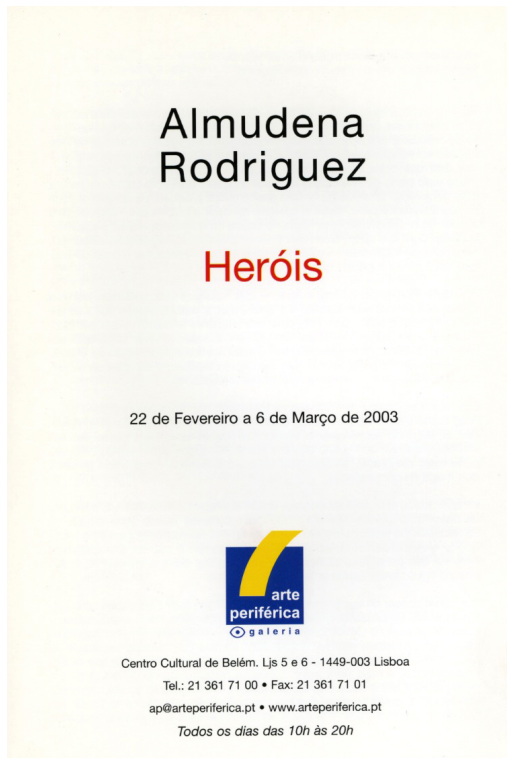


Scraps of fabric for the building of heroísmo  
(notes on Almudena Rodríguez's artistic work)  
Omar-Pascual Castillo



To some of the most radical artists of our contemporary world, Art-making involves, more graphically, a *de-constructive* gesture rather than a creative one. This is indeed true, since they place their execution systems, for a rich group of critics or theoreticians of Art who would be better defined as their own pragmatics (this is: a hybrid of *method* and *aesthetics*), who are much closer to the archaeological analysis of someone who is revising a natural disaster or the devastation of war, or just the mere passage of time. That someone might from that new gaze prefer to re-write the history which he/she is deemed to live, to doing it from the recreation of fictional imagery in which his/her artistic capacity is unfolded. With his I mean that there are artists who choose to document from the *fragments* and from *palimpsest*, rather than creating fiction

from the flow of the *kingdom of illusions* named fantasy.

**Almudena Rodríguez**, this painter from Madrid who has recently been living between México D.F., Madrid –Spain- and Texas –USA, is one of those artists who –in a form of re-interpretation, or even an strictly analytical form, opts for dismembering the plasticity of the Real Things, rather than resorting to looking for fantastic predicaments in Tolkien's books (against whom, by the way, I have nothing at all except for the fact that I find his elliptical dalliance, or the excessive verbiage which he uses to depict a forest through words, extremely boring), to give just one example.

We are living in the midst of an era which master **Baudrillard** has with extreme precision named *the show business of obscenity and pornography*. But **BE WARNED**: this does not merely refer to the sexual aspects of our lives, or to our associated erotic practice; it refers to the impunity of our privacy as civil individuals, which may be broken into – and made into public anecdotes – by the mundane tyranny of the mass media.

**Almudena** stops to look at this reality... She stops to OBSERVE. And the result of this gaze is captured by her works in a very specific way, from the set of *fabric scraps*. Indeed, submerged in the quagmire of the new technologies and the kingdom of technocratic cyber-thoughts, she returns to the roots of the feminine crafting

capabilities which find a mannerist domain in the scraps of fabric, as well as finding a *documental, testifying and confessional philosophy*.

Thus, despite her young age, **Almudena Rodríguez** seems to us to be a painter who is coming back. This is made possible by her gaze, and her methodical maturity makes it obvious in each of her so greatly manufactured paintings, in which her *skill* co-exists with the spontaneity of the *bad painting*, without any antagonism arising from this dichotomy. Beauty and ugliness go hand in hand, and become the essence of the proximity of Real Things..., broken into a thousand pieces. It is nothing more than a *scrap of fabric*, which is the fragment of a fragment, which has been restored. And maybe this maturity becomes something tacit in the time it takes her to work on each of her fabulous canvasses, or each of her drawings on *Braille paper*, which are never ready to be executed until the artist has – taxonomically – analysed each one of the accidental fragments making them up.

In all these works the artist, sews, embroiders, writes, labels and paints from the unabashed appropriation of a *voyeur*'s storytelling; she does it on dirty canvasses, with *kitsch* patterns, linked with each other in a coarse manner, from the abruptness of the delusion of quickness in someone who needs a map to re-structure the life experienced on.

This is, therefore – perhaps – the reason why her paintings always appear to us as being incomplete, childishly illuminated by a short-story writer whose writings are interlinked by means of the map, but never by means of the stories themselves. This stigma of memory flashes is thus a blessing. The idea of the fabric scrap is something unprecedented, in which heroes, super-heroes and other archetypes of *epic fantasy* are challenged by ceremonial votive offerings or small miracles which guarantee them as universal elements of a single culture: Latin-American; Western; Globalised; Post-modern; Neo-Baroque; the troubled and versatile temporality of our time, a time full of violence and love, love and disappointment. CONSUMPTION (epic fantasy being, to me, an utmost contradictory term: The Epic cannot be Fantastic, and vice-versa; however, the world of comic – a very good label for telling a story in a very poor manner, cartoons and/or Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, have managed to establish these paradigmatic clichés as the main characters of many of our dreams).

By contrast, in this restructuring of The Real, which flows in the midst of these simulating and *amateurish hybrid cultures*, **Almudena** lets herself slide into her brush stroke in a provocative manner, being expressive in all her tactile languages for visual things, as well as well as being a recycler and appearing as naked through her silence. Indeed, behind those masquerades of heroism which conceal the real powers, those that worry that disturbing image so much, we find Almudena.

We find her as she is: a justice-seeking chronicler, or a female scribe, a woman who is populated by many worlds, who right under the skin bears the courage and sincerity of a person with nothing to lose, tangible as the feel of *embroidered* figures or *braille writing*, who in her artworks may call for certain metaphors of patience and grief, or

who, like the comic-tragic singing of the viewer, in a gentle and visceral sound, may argue:

You see, I am the OUTSIDE. I am here, I am your  
deliverance, or your punishment. If you want or not,  
you will not escape. But I can wait. I have time.  
Because I am your own mirror.

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