



ANEXO DOCUMENTAL
XVII PREMIO FIGARI / MARCO MAGGI
Selección de textos críticos y entrevistas

Fotografías de Pablo Bielli



WAITING TO SURFACE

By Patricia C. Phillips

July 1999

As dusk descended to darkness, I sat at the computer gathering errant thoughts.

The low exhalations of passing clouds and a disquieting transformation of light in the atmosphere announced an imminent summer storm. Moving my eyes back and forth from the brilliant luminosity of the computer screen to the irregular brightening in the farmhouse window

to my right, these oddly contiguous lenses each framed seductive sources of light. Artificial and natural illumination shared incongruous affinities. The infinitesimal world of the microchip and the expansive turbulence of a gathering storm were congealed and connected by the common apertures that channel and edit sight.

Beginning as an almost imperceptible prelude, the storm rolled through with thrilling, tectonic ferocity. Experience was replete with and limited by a clamor of noise and light. The skies raged and the ground seemed to tremble as if to release some unassailable evidence of beginnings, endings, and improbable connections. Judiciously, I shut off the computer moments before an epiphany of light interrupted the dependable, invisible flow of electricity. The lights went out for a moment, fluttered, and finally were extinguished.

Futilely promising to be better prepared for other unexpected events, I fumbled around on a shelf where I recalled last seeing the sole flashlight. With the failing Shop Rite batteries providing scant illumination in the impenetrable darkness, my eyes hungered for something to see. There was a feeling of loss and deprivation -- a tactual desire to fix my focus on something. Even the insistent digital numbers of the clock radio and microwave were still and vacant. Space seemed to thicken. Seeing and knowing ceased to be reliable companions.

There was a disconcerting silence to confirm the absence of light and vision. The persistent hum of the computer that has become part of the physical sensation of writing had stopped early in the storm. Without electricity the pump was still; the loss of water was confirmed as a dripping faucet quieted. And the straining motor of the freezer, which had become a constant presence during steamy July days, also stopped. I realized that all of these often ignored sounds and pulsations are the dependable calibrations of a palpable dimension of time. Without these familiar noises and in a thicket of darkness, time was suspended.

Roaming around the dark rooms, I reflexively turned on light switches and water faucets. My experience of the loss of electrical power was constantly betrayed by an unconscious, quotidian choreography of gesture and activity. In other more confounding moments, the edges between environment and awareness, context and body were often ambiguous. What was

understood and experienced were mismatches. There was no power; the world had fallen into darkness until the sky would brighten at sunrise the next day. But in the hushed blackness of a well-known setting, the sudden transformation felt like a failure of the most reliable physical senses. Sight and hearing had been extorted or diminished by incalculable circumstances. Touch was the most incisive sensation. Oddly, this enhanced tactility sounded a prescient image for the future, as more of what we know will be visually unavailable -- behind the scenes.

A day later at nightfall, electrical power was restored. Lights left on the night before brightened. The motor of the freezer went into a frenetic pitch to capture and restore the cold. The digital clocks blinked brightly in their inaccuracy. All of the sights and sounds of domesticity were instantly reinstated. With the wellknown scripts and staging back in place, an unexpected pause of everyday life came to an end. Did the novelty of the night before change anything? Did the welcome return of usual patterns and amenities dispel any lasting reconsideration of new impressions? Did the temporary compromise -- denial --of sight, influence a general apprehension?

The abrupt consequences of a sudden electrical storm appear to establish improbable and tenuous connections to the quiet, premeditated work of Marco Maggi. The sublime pyrotechnics of intense light and blasts of thunder had reverberated with the shocking volatility of natural events. Thrilling and threatening, the storm was a ephemeral event, moving across space until its force dissipated. The experience of the storm and a night without light and sight was entirely visceral. The extreme visual stimulation of the storm wrought a mysterious opacity.

In contrast, Maggi's meticulous projects and drawings are hushed serial implosions. Their intricacy and intimacy transport paradoxical thoughts of velocity and stillness, presence and void -- a simultaneous concentration and absence of energy. While time may be a subject, the work is not transitive. The activity has an inappreciable molecular quality; aggressive, persistent movement is selfcontained. Development and movement are intellectually accepted, but never tangibly experienced. Strategically unpretentious, the work's eloquent concentration actively summons acute, attentive seeing.

In the 19th century, the invention and availability of printing presses, telescopes, and microscopes secured the ocular bias of the modern western world. 1 There was unprecedented optimism placed on

previously unexamined visual horizons rendered by new technologies. It was expected that a technologically-enhanced range of sight would lead to new knowledge -- an expanded optical environment would embolden thought.

... the break with classical models of vision in the early nineteenth century was far more than simply a shift in the appearance of images and art works, or in systems of representational conventions. Instead, it was inseparable from a massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices that modified in myriad ways the productive, cognitive, and desiring capacities of the human subject. 2

Concurrent with emerging techniques of observation, the development of new forms of political power and other industrial innovations, observers and consumers encountered a "new field of serially produced objects ... " 3 Social and economic developments produced a more variable, negotiable, and accessible scope of signs. Transformations in the 19th century that challenged the dominant authority of a Cartesian-based, singular scopic regime anticipated the discursive patterns of visibility that characterize the contemporary world.

As the telescope, microscope, computer, magnetic imaging, and other innovations have extended the biological range of vision, the syntax of sight is perpetually revised. Emerging technologies have displayed confounding similarities between the immense proportions of the universe and unimaginable infinitesimalness of particle physics, atomic structures, cells, and viruses. The techniques of observation present visual evidence that make the macro and micro -- once so unquestionably distinguishable -- entirely indiscriminate. Unimaginable extremes are, in fact, rendered uniformly. Representations of vastly difference scales and phenomena have surprising affinities.

In the late the 20th century, the traces of these and other profound changes are identified and examined through the different lenses of literary, art, and architectural theory, computer science and the digital world, and advertising and popular culture. Contemporary visual culture is calculatingly seductive and absurdly mundane. In spite of the promotional gusto of brand names and unique items for particular clients, the packaging of every aspect of life has produced a generic

environment of manipulated expectation, sensation, and satiation. This slippery common ground of desire and commerce -- its insubstantiality -- is a significant preoccupation of Maggi's meditative, yet anxious work. His disciplined methodology, a fascination with format and presentation, and a modesty of materials form an insistent critique with sightlines to the past and the future of vision and knowledge. In Stuart Ewen's book *All Consuming Images*, the themes of the politics of style, image management, seeing as scanning, and surface over substance frame a bleak critique of contemporary consumer life. 4

Ewen's book is a single compelling example of the pervasive pessimism about the social control (and superficiality) of vision and experience in a mediated society. Offering another perspective, Martin Jay writes: "In the case of the art of describing, we might see another reification at work, that which makes a fetish of the material surface instead of the three-dimension depths." 5 But just as vision and visuality are intricately braided phenomena shaped by nature and culture, biology and technology, surface and substance are not intrinsically estranged. Scanning the surface is not endemically an avoidance of deep ideas.

Maggi does not subscribe to the notion of a "true" vision. Optical processes are socialized, variable, cultural, and contingent. But his intricate work frames questions about the consequences of sight in a culture that is saturated with a storm images and things. In contrast to fast food, facsimiles, and other accelerated services, Maggi describes his work as "slow art." His making and our tracing of hundreds of almost imperceptible notations across different surfaces require patient and conscious search. And time.

