

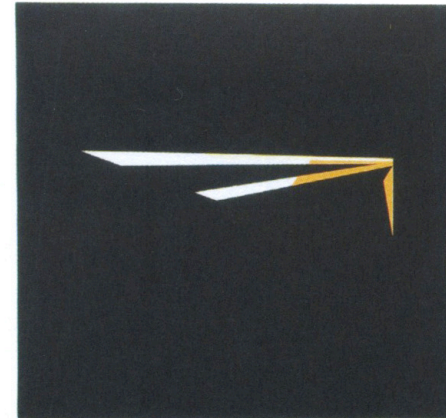
Esta narración de una tormenta, de una destrucción que se da al paso del tiempo también está relacionada con la escultura que se presentó en la exposición. Se trataba de una mesa vieja inclinada hacia el frente (pues una de sus patas fue lijada para hacerla más corta) de manera que ya no tenía una estructura estable. La mesa está recargada sobre un espejo triangular que refleja la parte de abajo, el interior, que está pintado de color naranja brillante. La parte superior de la mesa también está intervenida con una diagonal que crea un triángulo de esmalte azul que imita la forma del espejo. Así, la obra revela el tiempo y sus distorsiones. La vieja mesa doméstica, que porta las cicatrices íntimas dejadas por el uso, también exhibe las marcas de la actualidad; es decir, las capas de pintura azul y naranja. Así, repite las señales del paso del tiempo, hace que estas se reflejen mutuamente y, finalmente, las distorsiona al hacer que aparezcan sobre "el espejo de agua" que hay sobre el suelo.

El artista ha dicho que su interés en la abstracción tiene que ver con la "dinámica" de la música, y la forma en la que ésta manipula el silencio. Aquí, la palabra "dinámica" se refiere a cómo el compositor nombra los diversos grados de intensidad específicos que hay a lo largo de una pieza. Barquet relaciona esta estructura con su interés por trabajar en series, puesto que llevar a cabo una secuencia de composiciones le permite destacar las variaciones a partir de la

repetición, logrando así crear una narrativa cambiante y emotiva. Por medio del uso constante de estructuras definidas y de procesos temporales, Barquet es capaz de revelar la inestabilidad de las formas abstractas que hay en su obra.

La palabra *Reverb*, que es el título de esta exposición y quiere decir "reverberación", se refiere a la persistencia del sonido en un espacio cerrado durante unas cuantas milésimas de segundo después de que el sonido original se ha extinguido. La profundidad y la duración de la reverberación depende de las características del espacio en el que se produce. Cuando este mismo efecto tiene una mayor duración se llama eco. Así, el título sugeriría la relación entre estas obras contemporáneas, el lugar en el que se presentaron y la historia de este sitio —que, en este caso, era El Eco: un centro dedicado a la investigación del arte abstracto y la experimentación interdisciplinaria (entre las artes visuales, la música y la arquitectura). Al hablar de estas influencias, también trataba de las ideas anteriores, de la repetición y la resonancia. Al mismo tiempo, señalaba que estas convergencias son fugaces y superficiales, que, en última instancia, se trata de confluencias o encuentros pasajeros.

Tobias Ostrander, curador



OMAR BARQUET

*REVERB*

NOVEMBER 17 - JANUARY 16

Recently the artistic production of Omar Barquet has moved from large architectonic constructions that respond to the physical character of their sites of execution, toward more intimate works that create dialogues between interior mental spaces and exterior landscapes, exploring the way in which they are articulated through temporal structures, often related to music. With these developments in mind, this project for El Eco specifically did not involve the commission a single, large-scale project, but rather the presentation of a sparse constellation of recent pieces. This exhibition sought to give a significant amount of space and air to each of these small-scale works, encouraging viewers to enter the dense complexity of their individual forms, surfaces and significations. Informed by a history of geometric abstraction, investigations that include the Neo-Concreto movement in Brazil and those of Mathias Goeritz in Mexico, these works offer a particularly dynamic view on the potential of abstraction within a contemporary context.

This presentation, titled *Reverb*, included *Cuadrantes (Nocturnos)* [Quadrant (Nocturne)], a series of



square format works, produced as triptychs. A "quadrant" is an ancient instrument that helped guide ships at night, using the position of the stars; while the word "nocturne" is a genre of music, originally related to scores produced for night events, but later used to describe a particular musical form, such as those developed by the composers Claude Debussy or Frédéric Chopin, which are characterized by soft melodies and open structures. These references to night and to movements within this temporal space, find a visual counterpart in these dark paintings by Barquet. Their square canvases come to define an area of containment, such as that of a room; within which narrow triangular forms in yellows, oranges and blues move, evoking the sharp angles of projected light. From a distance these paintings seem to have opaque surfaces, but upon closer examination, they reveal a more complex construction, one of layered colored surfaces that have been obscured, producing subtle reliefs within the areas of black.

The angled shapes and clean edges of these paintings contrasted the formal character of the



series *En plein air* (Out of Doors). These five works, while creating compositions involving lines and fractured shapes, display an increased complexity and density in their surfaces, rich patinas made up from diverse treatments of the paper materials that make up these collages. The references to music in the previous series are developed further in this work, with its title taken from a set of five piano pieces composed by Bela Bartók in 1926. Barquet included an audio tape of Bartók's *En plein air* in the exhibition and produced a graphic interpretation of each movement, while also suggesting the temporal stages of a storm, a hurricane: with its initial violence, then the calm "eye" of the storm and then further drama. The small format of the artworks again evokes an internal space, while their forms describe an external, sublime landscape.

This narrative of a storm, destruction and the passage of time is also related to the sculpture included in the exhibition. An old table tilts forward, as one of its legs has been sharpened and shortened, destabilizing its structure. It leans over a triangular piece of mirror, which frames a view of the underside, or interior, of this piece of furniture, which has been painted a bright orange. The top of the table has also been intervened; painted at a diagonal, in a glossy blue paint that creates a triangular form, which mimics the shape of the mirror. Time and its distortion are revealed within this work. The old, domestic table, that carries the intimate scars of time and use, has been marked by contemporary time in the form of the blue and orange paint. Both layers of time are then repeated, reflected and ultimately distorted by the water-mirror on the floor.

The artist has described his approach to abstraction as informed by the "dynamics" and the way in which silence is manipulated in music; with the former term referring to the moments of intensity within a piece and their specific character, as designated by the composer. Barquet sees a correlation between this structure and his own interest in working in series; he uses variations evidenced within repeating or sequenced compositions, to create a shifting, emotive narrative. Through this process, his abstract forms reveal their instability and the manner in which he is

consistently subjecting them to particular structures and processes of time.

*Reverb*, the title of this presentation, refers to the millisecond during which sound lasts after a note is played. The depth and length of this repeated audio depends on the characteristics of the space in which it is played. A reverb is defined by its short duration, which when extended is called an echo. This title hints at the relationship between these contemporary artworks and their site of exhibition—the history of El Eco as a site for the exploration of formal abstraction and a space of interdisciplinary investigations merging the visual arts, music and architecture—which creates a dynamic of influence that is at once an extension of these previous ideas, a repetition, a resonance; as well as a relationship between site and work that is concurrently fleeting, superficial, and ultimately a momentary connection or confluence.

Tobias Ostrander, Curator

