

# Illustration

**ORLANDO PIERRI**  
(ARGENTINE PLASTIC ARTIST, 1913-1991)

**Small story of a great work of art.** *Orlando Pierri and Luis Barragán settle in Paris. There they contact the promoter of surrealism, André Bretón. The economic situation was so urgent that they managed to survive humbly with one meal per day (that of noon) to be able to buy paints. Circumstantially, when Breton saw Pierri's work, "Image" (1948), he decided to enter it in the "III Salon des Realités Nouvelles", Paris. Years later Pierri commented to his dear friend Manuel Zamora the emotion he felt when he saw his painting placed in the center of two consecrated artists, Dalí and Giorgio de Chirico.*

In the two opposing and contrasting phases shown by Pierri's work "Image" raises the principle of arriving at the truth by hiding the reality hidden in those facets. Light and shadow are the ways to interpret this "unconcealment of the being" (the *alétheia* of the Greek). In that tear that rounds off its shape to lose itself in the external - the mundane - moving away from the image, is disrobed the fatigue of life that hides behind the different truths - light and shadow - that coexist in each being. They are the opposites of every entity, very typical of Hegel's philosophy: in and for itself. The *being in itself* represents the object as it is, that is not camouflaged by reflection. The *being for itself* is the opposite, that modified by interest. The being, with thought, idea and language, approaches the "object", thus indicating that the attributes depend on it. The passage between the opposites puts us in agreement with them. We are always between those two extremes. The limit is not seen, it passes the *insensible limit* of difference itself.

There is an ideological event prior to the work based on the "object", in a time before the conscious act. And this situation is a limit to reality, first by its own subjective interpretation submitted to the interpretive moment and then by the very force of the idea. The artist will advance on his truth, but he will not be able to reach the essential reality of the "object" he interprets.

*Anguish materialized in tear flows on the dark phase of the painting and comes to the light unknown, detached from its master to be lost in the stream of a world that suffers the loneliness of every being's histo-*



"Image"  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 1947

*ricity. What hides that image that distills the tear? The artist has arrived at it but the tear has already rolled dragging with it the precise moment of its distress at birth. The painting is impregnated with a shiver faced with the threat of the elements that strike the being, every being.*

*Here we move away from the work's aesthetics and move on the "object" that gave inspiration to the author, where he praises from an event - real or imaginary, but emotional - the drawbacks he derives to the narrative that moves him. The "Image's" opposites - light and*

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*shadow - are confronted in their inevitable series of events, because without this opposition, the search for reality would be meaningless when the complementarity that supports the opposite is lost.*

The origin of the work is always behind; it is “after” the creative act. The narrative may seem but does not appear with the work’s *in itself*, which can be seen emerging without ever being discovered. As in all human consciousness, the unexplained void makes an appearance. It is the essence that takes away our meaning when we understand that void in nature’s immateriality. In that void art investigates. From it materializes the “Image’s” tear. Reality is the threshold where the opposites that determine objects are born. Shades in an alchemy that does not contain adjectives but mystery. An isolated phase of “Image” - light or shadow - would leave without expression the content of the “object,” lacking in manifestation. This distinctiveness would be far from consciousness, since with it we will always find union and separation from the opposites, which are those that manifest the materiality of the idea. There is in this a permanent game of concealment and uncovering, which gives to the observed truth the definition of an instant of subjectivity. That is why the entry to all art is the poem. In art there is always a blossoming in which poetry suggests but never gets bared.

How to think Pierri’s work out of what we observe with our own conscience? What was the source that rolled that tear illustrated in “Image” between two different worlds of light and shadow? What reality is hidden? Away from it everything happens in a falsification of the reality that only art tries to strip, although its meaning is also absurd in an existential being of unknown limits, such as the consciousness it houses. Although we can find self-denial in the absurdity of a maker as is the artist.

This relationship of opposites is not a limit, but a continuity entwined in a constitutive vagueness that proclaims the dialectic of human truth, always rela-

tive to the hidden absolute reality. It is the possibility suggested by poetry. It uncovers to hide. It leads to the ambiguity that underlies the proportions of light and shadow, and that advance from the hidden reality in the same void, if we can say or imagine nothingness. Pierri had the intuition to bring painting to literature, especially poetic art. That is the great concept of his plastic ideology. The work of art is a reconstruction of an “object” according to the idea of the creator. It happens in the time of its sustainability, not in an external time. From a hidden reality that vanishes through the historical process and from where we try to give it an emotional and absurd meaning.

*In some disregard the Archer  
time incarnated in his arrow ,  
the bow tensed and the furrow  
in the emptiness no longer had a master.*

*Men saw depart  
their aged affections  
Their skin turned into autumn.  
To err the target to the precarious stab.*

*With the bow up high the Archer  
his shot communicated with steady pulse  
never knowing whether  
it becomes a circle or has no return.*

The individual - the being - is understood within the universal - cosmic - and finds its identification within a continuous transformation. The being tries to overcome this anguish and understand the sense of being there, where his conscious state takes place. That tear that falls from each human eye materializes the emotion exempt of dialectic, although according to Lev Kygotsky “a word is a microcosm of human consciousness.”

**Jorge C. Trainini**