With a sudden electrical storm, the surrounding environment became an inappreciable void. Space became empty. A typical drive-by experience of art might suggest that Maggi's work is empty and absent. At first glance -- nothing.

Nothing seems obviously apparent. A more concentrated look -- a deliberate gaze -- locates an astounding proliferation and fullness extending across the surface. Through a devoted application of small marks and incisions on different surfaces and materials, Maggi slowly and inextricably reveals the drift of all of the common signs that skittishly move across surfaces.

Drawing with pencil leads the size of straight pins, Maggi places a single stroke that is the genesis of an unfolding, internal logic of marks

and patterns. The visual experience of this work produces a notational crisis between intelligibility and intelligence. Observation and interpretation are prolonged commitments, but the time spent simply intensifies the conundrum. The mazy network of lines is rational and inscrutable; a calculable intent never leads to a conclusive impression.

Architects, designers, and scientists develop and deploy models and representations. Fastidious drawings and constructions simulate unbuilt structures or untested speculations. With reasonable confidence, viewers assume that these are accurate pictures of prospective visions. Maggi's disquieting, shifting work gravitates between the traditions of drawing and diagram. The precision of his drawing and etching, makes unclear whether each work is complete in its ambiguity, or a scale representation of something that only resides in the imagination. The tiny lines and marks possess the self-contained focus of the miniature, as well as the expansive potential of representations of vast systems or minute particles.

Paul Virilio has compared the field of vision to the site of an archaeological excavation. 6 Maggi's creative process has the obsessive qualities of a prolonged, painstaking dig. Every particle and stroke has immense purpose. The surface is continually examined and excised for evidence. Maggi draws delicately and fastidiously on the surface of paper and other materials. He incises with surgical precision foil, foamboard, and other vulnerable surfaces. Intelligible impressions are made, but the actual plane of the material is never excised. Occupying this intense non-space -- this dimension between surface and substance -- the work reveals the superficial and insignificant as profound concepts.

With the excavation of old landfills and other quotidian sites, the archaeology of the ordinary is now intellectually endorsed. For Maggi some of the most fascinating evidence of an entropic visual culture is discerned in the ubiquitous floor plans, product displays, and commonplace materials of Home Depot, Staples, or WalMart. Wandering and poaching in these epidemic franchises, he faithfully uses generic, often banal formats and materials for his extreme work - -conventionally-sized drawing paper, simple frames, plastic slide mounts, transparent slide sheets, insulation board, aluminum foil, and Macintosh apples from the fruit-growing region where he lives. If often ignored, endured, or scorned, they are never benign; they are the unacknowledged texture of our lives and the receptive surfaces for Maggi's idiosyncratic work.

From the fast convenience of the freezer to the microwave to the art gallery. What time is required -- and allocated -- to produce and look at art? The current politics and economics of the art world do not condone or reward creative investments of interminable hours. Unaffected by conformity, Maggi's slow methodology is subversively time-consuming. Vision may be fast and restless, but his timeless meandering marks and impressions evoke the purpose and intimacy of touch. Our choice is clear. The work can be easily overlooked, or we can let ourselves be held by an unhurried tangibility of time. In the darkness following an electrical storm, a dilated sense of time made the familiar suddenly mysterious. Maggi's work invites a similar kind of suspension. Facing unfathomable entanglements on the most mundane surfaces, the work immerses us in the vagaries and vulnerabilities of sight.

Patricia C. Phillips
July 1999

Notes

1. Martin Jay. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity". Vision and Visuality. Edited by Hal Foster. Bay Press. Seattle. 1988. p. 3.
2. Jonathan Crary. Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century. M.I.T. Press. Cambridge. 1990. p. 3.
3. Crary. p. 13.
4. Stuart Ewen. All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture. Basic Books, Inc. New York. 1988.
5. Jay. p. 20.
6. Crary. p. 1.

(Fuente: <https://dl.dropbox.com/u/62247403/exhibit-e/Marco%20Maggi/1999-Waiting%20to%20Surface.pdf>

Cortesía Marco Maggi)



SLOW POLITICS

Adriano Pedrosa

July 2008

“Examining a ream of the best-quality white paper proves that it is impossible to find a single absolutely white, silent sheet in 500 examples.” - Marco Maggi

The great movement of the 20th century is velocity. Speed radically transforms landscape, city, architecture, and things; and, if it does not

banalize them, it visually simplifies them. Thanks to the invention and disseminated use of the automobile, people travel rapidly across the city and their gazes scan streets and highways at high speed. Their visual and perceptive experience is completely transformed.

On account of the swift motion, the individual can no longer perceive the finishing and decorative details on façades of pre-modern houses and other buildings, for example. Façade and landscape must be simplified so they can be captured by the gaze that fleetingly scans them. The modernist architecture and landscape design of straight lines and flat surfaces are to a great extent a response to acceleration. Within this scenario, the swiftness and the banalization of gaze and visuality pose a threat to aesthetic decadence. The risk: an architectural design and an urban planning might appear that will introduce large cartoon- or caricature-like façades which can be understood and appreciated at a single glance. Speed is also given a compelling impetus in such media as television, the Internet, and other globalized networks. The amount of events must also supply the media's daily consumption, thereby spawning news production rather than reports. Going against the grain, in this case, we have ancient, modern or contemporary art. Notwithstanding the unbridled multiplication of art works, shows, fairs, collections, museums, and biennial and triennial exhibitions, art insists in demanding a slowdown, a pause. (Possibly the exception is Andy Warhol, who to a certain extent incorporated multiplication and acceleration in his work; but one needs time and dedication to fully understand this).

The work of Marco Maggi (Montevideo, 1957) opens trenches in this clash with speed. "Paper is my purpose. Time, plus focus, is my preferred medium," the artist stated. His work consists of finely traced, accurate, delicate and subtle drawings (at times rendered without graphite or ink) of intricate patterns that albeit being abstract and geometric, relate to architectural designs, networks, landscapes, maps or grids, whether they be real, imaginary, fabulous or idealized. Maggi's drawing resorts to different media that include graphite on paper and graphite on the passe-partout of the picture frame (such as in *San Andreas Fault*, 2008); dry point on aluminum foil, which in turn is framed (such as in *Slow Foil*, 2008), or framed in slide mounts (such as in *Sliding*, 2008) or yet framed on the foil roll itself; making incisions on acrylic (such as in *Slow Shadow*, 2008, in which the light shining on lines incised on the transparent plexiglas frame casts fine shadow lines on the blank paper), or on piles of paper. By and large, Maggi's works are small (even the large installations that he creates are made up of numerous piles of paper that can hardly be distinguished from the distance); they are patiently made with

precision and careful attention to detail. There are no sudden, violent, expansive, or expressive gestures. Although there is excess. In this context, one needs to view the works from up close to understand the small and vast micro-universe that they contain. Not by chance, Maggi's works are difficult to reproduce or record in photography. One should strive to view them live and to inspect their surface, line, cut, shadow, relief and transparency.

