the axolotl, that alien-like being capable of regenerating its most complex organs, or the tardigrade, the tiny water bear that is capable of hibernating for years and, then, returning to life. Also, the *Plectranthus Verticillatus*, commonly known as the "plant of money", shown in some sort of endless dance. This is the plant that, if given, will bring wealth, but if broken, will develop new roots and grow abundantly. All these beings make up that wish of good fortune and glorious change by Ruth Gómez to those who now need to reinvent themselves or resist.

Guillermo Espinosa