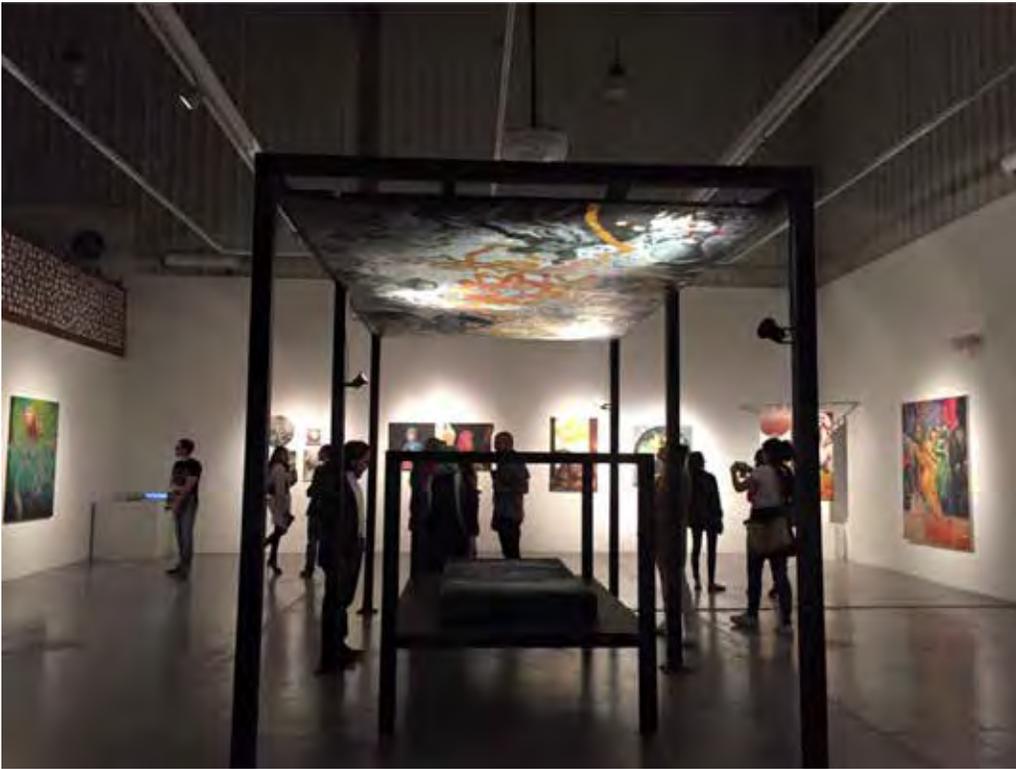


German Fernandez Cantos

SELECTED PAINTINGS

THE JOURNEYMAN II, 2016



Painting is a trick of the mind, a perceptual set up that allow colours in a canvas to show us different realities. This has been known since the times of the legendary Apeles. I use to base a significant part of my works in my fondness to old illustrated history books.

Playing over these references in my mind, I have generated a series of narrative images approaching the subject of history/travel. Travel is to adventure in new places, without really not knowing what to expect, and history is an adventure in the realm of the future. But travel has nowadays been marketed as fun, and it wasn't always the case in the past. More of a hazardous exploration, vulnerable to fate and unknowns. The travel of Ulysses, of the book of the Dead, of Dante. Survival journeys. Maybe, somehow, journeys of unwanted changes. Usually, they are not individual portraits, but depictions of groups, for what interests me is the interaction and the dynamic of the relations between the characters. Most of the works have a certain connection with the traveler's feelings of non established, of temporality and maybe ephemerality; either they are small or foldable. Like any experience, travel defines you, but your identity is also mutable to some degree; some of the characters wear impersonal masks while other are animal-headed, may be masked as well; this is a strange world, familiar to some degree, but anyway distant.

Also, in working in these materials, that are not traditional in the artistic practice, is implied the believing that art as a corpus of knowledge, can transform and enrich, as these raw materials, part of the prosaic daily life, and which have no big value outside their function, are changed into something more valuable; is a kind of optimistic view of the possibility of

knowledge in the human society, and as such, is representative of the action of mankind over the world.

This group of works presents a series of paintings and drawings depicting scenes populated with imagined masked characters in an imagined urban life, surrounded or covered by different elements that are linked some way to the process of communication and meaning.

Each of the compositions reuse traditional symbols and imagery, merging it to create the visual incarnation of this alternate reality that we call "the city". The main point of "the city" is to be a place where we try to reconstruct some meanings of our reality, defining, classifying that imaginary world, giving it meaning, as we struggle to do with the real world.

"The city" is also a place where the permanent search for identity takes place, the masks that most of the characters wear being a reminder that the process for identity is never completed, and like history, is in a process of constant redefinition.

Because, we can ask, under which principles or guides should it be completed?. That is where the father /authority/power figure, comes, nebulously, into the realm of the overall structure where the other family figures/symbols also participate , such as mother/motherland/homeland/city .

As the structure/system/city/imaginary world, designed to be in balance, is unable to reach a clear definition by the imperfect set up of one or more of its elements, the quest for meaning becomes more urgent.

Most of the works here were part of the 2016 exhibition "The Journeyman II" that took place at FN Designs gallery, Al Serkal Avenue, curated by Sheika Wafa bint Hasher Al Maktoum.