Maggi asks us to slow down. The reference comes up more obviously in two of his titles shown in São Paulo: *Slow Foil*, and *Slow Shadow*. It also comes up in *Sliding*, a work made up of photo slide mounts, thus evoking a photogram or still, i.e., the suspension of the cinematic movement. The slowdown also appears in a more oblique, though penetrating manner in a series that the artist has been developing since 2005 named *The Ted Turner Collection—From CNN to the DNA*. The title is an ironic reference to celebrated U.S. media tycoon Ted Turner, the highly influential developer of the television news station Cable News Network (CNN) that revolutionized the market of news fabrication, broadcasting, and consumption. With this series, Marco Maggi intersects different speeds in life, in the media and in the globalization of art. In his own words, "From CNN to the DNA, I focus my attention on reading surfaces without the minor hope to get informed. Every day, we are condemned to know more and understand less."

In the works of this series, Maggi appropriates reproductions of works by modern masters Jasper Johns, Sol Lewitt, Lucio Fontana, Kasimir Malevich, Piet Mondrian and Robert Ryman—, turns the work with its back to the viewer, adds piles of paper to it, and then slits its surface, creating small paper reliefs and sparsely revealing filaments and fragments of hidden masterpieces. The overall result boasts characteristics of a nearly all-white minimalist grid, except for the small color fragments and filaments of the appropriated works. The title of each individual work relates to the perverse realm of the media, in which much is shown but little is actually seen: *Complete Coverage*. Maggi has brought to São Paulo, "complete coverages" of works by Gerhard Richter and Warhol, as well as foundational characters of the Latin-American modernism that include Lygia Clark, Jesus Soto, Helio Oiticica, Lygia Pape and Mira Schendel. In this specific context, the white grid structure for the works brings to mind a few reliefs of Pape's "Grupo Frente" series (1954-56).

The game that Maggi proposes is replete with great concealments and strategic revelations. The viewer must take the time for careful

observation. The reward may relate to Jorge Luiz Borges' *Aleph*, the small, brilliant and pulsating sphere that contains the entire universe. However, this is a silent, delicate and slow game. In this sense, here we have a subtle political vein, even if masked by the beauty and dazzle of the works. The slowdown is anti-modern, anti-progressive, anti-capitalist, anti-urban, and anti-globalization. Much like a contemporary Faust, the artist seems to say "This passing instant may stop", but his wish will hardly come true. It is precisely this trace of resistance that makes art so fundamental for our daily life.

Translated from the Portuguese by Izabel Burbridge.

(Cortésia Marco Maggi)



MARCO MAGGI, HOTBED E ALTRE STORIE

Roberto Pinto

Torino, 2005

“I don’t work like a big man to change the world. I have no big ideas or ideology or big truth. I am a little man working with normal things. I am comfortable with my materials and my scale and my lack of didactic message. I don’t attempt to transform you. This is not an aggressive discourse about the world. I create an alternative world with its own rules.” — Marco Maggi

Il mito dell’artista eroe, creatore, prometeico trasformatore del mondo, è forse definitivamente tramontato, reso anacronistico dai cambiamenti subiti dalla società stessa. Ma di questo mutamento della realtà alcuni sembrano non accorgersene e molti lo ignorano volutamente perché la figura eroica costituisce una delle basi necessarie per sostenere un complesso sistema dell’arte (e più in

generale della società), struttura che periodicamente rilancia tale modello. Certamente le parole di Marco Maggi, che costituiscono l'incipit a questo scritto, sembrano fornirci un'affermazione più che esplicita di una diversa attitudine, quanto meno possibile, dell'arte contemporanea. E naturalmente, anche le sue opere rispondono adeguatamente ai principi che stanno alla base delle frasi citate.

Il primo lavoro che si incontra in questa mostra torinese è Hotbed, composto da una serie di risme di carta, perfettamente allineate a formare una griglia di 7 x 7 che ci ricorda la maquette della downtown di una possibile città, con i suoi edifici allineati e le forme perfette, come possiamo trovare solo all'interno di un progetto. Fogli bianchi, incontaminati, regno del possibile e allusione al tempo, all'utopia insita nel concetto stesso di progettazione, di razionalizzazione dello sviluppo urbano. In Hotbed c'è un evidente riferimento al minimalismo, a certi lavori di Carl Andre o alle prime opere di Richard Serra, che contenevano la stessa spinta utopica sottesa ai progetti urbanistici degli stessi anni. In Hotbed, tuttavia, troviamo anche un sottile, ma deciso, ribaltamento di quella tensione ideale, messo in opera dai materiali in gioco: le astrazioni concettuali del minimalismo non sono più realizzate attraverso materiali freddamente industriali, ma con una materia "calda" e ricca di rimandi psicologici e culturali come la carta.

Analogia inversa è realizzata dall'artista quando usa i materiali industriali per aggiungere preziosità all'intimità del disegno come fa, infatti, in un lavoro che troveremo nella stanza successiva, un'opera in cui l'immagine è creata con un raffinato procedimento a sbalzo su dei comuni fogli di alluminio prodotti per uso alimentare.

C'è un secondo rovesciamento creato da Hotbed, forse ancor più evidente, che definitivamente allontana il lavoro di Marco Maggi dall'idea utopica che stava alla base del minimalismo. Le risme presentano infatti alla loro sommità una serie di interventi minimi, sottilissimi tagli della superficie che trasformano la sommità piana di queste colonne di carta in un disegno tridimensionale; una piccola escrescenza che fa scoprire un modo completamente diverso di guardare quell'opera. Come in molti altri lavori di Marco Maggi anche in questa occasione il rapporto tra micro e macro, tra visione d'insieme e ricerca di particolari, è fondamentale. Gli spettatori devono avvicinarsi, prendere confidenza con queste immagini, e allo stesso tempo se ne devono allontanare per riacquistare lo sguardo d'insieme.

Maggi costringe lo spettatore a fare un continuo spostamento, di accostamento e distacco dall'opera, alla ricerca di un giusto punto di

osservazione che in realtà non esiste, o si concretizza solo attraverso quel movimento che ci consente di cogliere la complessità dell'installazione. Un'ulteriore conferma di questa tesi la si può trovare nel video D-ream, realizzato in collaborazione con Ken Solomon (esposto nell'ufficio della galleria), in cui l'uso delle luci sottolinea ancora una volta i tanti possibili modi di guardare (e di conseguenza di essere) di Hotbed.

Quel vocabolario astratto che ci accoglie al primo sguardo non è quindi del tutto applicabile; o, quanto meno, tale codice deve fare i conti con la perdita di senso che subisce nel momento in cui lo spettatore si avvicina all'opera. La pulizia, il bianco assoluto — che forse possono essere anche intese come una risposta all'eccesso di informazioni della società contemporanea — lasciano il posto, quindi, alla morbidezza di un intervento fragile e leggero, che crea ombre e sposta lo sguardo, insinua dubbi e si scopre policentrico. E in questo percorso forse anche lo sguardo stesso perde di importanza in favore delle percezioni tattili suggerite in tutti i lavori dell'artista uruguayano.

