

Ruth Gómez combines animation, drawing, and music to convey her views on a variety of personal topics related to the social conditions of capitalism, from eating disorders to the "acrobatic" life of the contemporary artist. Ironically, her animations may strike us at first as visually vibrant and active but superficial. In fact, they are loaded with content, communicated through her adept use of cutting-edge animation techniques: a fixed palette of gray, pink, and yellow tones; and fast-paced, recurring imagery presented in a very assembly-line way—all of which gives her work a very particular trademark. Transparent in her embrace of digital software and mass-media production. Gómez appropriates accessible and recognizable components of popular visual culture, including music videos, advertising, and comics, into compelling personal statements. She uses her background in graphic design to her advantage, and one aspect of her work that gives it an edge is its polished, commercialized look. With this aesthetic, she is following the legacy of 1960s and 1970s Spanish Pop art, especially its strong critique of the consumerism generated by mass media. For example, a specific precursor to Gómez's practice is the politically charged, ironic, and satirical works of the prominent anti-Franco artist Eduardo Arroyo, with their images appropriated from mass media rendered in pastel hues, depiction of human figures with minimal facial features, and simple colored backgrounds.

Although her incursion into animation is quite recent, Gómez has already developed a distinctive pictorial language characterized by her use of hot pink and grays as well as the fictional settings she devises for her figures, drawn in a cartoonlike style, as they perform diverse choreographed consumerist actions. Gómez begins with pencil drawings, which she scans and then combines with digitally retouched photographs and live-action footage. She then submits these images to a variety of animation techniques, the most obvious one being rotoscoping (a technique in traditional cel animation, which features hand drawing over each frame of live footage) to achieve her slick pictorial style. Her signature use of colour plays a significant role in the assemblage of her stories, as she applies masses of colour similar to aquarelle or even silkscreen ink, but with dramatic contrast and shadows that give her characters a ghostly 3D presence. The images are edited and sequenced, paced and counterpart to a musical score composed from ambient sounds and samples. The final result, as she explains, is a "collage of superimposed layers."

Gómez's 2003 works *El asesino de su persona* (The murderer of himself) and *Te sobrealimentas* (You overeat) are two simple stories that are conceptually linked, although the characters are not the same. In *Te sobrealimentas*, an overweight girl tries to take vegetables from a thin girl who is cutting them. The thin girl shoos her away, and the overweight girl then goes into a factory-like room where donuts march in through the ceiling and are fed to her mechanically. The sole male character from *El asesino de su persona* is seated on a desk, poking holes incessantly into a ball of dough to make the donuts that the overweight girl is being fed. For Gómez, colour adds coherence to the narrative storyline and establishes a fictional environment, for ordinary considerations of good versus evil. For *Animales de compañía* (Animal companions) (2005), the addition of swaths of green—used mostly as a photographic backdrop of gigantic palm leaves and vines—signifies a new emotional dimension. It is the environment for the violent interactions among characters in an "asphalt jungle" as one group, dressed in business attire, is persecuted and eaten by another group of characters that look the same but are much larger. Gómez makes a nod to film noir, with its leanings toward the dark side and to the ethical contradictions that people face both as individuals and as "social animals". The characters appear to support one another as a group, but eventually find themselves fighting one another to survive, a reference to the ambitions and competitiveness that drive people to "eat each other alive". Her imagined jungle is like any other, where only the strongest survives. *Animales de compañía* continues Gómez's dialogue on the relationship between art, the artist and the viewer in terms similar to general marketing concepts as applied to the promotion of consumer products. She uses the metaphor of the human cannibal, driven to disregard practical solutions and moral issues in order to survive in a competitive world ruled by contradictory laws of survival.

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