

# PEDRO PARICIO: MY GAME AND MY GAME PLAN

JAVIER DEL CAMPO

Pedro Paricio (b. Tenerife, 1982) has always believed that artists are morally obliged to have an understanding of the past and its traditions, as well as a familiarity with the history of Western art. Perhaps this is why his own works are often focused on those of artists he admires and from whom he borrows. His aim is not to compete with them but to fulfil his firm commitment to strengthening the link between present-day artforms and those on which they were founded. It is in this sense that his exhibitions *After Pablo Picasso*, *The Spirit of Painting* or *After Francis Bacon* have been memorable.

He himself admits that it was pure circumstance that he was first attracted to art. ‘To be honest, what appealed to me was the freedom society gives to the artist,’ he explains. ‘I chose art because I wanted a life that was different.’ Paricio has a global vision of painting that crosses the boundaries between abstract and figurative, objectual and narrative. By their very nature, the forms for which he is recognised carry within them a sense of permanence that deliberately avoids what he calls ‘momentary feelings of satisfaction’. An artist thinks in past, present and future all at the same time. ‘A work of art is not only today but simultaneously yesterday and tomorrow.’

*Extended Version*, the Pedro Paricio exhibition at the Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB), tiptoed towards other fields of creativity that have always interested the artist. Literature and, of course, cinema have gradually woven a biographical fabric that overlaps life’s experiences like a second skin. All is true, all can be proven, all are part of who he is, while at the same time his works are always an imaginary construction in which the content is replaced by references to cinematic favourites. What made Paricio’s CAB show was (almost) that it featured painting – in the conventional meaning of the term – that at the same time was (almost) nothing like it. Demands for detail and workmanship, in each and every medium with which Paricio operates, always leave the spectator wondering. The intensity and bewilderment to which he subjects us is also part of the complicated architecture the artist employs at this exhibition.

With a formal structure in four stages, Paricio begins by quoting Lucien Freud – ‘all work is autobiographical’ – to create a continuous game of mirrors between different disciplines and between reality as lived and contrived. The pictorial interventions into film clips tell us as much about the man himself as about his taste in films. There are drawings with which he builds an imaginary story in line with the literary texts that seduce him and sculptures that appear to have escaped the modules of colour under which Paricio hides the faces of the characters who appear in his work. The artist also appears modelled in plaster with those who are transfigured and placed at the mercy of the spectator by assuming the role of puppets. And then there are posters, like those advertising films, that close the circle of double representation (life and art, light and shade) many of which feature in his proposal for the exhibition at the Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB).

“My game and my game plan is to develop, both in and outside the exhibition, a biographical story that drifts between reality and fiction, even though sometimes it’s difficult to tell the difference because every biography is to some degree mythological – consisting of a self-selected

The image opposite and on pages 14–25: *Pedro Paricio: Extended Version* exhibition (8 October 2021 to 23 January 2022) at Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB)



Andrei Rublev, *St Paul*, 1407. Tempera on panel, 159 x 105 cm.  
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia

narrative if it's an autobiography, as against a story chosen by another if it's simply a biography. A life recorded and/or a life imagined.' This is how Pedro Paricio explains his work.

Well accustomed to easily using different media and techniques (such as traditional oil painting, engraving, drawing, sculpture and literature), for this CAB exhibition Paricio turns to cinema and video, not so much as artistic mediums but as an aesthetic and narrative source. Pedro Paricio's highly original proposal draws on cinema for elements that helped create his life as an artist. Sometimes he chooses explicit episodes that clearly show direct connections between cinema and art, other times preferring more subtle indications of shared formal elements. Calm and collected, Paricio makes no attempt to hide either literary or cinematic quotes. Nor does he make a secret of quoting conceptual sources that have inspired him, like *Formas biográficas*, the 2014 exhibition at the Queen Sofía National Museum Art Centre (MNCA) dealing with the dichotomy between creative activity and life. 'The artist as his own biographer,' explains Paricio, a man without fear of putting himself on show and presenting his tribute to the art which sustains him.