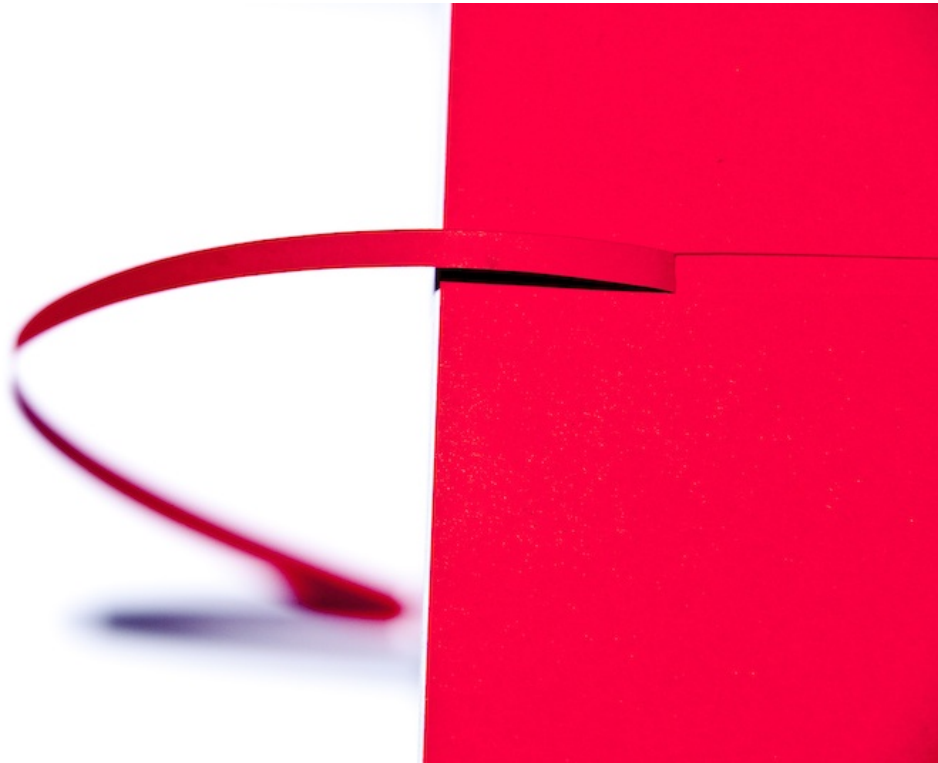
C'è un altro elemento su cui è necessario soffermarsi: il tempo. Abbiamo già sottolineato come allo spettatore sia negata la possibilità di cogliere l'opera in un unico sguardo e che quindi sia necessario un più lungo tempo di fruizione. Forse è implicito pensare al "tempo perso" nella maniacalità della precisione dei lavori realizzati con una tecnica antica ma piegata a questo diverso contesto e alle mutate esigenze. Da co-protagonista, il tempo assume però il ruolo di primo attore nel lavoro che troviamo nell'ultima stanza. Si tratta di una proiezione video del processo di trasformazione di una mela, ripresa costantemente per alcune settimane. Le immagini sono state poi compresse in pochi minuti e il processo degenerativo viene presentato al contrario. Nelle prime immagini, infatti, troviamo la mela nel suo stato finale e lentamente la vedremo riacquistare il suo colore, il suo succo, la sua funzione, la sua "giovinezza".

Marco Maggi ha inciso la superficie di quella mela, proprio come ha fatto con la carta e l'alluminio, creando un disegno geometrico e infine ha lasciato seccare questo frutto che lentamente si è trasformato da materia organica in scultura. Girando lo sguardo possiamo vedere alcune mele sottoposte al medesimo trattamento, protagoniste di quella storia sul video, bloccate nella loro trasformazione. Ci ritroviamo faccia a faccia con questa straordinaria collaborazione tra l'uomo e il tempo che ci parla della finitezza della vita ma anche del perché valga la pena di ingaggiare giornalmente questa lotta per continuare a stare al mondo.

Quando scrivo un testo in genere mi appunto delle parole che mi aiutano a formulare pensieri e ragionamenti o a esprimere sensazioni in relazione alle opere e all'autore di cui devo scrivere. Per questo scritto avevo segnato anche "gentile", "bellezza", "delicatezza", parole cui non ho fatto ricorso e che si fa fatica ad utilizzare in un testo critico per la polisemicità di questi termini. Parole che non vorrei abbandonare, ma lasciare in custodia agli spettatori come spunti ulteriori per muoversi tra i lavori di Marco Maggi.

Roberto Pinto. Galleria Vitamin, Torino, Italia.

(Cortesía Marco Maggi)



INTERVIEW WITH B. HUNTER

Marco Maggi (New York, USA) interview with Becky Hunter (Durham, UK) via email between November 08 and February 09.

Working in both small scale drawing/etching and in room-sized paper installations, Marco Maggi's work has been said to evoke an architectural spectrum of sources, from El Lissitzky to Zaha Hadid. Featured in the publication Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing, and in collections including that of the Museum of Modern Art, New

York, Maggi has exhibited extensively across North and South America, Europe and Asia.

BH: "Maggi is not about walking on or picking up, but crouching down and looking at." I found this quote about you from a 2003 Hosfelt Gallery press release. It caught my eye because it described the way images of your work affect me, drawing me down and in to explore detail, yet it is describing a large scale paper installation, not something shy or tiny. Is this your intention for the work, to draw people into quite an intimate viewing relationship?

MM: Scale changes the relationship between the viewer and the work. This reduction of scale intends to humanize the visual arts. Fast viewers see, from far away, a drawing as a blank sheet. Slow viewers can read the same drawing ten times, switching perspectives and conclusions. My main issue is protocol; my main focus is not the object or subject. I focus on the space in between the object and the viewer. I am interested in the particular protocol of manners and pace in the viewing process. [Click on this link to see a letter-size paper carpet and people walking very slowly on the piece, 'Snow Walking Protocol'] To watch theater, a movie or video, or to hear a symphony, you need to spend a specific amount of time with the work. For example, a three minutes fifteen seconds song requires three minutes and fifteen seconds of your time. Reading a book is more flexible, but it is not completely flexible, because it is impossible to read a novel in sixteen seconds, which is the average amount of time spent by the public looking at a work of art in a museum. Drawings are not so much related to space as they are related to time: no time frame is included in 'drawing protocol'... the viewer is therefore free and the challenge is to expand the freedom range from 16 seconds to 16 minutes or 16 hours.

BH: I wondered if that description I quoted is still relevant now or if your approach has changed in the past five years?

MM: My recent show at the Sicardi Gallery is entitled 'Slow Politics'. 'Slow Politics' was also the title of the text written by Adriano Pedrosa for my September show at Nara Roesler ('HypoReal', San Paulo). So, yes I am still promoting pauses.

BH: I'd now like to quote something that you have written that seems fitting here. "We all feel a bit offside at the start of the 21st century, the only hope available to us is unambitious and slow: hypo-hope." Do you think slowness (in artmaking or in life) is undervalued now?

MM: I really love MHz and computers. They save so much time: saved time that allows us to go slowly. Computers deal with long distance very well; we need to take better care of the short distances. Images and sound travel on the internet; we need to take care of tactility, smell and taste. Computers work with zeros and ones; we need to focus on the hand's ten digits. Nothing is more digital than a hand. I love the digital era in both interpretations of the word: 'hand' and 'binary'. We are 'bit-niks' and not reactionary or nostalgic. I wouldn't say that slowness is undervalued, as slowness is a great opportunity made possible by the fantastic speed of computers. If I have speed and long distance on my laptop, then it enables me to have slowness and short distance on my table top.

