

EL ARTE DE HUSMEAR DE CARLOS JIMÉNEZ

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2010

Tania Bruguera, Indefatigable

If there is something that must be acknowledged in Cuban artist Tania Bruguera is her activism. Activism in a double sense: the one having to do with her tireless activity as an artist who is today in the Havana Biennial, tomorrow in the Venice Biennial, then in an international performance festival in Bogota and a little later in individual exhibitions at the Pontevedra Biennial, the Juana de Aizpuru Gallery in Madrid, the Pompidou Center itself and yesterday in Murcia (21.09.10) inaugurating the intervention of PAC, the Contemporary Art Project directed by curator and art critic Cuauhtemoc Medina. And activism in the political meaning of the word: all these activities, just as others I have not listed, had a political purpose which is no other than offering spectators and participants in her works the chance to experience politics, to live it in their own flesh, to give it a name. The work inaugurated yesterday is in this sense emblematic because it intends to have those who approach it and decide to contribute with their own hands in its painting participate in their own way – which is the way of art – in the general strike called by the trade unions for Wednesday September 29 in protest for the labor reform the Spanish parliament has just adopted and which brings a serious cut to the rights workers had won after decades of hard struggle. The title of the work is

unmistakably *The General Strike* and consists in a mural of human figures delineated on one of the walls of the old Las Veronicas temple which may and should be colored by the spectators following the method of numbered areas seen in children books and which Andy Warhol once used to satirize the authorship of works of art guaranteed because of being hand-made. The general strike is right now left up in the air, with the trade unions pressured by the government with the demand of providing minimum services which would make the strike a caricature of itself and with the mass media systematically bombing the public opinion with disheartening messages and announcements that the strike will fail. But this uncertainty adds interest to Tania's piece because, in a given way, it has become a thermometer of up to what point art lovers who go to see it these days are ready to take the brush and paint to disclose their decision of supporting the strike.

Published by Carlos Jimenez Moreno

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