*Extended Version*, as his CAB exhibition is called, included screenings of films such as *Dov'è la casa del mio amico?*, *Una insólita obra maestra*, *Zama*, *Stranger Than Paradise* and *Stalker*, together with more bizarre specimens such as *Trainspotting* or *Johnny Mnemonic*. In another of the developments at this Pedro Paricio show, the artist prefers that exhibition space be flooded with stillness and quiet conversation. Here he spreads out the full flow of his painting with works dedicated to *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums*, directed by Kenji Mizoguchi, Jim Jarmusch's *Permanent Vacation* and Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev*. It is with this last work that Pedro Paricio has no qualms about showing us some of his fetish materials, almost as a reliquary, with old slides capturing the work of the great fifteenth-century Russian icon painter. Something similar occurs with the voices of two more of his creative references: *Le Testament d'Orphee* [Orpheus] and Albert Serra's *Historia de la meva mort* [History of my death]. The drawback to which Roberto Bolaño's story *Días de 1978* might seem familiar – of having to submit to an intransigent classification of cinematic associations – is here resolved by presenting a series of seven stunning etchings. In these, Pedro Paricio reveals what could be considered his most personal and emotional work, the transcripts of Tarkovsky's film *Sacrifice* and *The Killing Fields* directed by Roland Joffé. Here Paricio is forced to submit himself to an intimate act of atonement and recognition, inspired by having made his way along certain cinematic pathways. The show is brought to an end with a gallery of eloquent art intervention posters where once more we meet the films with which the exhibition opened. Featured is a collection of wall sculptures, subtle chromatic reliefs, steely and shiny, transforming the atmosphere and casting their reflection towards the spectator. Here, he finds a way of engaging the public by camouflaging his face and his gaze, converting this artwork into a dynamic painting with the same formal resources that accompany all Paricio's work but this time overstepping the limits of his own materials by sticking to one that is more real and more tangible: light.

From eloquence to reflection, action, intrigue, comedy and humour, Paricio extends his fields of creativity and emotion. Not without



Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB), Burgos, Spain

reason was Paricio constantly thinking throughout the process of Fidel Balaguer, who died suddenly two years ago and who urged him to move beyond painting. ‘This is why I would like to think that this exhibition has become the first place I’ve expanded my field – my movie – but in an extended version,’ he says.

This text was first published in the catalogue that accompanied Pedro Paricio’s *Versión extendida* exhibition at the Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB) in Burgos, Spain (2021–22). Javier Del Campo is the centre’s art director.

Javier Del Campo (Valladolid, Spain). He has been the art director of the Caja de Burgos Foundation since January 2016, where he is responsible for exhibition activities, both at the Caja de Burgos Art Centre (CAB) and in the Casa del Cordón. As an author, he has published a great many critical and historical texts and as a cultural disseminator, he has produced numerous educational notebooks, scripts for varying audiovisual productions and a range of didactic guides. In addition, as exhibition curator and museologist, Del Campo has overseen, produced or coordinated more than ninety exhibitions for varying public and private institutions in Spain, Europe and America. Exhibitions he has curated include: *Otra figuración, Nuevas realidades* (2005); *Warhol* (2008); *Salvador Dalí. Veinte años después* (2009); *Diego Rivera. Arte y revolución* (2011); *Duchamp* (2012); *Más que vanguardia. Arte portugués entre dos siglos* (2016); *Benjamín Palencia. De principio a fin* (2018).

# J U E G O   Y   J U G A D A

Javier Del Campo

Con una estructura formal repartida en cuatro estadios, Paricio parte de la frase de Lucien Freud (“toda obra es autobiográfica”) para confeccionar un continuo juego de espejos entres distintas disciplinas y entre la realidad vivida y la realidad figurada. Intervenciones pictóricas sobre fragmentos cinematográficos; pinturas extraídas de secuencias fílmicas con las que el autor nos habla tanto de sí mismo como de las películas que le atraen; grabados con los que construye un imaginario relato, al hilo de los textos literarios que le seducen; esculturas que parecen haber escapado de los módulos de color con los que Paricio ciega los rostros de los personajes que aparecen en su obra; modelados en yeso con los que se transfigura y se pone a merced del espectador al asumir el papel de fante que con frecuencia atribuimos al artista o la cartelería, los posters de cine, con los que cierra el círculo de la doble representación (la vida, el arte; la sombra, la luz) conforman el detalle de su propuesta para el Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos CAB. “Mi juego y mi jugada consiste en desarrollar en la exposición, y fuera de ella, un relato biográfico que navega entre la realidad y la ficción, aunque a veces sea difícil establecer la diferencia porque toda biografía tiene algo de mito, de relato auto-escogido si es autobiografía, y de relato escogido-por-otro si es solo biografía. Una vida recordada y/o una vida imaginada”, comenta Pedro Paricio sobre este trabajo.