BH: You write beautifully, as though you are also taking time over phrases and that allows you a deep expression - I'm having to read slowly to take it in fully, which is a good thing. I watched the film on YouTube [link above] of your installation being constructed and demolished, it was very poetic, all the whiteness. And it did seem to slow people down a great deal, bending close to see, perhaps suspending the usual viewing protocol for something more careful and sustained. Is it your intention that the work is demolished by the audience, or are some parts of it preserved other than in film? Or is the demolition the final act of the piece?

MM: I have no precise intentions about tensions between people and the work, only expectations. I did very different versions of the same floor piece in diverse cities and venues - from Montevideo to Gwanju, from Los Angeles to Santiago de Chile or Bogota, from Madrid to San Paulo, from La Habana to Washington or San Juan de Puerto Rico, from Pontevedra to Kansas City - in biennials, galleries, museums there have been more than twenty examples. People's reactions are always very similar, but the traces left behind after the exhibitions close are very different. The paper piece works like a slow photo-sedimentation of the show, in that there could be a very clean context and perfect conservation at the end, or a very aggressive environment with interventions by the viewing public, such as hair, coffee, written messages, lost objects, particles, etc. In some places the work survived like a collection piece (Daros Colection, LA MOCA); in others it was destroyed after the show (Buenos Aires Biennial). At the Hirshorn museum a child jumped on the piece; at San Paulo Biennial some top sheets (that are cut into with engraved marks) disappeared. In some cities I asked for a 'non shoe' sign; in others shoes were

allowed. At Josee Bienvenu (my New York gallery) shoes were allowed and two friends added clean sheets of paper to erase shoe prints during the opening. The video on YouTube is a document: it is not a phase of the piece. I really love the response of the people documented, as they participated in constructing or demolishing the piece. Mutations start before the installation of the floor piece: the top sheets travel in a folder like a zip file to unzip on local paper reams.

BH: Why do you think drawing is not subject to the same time protocol as other works of art? Is it not seen as such a serious or complete art form? Is it more approachable or flexible?

MM: It was a 'Drawing Inside' era: drawing was working backstage, like art interface, or bone structure in paintings and sculptures. Now, drawing emerges like the final tool to express precise confusions. Ninety percent of the actual description of the Universe is based in mathematical metaphors. Numbers are better than letters to describe abstract contexts. Drawing is the perfect media to document the triumph of micro uncertainties or the demolition of big messages. When words or landscapes are no longer capable of naming or showing systems, drawing becomes the protagonist. After the shock art of the early 1990s, the silences of drawing allow us to start again. Drawing can be slight like a text or even less; drawing carries the notion of being pre-text, coming before written language. Drawing is the perfect medium to emphasise or construct emptiness: a type of writing that erases.

BH: Can you remember the first object you paid close attention to and how that felt?

MM: It was a book and I was too young to know how to read it.

BH: So there's a thread in your work that sees drawing as unknown language, or standing in for an unknown language, that has the power to erase because of its unknowable quality, to act as a blanket over what has come before?

MM: To draw is very similar to writing slowly in a language that you cannot read: a text with no hope of being informative. It's not a thread, it is training to stimulate our empathy for insignificance.

BH: I've been fascinated with ancient languages for a long time and have collected several books on the subject, and started to learn some of the basics. I felt there was some connection between being

interested in art, particularly drawing, and being interested in the cut and carved marks of cuneiform script, for example. Would you agree that in both cases there is meaning to be uncovered? Or do you see mark-making in your work as only an erasure or slowing down, or can it refer to many possible meanings?

MM: Cut and carved marks of ancient cuneiform scripts are the most beautiful examples of new drawing. The genome alphabet is another example, and in a way, the genome is older than cuneiform! They are both examples of an illegible language: an abstract alphabet and syntax, grammatical tension. They are insignificant texts waiting for meaning (like a hook waits for a hat) in the sense that most of us cannot understand them, their interpretation is still being worked on. In the last four years I have been working around the word 'cover' and its sister words such as 'coverage'. It's interesting that the mass media use the word 'cover' to mean the opposite: to show something, they promise 'complete coverage'. To link back to the idea of unknown languages, you could describe CNN coverage of the war or the elections as 'cuneiform coverage', covering up in the act of showing. My series title is 'The Ted Turner Collection from CNN to DNA'. The coverage is so efficient that we cannot recognize the difference between live transmission and death. I wrote: 'We are familiar with the DNA structure but we cannot remember the genome's alphabet. I have only one question: is the inability to relate to this type of information blindness or should it be described as a new form of illiteracy? In both cases the most advisable thing to do is to patiently resign ourselves to the fact that we are doomed to knowing more and understanding less –victims of semiotic indigestions. The extreme percussion of news prevents any repercussion of the news. An overdose of drama is the perfect anaesthetic, a tool for censorship that is more efficient than a pair of scissors. We are setting up a society of dysfunctional information: reality becomes illegible; and the visual arts become invisible.'

BH: You often make the point that micro and macro have similar visual effects and also you compare ancient with up-to-date (preColumbian/postClintonian). Can you say anything further about this comparison of opposites? Are there political or geographical implications for you?

MM: The point of these pairs of opposites is the idea of unfocused information (in scale and time). Looking at the same drawing we can see different things: is this a bird's eye view of the urban fabric or is it micro computer intimacy? Is this texture, textile or text? Is this

archaeology or statistics? We cannot trust in our conclusions about drawing or reality. In this situation the best reaction is to slow down. Nowadays speed is tragic in arts, diplomacy and cars.

BH: Can you say something about your juxtaposition of delicate engraving/etching and ordinary, household objects, such as kitchen foil still in its cardboard box, empire rulers and plain paper? This use of the everyday and simple is taken to an incredibly detailed and poetic level in 'Micro and Soft on McIntosh Apples', 1999, which uses a dry-point technique to make minute drawings on the apples' surface. Also, your careful use of language comes into play here...

MM: I already talked about training our empathy for the indecipherable, that drawings are texts that you cannot read. Similar training is conducted by choosing insignificant objects, giving them a second chance, changing their destiny from garbage containers to art collections. They have very beautiful surfaces: the silky side of the aluminum foil, the McIntosh apple skin, coated office paper, industrial graphite sheets, plexi-glass. If you see a drawing on aluminum foil in a very important institution you will perhaps take more care and time at the supermarket. Attention and delicacy are two subversive activities in Walmart. My first video piece, in collaboration with Ken Solomon, show the biography of an apple. A photo with video vocation, a slow perception test. One photo, every ten minutes, during 40 days, documenting apple skin micro mutations.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aJhdJI1dZI>

BH: Do you have an interest in the tradition or history of drawing and etching, or are these activities simply useful for your purposes? For example, Dana Self compared your mapmaking impulse to that of Jan Vermeer.

MM: I did an MFA majoring in Printmaking at the State University of New York. My interest was not in the print process. I focused on plates and particularly in the threshold between two and three dimensions, using engraving and embossing. As I write today, I am engraving a plexi-glass sheet but I will not print from it. I stop here. The framed plexi-plate projects a shadow on the paper. The technique could be called printing with shadow. You see the projection but you cannot see the real drawing on the plexi-glass. A spacer between the plexi sheet and the back paper is a second referent to three dimensions. In fact, the relationship between two and three dimensions is another very

important dichotomy. Jan Vermeer and Fred Sandback are my favourite artists, if that helps you locate where my interests lie. I did my first print edition last year. I was invited by The Drawing Center in New York for the 25th Anniversary of the institution. I worked with Greg Burnett, a master printer and a master friend.

