

Os que habitan, Eva Díez

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To be is to inhabit

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Eva Díez represents animals with profoundly human attitudes. The artist uses these irrational beings as a reference point in order to classify the world of senses. Although they remind us of fables and tales from folk traditions, nothing could be further from what Díez is trying to do with her photos. Her intentions are far removed from the anecdotal and suggest a demystifying of what is human by understanding our world through the representation of animals in visibly human postures. The artist reverses the roles and projects onto her protagonists - all of which are animals - qualities that belong to rational beings. This is not done just to any such beings but to introspective and thinking ones in such a way she imagines an owl in thoughtful reflexion, a philosopher parakeet reconsidering the concepts of identity and otherness before a mirror, a reading hedgehog, that is broadening its knowledge with new texts, or an archaeologist mouse, anxious to reveal the mysteries of a lost civilization that preceded its own and thus understand the one we have now.

The exhibition *"Those Who Inhabit"*, as its name suggests, leads one to think about the quality of inhabiting, which easily leads us to Heidegger, when he proposes inhabiting the Quaternity; with the aim of untying humanity from its functions, around which a world of living spaces are constructed - a world made to measure. According to Heidegger, the house of the being is the word, and so we inhabit the world to the extent that we are able to define it. Heidegger follows from Hölderlin, who, in some of his poems, imagines mankind living in a poetic way and says; *"Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth"*. The images of Eva Díez lead us to these thoughts when she proposes a new order by removing the animal from its

habitat and enclosing it in architectures that, on their own, assign certain habits that are difficult to escape, constrained by the setting. Even so, the tortoise, the owl, the dog, the butterflies... all of them think twice. How to inhabit this world poetically? How can I escape my desire to order and measure chaos? How to disorganise my free time?

It is amazing how the animals in the photos, nervous by nature, willingly and devotedly follow each of the artist's instructions to pose impassively before her lens. Or at least that is how it seems, although intuition tells us that behind everything lies a lot of work and patient waiting that, with the help of some studied lighting, discovers the moment when the animal can be immortalised in its doubt and thought. So we return to Hölderlin: *"Can a man, when life is all weariness, look upwards and say: I also wish to be like that?"*

Díez finds the backdrops for her photos in abandoned houses. She creates private living spaces and does so in such a meticulous way that, as if by magic, a desolate space becomes the home of one of the curious animals that take centre stage. The merit of this artist lies not only in the gentleness and detail with which she elaborates each of the settings, but rather in her intention to classify and structure the way in which we think of the world from the untameable, which leads to the construction of a moment that is apparently relaxed, but at heart is tense. At first sight nothing is happening but this is the result of a profound inner life that the photographer invents for each of the protagonists as she hopes to open the viewer's eyes to a new universal order and so broaden the possibilities and perspectives.

I would like to stress the great profusion of details that can be seen in each of the elements accompanying the animals, allowing us to construct, without the aid of any storyline, a past for each of them. Eva Díez imagines animals within a structure and a psychology that belong to mankind; she creates surreal stories from improbable and enchanting situations, and all this is thanks to her vivid imagination.