Acostumbrado a manejar con soltura diferentes medios y técnicas (pintura tradicional al óleo, grabado, dibujo, escultura y literatura), para esta exposición en el CAB Paricio emplea el cine y el vídeo antes que como soporte artístico como fuente argumental estética y plástica. La muy original propuesta de Pedro Paricio rastrea en el cine elementos constructores de su personal biografía artística. Pasajes explícitos en algunos casos en los que las alusiones entre cine y arte son directas o, por el contrario, sutiles depósitos de referencias formales en su obra. Sin equívocos, Paricio no esconde las citas literarias y fílmicas, tampoco lo hace con las fuentes conceptuales de las que bebe, como *Formas biográficas*, la exposición de 2014 en el MNCA Reina Sofía sobre la dicotomía entre práctica creativa y vida. "El artista como biógrafo de sí mismo", explicita el propio Paricio, sin miedo alguno a exhibirse y mostrar su tributo al arte que admira y del que se nutre.

En *Versión extendida*, el título dado a su exposición en el CAB, se suceden las proyecciones intervenidas de películas como *Dov'è la casa del mio amico?*, Una insólita obra maestra, *Zama*, *Stranger Than Paradise* y *Stalker*, junto a otras de naturaleza más bizarra como *Trainspotting* o *Johnny Mnemonic*. En otro de los desarrollos de su exposición Pedro Paricio prefiere que sea la quietud y la palabra la que inunden el espacio. Aquí despliega todo el caudal de su pintura con obras dedicadas a *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums* de Kenji Mizoguchi, *Permanet Vacation* de Jim Jarmusch o *Andrei Rublev* de Tarkovski. Sobre esta obra en particular Pedro Paricio no duda en mostrarnos algunos de sus materiales fetiche, casi a modo de relicario, con antiguas diapositivas que recogen la obra del gran pintor ruso de iconos del siglo XV. Algo parecido sucede con las voces de otras dos de sus referencias creativas: *Le Testament d'Orphee* de Jean Cocteau e *Historia de la meva mort* de Albert Serra. Un contexto al que no es ajeno el relato *Días de 1978*, de Roberto Bolaño, convertido en una intransferible crónica de asociaciones fílmicas, esta vez resuelto mediante una serie de siete sorprendentes aguafuertes. Pero donde Pedro Paricio revela, aun si cabe, su obra más personal y emocional es con el trasunto de la película *Sacrificio* de Tarkovski y de *The Killing Fields* de Roland Joffé. Aquí Paricio se impone un acto íntimo de expiación y de reconocimiento afectivo a partir de sendas filmaciones. Cierra su proyecto una enérgica galería de carteles intervenidos, donde de nuevo nos reencontramos con las películas que abrían el primer espacio, y un conjunto de esculturas parietales, sutiles relieves cromáticos, acerados y brillantes, que transforman la atmósfera del espacio y prolongan sus reflejos hasta el espectador. Un modo de envolver al público, de camuflar su rostro

y su mirada, de convertirlo en pintura dinámica con los mismos recursos formales que acompañan casi toda la obra de Paricio, pero esta vez traspasando los límites de la materia que le es propia para quedarse con lo más real y tangible: la luz.

Desde la elocuencia a la reflexión, la acción, la intriga, la comedia o el humor Paricio ensancha su territorio formativo y emotivo. No en vano Paricio ha tenido en mente durante todo este proceso a Fidel Balaguer, inesperadamente fallecido hace dos años y quien le instó a ir más allá de la pintura: "Por todo ello me gustaría pensar que esta exposición se convierte en mi primer campo expandido, mi película, pero en versión extendida", nos dice.