BH: *Do you enjoy the physical processes of art making?*

MM: It is my full-time job and my life's work. Process is my concept and my purpose, the work's origin and its goal. The most important phase in that process is not to warm up my hand before returning to the drawing, it is the viewer's process of art-making that is the vital stage.

(Fuente: <http://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/2009-interview-with-marco-maggi/1773>)

Cortesía Marco Maggi)



VISUAL YOGIISMS IN MARCO MAGGI'S *PARKING ANY TIME AT JOSÉE BIENVENU GALLERY*

By Alex Glauber

The Drawing Center, November 1, 2010.

The oft-quoted witticisms of famed New York Yankee Yogi Berra are funny, but not because they are jokes. Somewhere between tautology and truism, they become contradictions, or, as we fondly know them, Yogiisms. When once asked why he stopped going to a restaurant, he said, "Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

What seems obvious at first leaves you scratching your head. Yogiisms are momentary slippages or misalignments of language that force you to reconsider quotidian communication. In Marco Maggi's current show, PARKING ANY TIME at Josée Bienvenu Gallery, he embeds brainteasers that eclipse their aesthetic underpinnings, just like Yogiisms. One such example is Blind Sliding, where drawings incised on aluminum foil and then placed in slide holders are failed attempts at communication: while the information is physically incised into the surface, the opacity of the material prevents us from illuminating the slide and therefore, the image. They are Braille for those who can see, which in turn, makes them blind. A visual Yogiism.

Maggi's language is one of intricate linear mark making, be it through cuts, incisions, or drawings that seem to grow across a surface. His sprawling webs of marks are regulated and systematic but nevertheless individual in each permutation. Conjuring associations ranging from ancient hieroglyphs to modern day computer circuitry, information and communication continue to be important themes for Maggi. At the core of his interests is the fact that we live in a world in which we are overloaded with information. The result is ironic: the more we know the less we know.

Many of the works in Maggi's show reengage some of his most enduring formats: cut paper, slide carousels, incised Plexiglas, and graphite on graphite drawings. However, there is one particular moment where Maggi posits one of his best Yogiisms to date: Global Myopia (Parking Mirror). As though he meticulously engineered the smashing on a mirror, Maggi has advanced his signature markings across the surface of this 36-inch surveillance mirror. In the press release, the artist is quoted as saying, "We are setting up a society of dysfunctional information: reality becomes illegible and visual arts, invisible... Speed is tragic in cars and arts. We must park now."

After a viewer runs through the obvious associations that the mirror has with the themes of the show – analysis, movement, speeding, parking, and recklessly smashing – the true meaning of the work is revealed. The aesthetic and conceptual paradox lies in the fact that as the mirror duplicates the image, it ultimately abstracts it. The convex nature of the mirror forces the ersatz line to become unsynchronized with the original. As a result, the image becomes blurred. Not only is more less, but as the mirror (and Maggi) take stock of the image, we see a state of incoherence; a metaphor to Maggi's claim in the press release.

If you don't have a chance to see this great show, fear not. Maggi's mirrors will be featured outside of the convention center at this year's Art Basel Miami.

Alex Glauber,
Contributor

(Fuente: [http://dl.dropbox.com/u/62247403/exhibit-e/Marco%20Maggi/2010-Drawing_Center_Blog_Marco_Maggi\(Parking_Any_Time\).pdf](http://dl.dropbox.com/u/62247403/exhibit-e/Marco%20Maggi/2010-Drawing_Center_Blog_Marco_Maggi(Parking_Any_Time).pdf) Cortesía Marco Maggi)



NO IDEA

MARCO MAGGI INTERVIEW

by Selene Preciado

Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA) November 2011

SP: I read the following statement by you "Paper is my purpose. Time plus focus is my preferred medium." Though you have experimented with different materials and surfaces such as Plexiglas, aluminum foil

and even apples, please tell us about your preference for paper as a medium.

MM: I am essentially superficial. I like surfaces. I avoid depth and content. There is nothing more superficial and portable than a paper—a paper is only a surface. To draw is basically to dialogue with a sheet of paper. I always work with soft materials that allow incisions or cuts; I draw inside the threshold between etching and sculpture. A crevice or embossing barely liberates a line from the plane; a cut on paper allows passing from the bi-dimensionality of drawing to the tri-dimension of a micro-sculpture of folded paper. Drawing with a soft pencil on Reynolds aluminum foil allows generating intangible reliefs. On the other hand, the graphite of an H9 pencil wounds Yupo or coated paper. When looking at the lines cut by the pencil through gradient light, they look like rivers on the very surface—on the surface of water. Intellectuals are concerned with abysses; I prefer to surf on paper.

SP: What is the significance of the play of words in your work? Is it mostly related to the viewers' first reaction to the work or an invitation to interpret the work from different perspectives?

MM: I am a supporter of polysemic titles and landscapes; words or signs that allow variable conclusions. Humor is always synthetic and helps to frighten away transcendence. Latin America has a valuable stock of serious ideas. Plenty of stock.

SP: There is an obsessive aspect in your work, in the way you saturate and defy materials with so much detail and diminutive incisions that are at times difficult to grasp without great attention or the use of a magnifying glass. Please talk about your work methodology and your use of materials such as aluminum foil and slides (to which you remove the transparencies and replace it with different materials).

MM: An obsession is a fixation out of control. In my case control is fixation. The general plan is to add in order to subtract. Write to erase. When I draw, the texture becomes so dense that it looks like a blank sheet of paper from afar. When you come closer, it turns gray. The closer you get, it is easier to dig in the visual field until you warm up to the insignificant. Saturation is a way to turn down the volume of landscape and to help the viewer to lose focus. The intention is to create a kind puzzlement and a pleasant chain; to offer a precise confusion, to generate less conclusive dichotomies. Is this drawing a text or a texture? Are these ruins or foundations of an alphabet? Is it

the aerial view of a city or the privacy of a computer system? Is that organic or technological tissue? Would it be pre-Columbian or post-Clintonian?

This is why I refer to the “no idea.” It is simultaneously a micro and macro exhibition when in reality it only refers to what each one of us decides to understand after seeing it. It works like a rack to hang figurations in the intimacy of our head. The goal of the work is not the content or the container. It is only a subtle invitation to lower speed and distance.

SP: You have mentioned before that your work is not “colorful or commercial in any way,” but you use common (commercial) objects and materials such as Macintosh apples, Reynolds wrap, Avery labels, envelopes, slides, etc. Can you explain how you use and transform common daily objects into silent reflections that simultaneously elevate and criticize reality?

