

SMELL OF THE SEA

About Martín Lejarraga's "My name is Lolita" Gallery in Murcia, Spain.

PUBLISHED IN

VIA Arquitectura. COA Valencia. Valencia, mayo 2002

Pensar con las manos. Ed. Nobuko. Buenos Aires, 2009

SMELL OF THE SEA

About Martín Lejarraga's "My name is Lolita" Gallery in Murcia, Spain.

Dear Martin:

While I open the envelope you send me with your works, Manu Chao's latest work, *Próxima estación, Esperanza*, is playing in my studio with relish. The songs that it contains are unraveling with a grace and a flair that only the Galician-Parisian-Peruvian singer has. And in the fourth song promiscuity, the word flexibility sounds over and over again (in reality it says other things, but that's what it sounds like to me). And it coincides with the flexibility that you proclaim in the memory of your stupendous project and achieve in reality in your work in the gallery "My name's Lolita".

But, the first image, fascinating, that is offered to my eyes is another one. I see a concrete platform floating on the sea, as if it were a jetty. And in that sea, generous palm trees. And a child. And a still empty pool dug in that strong plane. Then, without losing any of the fascination of the first impression, I discover that the sea is not the sea. That it is the infinite field. And that the house, magnificent, is a house that opens its astonished eyes to the landscape and, as a counterpoint, it establishes a platform supported by some steps from which to contemplate that infinite landscape in the open sky. A marvel. Everything crossed by the air of the best architecture. After studying the project with a magnifying glass, one misses the welcoming sloping side. All of 10.

But in your shipment you immediately take me out of that orchard to take me to that other orchard in the gallery, which is also very nice.

The gallery is impeccable. What every good architect should do is there. With the minimum number of elements you get the most out of it. You cut, remove, clean, put, add, rotate, etc. all with perfect precision. Everything with a criterion of, as you say in your memory, maximum flexibility. Everything can be opened, everything can be closed. A unique space, very white, where by turning and changing planes, by introducing shadows, you change its qualities.

The construction is ingenious, the mechanisms and the necessary shapes are very well studied to make them work very well. The wonderful performances of Elías Torres in a chapel and in a hardware store come to my memory. Like a magic game.

One would like, if one were to paint, to have an exhibition in that gallery. Or see many different exhibitions in that gallery. I would like, if I were to visit the Murcian countryside, to go and rest in that house that floats among palm trees and has that "something more" that we architects miss so much today.

NB. After finishing Manu Chao's album with "an infinite sadness", I decide to go back to where I used to be and I put Kathleen Ferrier to sing the "Qui sedes" from Bach's Mass in B minor. And I think again of this house of yours of infinite beauty.