MM: When we walk slowly to a supermarket shelf we are able to give a second chance to the lavish skin of a Macintosh apple, or to discover the satin face of kitchen aluminum foil. My formats are always standard: letter size paper, slide frames, apples, 12-18 inch aluminum foil rolls. Every standard format is nothing else but a set of unchangeable limits; a rigorous point of departure that demands focus and inhibits wandering in tangents. The hypo-real or sub-ordinary defines a voluntary reductionism that suppresses irrelevant possibilities. Familiar objects that are easy to identify present small interventions that are difficult to read. To install 256 reams of paper on the floor or to frame 324 slides in a square meter are two different multi-focus strategies with a common goal: care and approximation. This proposal does not criticize reality but the way we relate to it. Our perception device has a limited range—we do not see stars or germs; all that moves slowly seems to be still to us. We cannot hear a heartbeat or supersonic planes. It is extraordinary that coming from a source of information so minimal and vague we dare from time to time to build maximum and concrete doctrines.

SP: You are recently including the use of more color in your work. Without intending to make literal sense of your statement, please explain the importance of primary colors in your more recent work, specifically the use of bright yellow in works such as the Yellow Hotbed, 2011. Does color play any role in the experience of the viewer?

MM: Color offers a displacement; it moves us away from reason and closer to two opposite extremes: emotion and function. For example, yellow is the color of light and also of caution. I am interested in primary colors because we resort to them regularly to codify things that range from electric or mechanical installations to transit signs. Colors with a specific function. Why was blue excluded from traffic lights?

SP: *Are you interested in the participation of the audience? Would you consider your work interactive? How?*

MM: The audience is vital because the work waits for them in order to make sense. Interactive: because attention or the shift from the viewer will allow people to vary perspectives and the meaning that they attributed initially to the work. The work is an empty container, and the container does not matter. The only thing that is offered here is a bottled pause and the content refers to the use. The ceremony of opening slowly is a responsibility to the void: the viewer as creator of content. My only intention in this process is to give visibility to time.

SP: *Your work has been described as a combination of Joaquín Torres-García's "Universal" language and Henri Michaux's automatic writing. How do techniques of cutting, incising, marking, scratching a surface help you create erasure or saturation in "an alternative world with its own rules"? What are these rules?*

MM: I believe that saturation is the best way to erase. Censorship in the 20th century edited out news; it acted as a pair of scissors. Today, censorship is achieved by inundation or saturation. Nowadays the pursuit of news has such an overwhelming rate that it hinders repercussion. We are victims of a semiotic indigestion caused by an overdose of drama and comedy. Departing from this diagnose, my proposal consists in opening parentheses and not generate new thesis. To camp out until dawn.

The rules you refer to in the question are simple rules of circulation or transit. A second reality where paying attention is not subversive and we are not fined for parking. The title of my most recent exhibition in New York was *Parking Any Time*.

SP: *You have talked about the 3-D quality of paper stacks and how paper reams represent columns or pedestals—all terms that refer to architecture. All the elements of drawing in architecture are to be functional and your works in the exhibition no idea have a function as well. Are these "alternative architectures" also a play on the term*

"paper architecture" which was a term used to refer to architects making utopian, dystopian or fantasy projects that were never meant to be built?

MM: I like the direct relationship between drawing and its function in architecture, emphasizing the role of drawing in a floor plan; its capacity of representing with precision a door or a wall, without a poetic or philosophical meaning.

Every line in a floor plan has a specific and vital consequence in 3-D. I do not associate my drawing with utopia. I do not draw impossible monuments or urban fantasies. When numbers insist on being exact and words are not enough to name things, drawing is the only medium to stop understanding with precision. To draw is the opposite to not understand anything in general. Drawing permits to not understand anything in particular, to not understand every single thing, every step. Not understanding demands a rigorous training. It allows understanding the bones of uncertainty.

SP: In the exhibition at MOLAA you are presenting three Turner Catalogs and one box that refer to famous architects and their designs of famous museums. Are you particularly interested in deconstructivist architecture? Is there a direct intention or pun in presenting these works in the context of a museum space?

MM: Deconstruction permits to isolate fragments. I have a particular interest in focusing on fragments. Isolating a fragment and observing it carefully allows us to discover that each fragment is a whole in itself. This "whole" deserves undivided and not peripheral attention—Postmodernism fragmented reality and shattered attention. Now our duty is to assign a protagonist role even to the smallest detail; to every particle a particular attention. Every fragment is a whole of minor size or intensity. Every period, letter or brick is a basic particle and at the same time a question that we have to pay special attention to.

In the last years I have been working in "coverages" (coberturas), a series based on a great paradox: when CNN or Fox want to communicate something, they "cover" it. To cover is the best way to show and communicate? The exhibition includes the "cover" of various museums under the roof of a fifth museum: the MOLAA roof is a broader way of coverage than a paper mille-feuille.

SP: Lastly, you mention in your statement for this exhibition that "if each paper column would have valuable data, the 'passageways' between each stack would mark the limits of these monuments of

universal thought.” Please explain how this certainty or uncertainty of the existence (or absence) of information plays with the concept of saturation as erasure in your work.

MM: I work in the hallways that separate the ideas, from a space previous and posterior to certainty. A precise and orthogonal absence separates the reams of paper. That grid of 2-inch streets is not a drawing with paper but a drawing made with lines of empty or negative space. The drawing is defined by the absence of the paper, a sort of vacuum drawing that can be considered as a radical example of suprematist materialism.* First I drew with pencil on paper. Then only with pencil (drawings made with graphite on graphite). Then I drew only with yellow paper—the creases and their shadows on the top of the paper reams. Now, I went a step further and the grid that separates the reams is a drawing made without pencil or paper; a drawing made on empty space. This “in between” space is my space: the space previous and posterior to thought. If each ream implies the threat of an archive of 500 pages full of data and ideas, my space would be an empty library bookcase. Free space in a hard drive waiting for something memorable. The “intergrid” space of our floor installation is less than Malevich’s *White on White* (1918). It is an orthogonal net made by corners where nothingness finds nothingness in angles of 90 degrees.

*The term “suprematist” refers to Kazimir Malevich (Ukraine/Russia, 1878-1935) and his suprematist compositions that went against material realism that was characteristic of his era. Malevich discarded elements until he was left with a white square on a white canvas.

(Cortesía de Marco Maggi)



OPTIMISMO RADICAL

Entrevista de Guillermo Ovalle
Diciembre 2011.

Guillermo Ovalle: Marco, no sabes lo feliz que estoy, ante todo de que hayas aceptado hacer este proyecto en NC-arte, y, que estés acá con nosotros. Es lo más importante que me ha pasado desde que soy el director de este espacio.

Marco Maggi: Para mí es una gran alegría que tiene que ver contigo y con Bogotá. Desde hace un año venimos planeando juntos esta exposición; en esto somos socios o cómplices.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Dónde nace Optimismo Radical?, porque no es la primera vez que lo haces.*

Marco Maggi: En el 2009 decidimos con José Bienvenu sacar a pasear un título. Así se juntaron dos palabras que no se llevan bien: optimismo y radical; una esquina atractiva cuya única meta es la alta indefinición. Un nombre que con modificaciones mínimas funciona en portugués, inglés, italiano o francés sin lograr entenderse con precisión en ningún idioma. El formato y la geografía eran parte de la vaguedad del proyecto, por eso el título se inauguró en mayo del 2010 con una exposición colectiva de artistas latinoamericanos en la Galería de José, en Nueva York. Ahora, en Colombia, Optimismo Radical se transformó en una exposición individual. En la parada siguiente volverá a ser una muestra de grupo en la Galería Nara Roesler de San Paulo. Antes o después, el nombre viajará a Madrid y París para volver a Nueva York. En el 2012, José tiene previsto en su espacio de Chelsea una serie optimista y radical de Project Rooms basados en artistas internacionales.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Hay cierta dicotomía en Optimismo Radical, por una parte un afán de definir y por otra de dejar espacios abiertos.*

Marco Maggi: Exacto. La intención es crear un desconcierto amable y un encadenamiento simpático. Una etiqueta fuera de foco, confusión precisa que como mis dibujos puede derivar en dicotomías poco concluyentes. Este dibujo es un texto o una textura? ¿Ruinas o cimientos de un alfabeto? ¿Es la vista aérea de una ciudad o la intimidad de una computadora? ¿Son tejidos orgánicos o tecnológicos? ¿Será preComlombino o posClintoniano? Por eso la muestra en NC es al mismo tiempo micro y macro cuando en realidad solo refiere a lo que cada uno decida inferir al recorrerla; funciona como un perchero para colgar figuraciones en la intimidad de la cabeza. La meta de la obra no es el contenido ni el envase. La única propuesta clara es sugerir una mutación de protocolo. Una invitación suave a reducir la velocidad y abandonar la larga distancia. Detenimiento con focalización, acercamiento minucioso y saludable, en los tiempos que corren. Propongo un campo visual que intenta multiplicar nuestra simpatía por lo insignificante. Ser lento en una exposición o una oficina permite fijar la atención en una cascada de sobres, milhojas de carta o escamas de Post it. Acercarse a una estantería en un supermercado nos habilita a darle una segunda chance a la cáscara suntuosa de las manzanas Macintosh; o descubrir la cara satinada del papel de aluminio de cocina.

Ovalle: *¿Dentro del contexto de tu obra, hubo una ruta, cuál fue el recorrido para llegar al montaje de NC-arte?*

Marco Maggi: Sigo un proceso raro, empiezo siempre por el final. Primero elijo el marco y después hago el dibujo. Empecé enmarcando el espacio de NC-arte, encerrando sus virtudes y dificultades. El resultado ideal hubiera sido que no se supiera que fue primero: las hojas o el edificio. Por ejemplo, la escalera o las columnas de la sala podrían perturbar la visión del dibujo sobre el suelo; preferí que cumplieran la función de la puntuación en un texto.

Mi intención desde el comienzo fue que las supuestas interferencias ayudaran a multiplicar el efecto intermitente de las líneas de bloques de papel. Al desplazarnos, las verticales del edificio fragmentarían la perspectiva del espacio, creando capítulos como si prendieran y apagarán la estructura de papel de color.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Indudablemente tienes un entendimiento muy claro de la arquitectura, es decir, entiendes el espacio, tal vez por el hecho de haber sido constructor.*

Marco Maggi: Constructor y destructor. Todo mi trabajo está en el umbral entre las dos y las tres dimensiones; entre el grabado y el dibujo, entre el plano y la instalación, entre la línea que corta el papel y la micro escultura plegada. Esta exposición viene a ser como una enorme ampliación de uno de mis slides; en ellos corto un papel de 35mm, pero en este caso tenía 35 metros. Una ampliación tan desmesurada provocó la pixelización de las rectas de color sobre el piso.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Me pareció fascinante la forma como comenzaste el "site specific" en NC-arte. Lo primero que hiciste fue básicamente enmarcar el espacio, una vez demarcado empezaste a componerlo de afuera hacia adentro. Lo vi como un acto casi instintivo.*

Marco Maggi: El primer gesto fue esa línea perimetral que incorporó columnas y escalera tratándolas como si fueran inmensos cortes o pliegues de papel. Ese rectángulo inicial se parece al trabajo de un agrimensor, previo al replanteo de una obra de construcción. Fijar los límites del terreno, la comarca. Definir el tamaño exacto del desafío, desinfectar el campo operatorio para poder fundar una realidad con otras reglas. El edificio de NC ayuda mucho, es una escultura en sí mismo con un atrio de 12 metros de altura y un puente que lo une a la fachada que decidió declarar su independencia. Una de las columnas

del atrio tiene tres pisos de altura y fue empapelada con 12.000 postits amarillos: la montaña de asuntos pendientes que nos impiden encarar el optimismo con mayor racionalidad.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Es la mejor conjugación de espacio y obra que he visto en mucho tiempo, un diálogo extraordinario. Hay un sentido rítmico entre las bandas de las resmas de papel y su correspondencia a la columna, a la escalera... Me imagino que todo eso viene de ese sentido de construcción, del dominio que tienes del espacio. La obra abarca un ámbito enorme y al mismo tiempo mínimo, en los dibujos lineales, sobre las plataformas de las resmas de papel.*

Marco Maggi: Veo las resmas de papel como azoteas.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Azoteas?*

Marco Maggi: O playas de estacionamiento. El diálogo con el espacio parece fundamental, pero mi único objetivo tiene que ver con el tiempo. La estructura espacial, el recorrido o el alfabeto mudo que se levanta sobre los pedestales de papel son excusas o detalles que intentan retener, frenar y si fuera posible...estacionar al observador. El laberinto y la pequeña escala propician una circulación lenta en estado de alerta permanente. Exigen tomar precauciones, mirar por donde se camina y prestar atención a los síntomas o señales mas insignificantes ...como si camináramos en un campo minado.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Has aludido a términos como ruta, pausa. En tu obra, ya sea grande, o pequeña ¿son estos los referentes visuales más importantes?*

Marco Maggi: Soy un promotor de pausas. Mis dibujos a lápiz son tectónicos y pueden confundirse con una superficie en blanco; al prestarles atención se descubren placas móviles o planos fuera de foco. Milhojas de Troya.

Tengo como referencia al cine. Donde la velocidad es estándar y escandalosa; el espectador recibe 24 cuadros por segundo. En el caso de la muestra en NC, no son 24 resmas por segundo, sino todo lo contrario. El espectador queda libre de pautar su ritmo y yo trato de demorarlo. Los diferentes niveles de información no son subterráneos sino que se plantean como un itinerario lineal con 500 escalas o 250.000 hojas. Son estrategias de capilaridad, retención y proximidad para ir suministrando dosis de información homeopáticas.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Hay referencia de alguna manera a la naturaleza, o, al cuerpo humano?*

Marco Maggi: Al cuerpo no sé. La referencia permanente es a nuestra calidad de percepción. Trabajo siempre al límite de lo imperceptible. Me interesa lo ínfimo y lo infame. Si algo vuela muy rápido ...no lo vemos , ni lo oímos. Si algo avanza lentamente pensamos que no se mueve. No somos capaces de ver ni lo muy grande ni lo muy chico, ni astros ni microbios. Y sin embargo, insistimos con tenerle plena confianza a un aparato de percepción tan precario. Somos un ejemplo de percepción de rango modesto y fe ciega.

Tener claros los límites estrechos de nuestros 5 sentidos no nos impidió la construcción de doctrinas encadenadas que parecieron resolver todo y para siempre. No veíamos pero éramos visionarios. Avanzaba la ciencia confirmando nuestra incapacidad de conocer la realidad y en paralelo forjábamos certidumbres inapelables sobre el destino del mundo y la totalidad de sus habitantes. Partiendo de una información parcial y vaga logramos contagiarnos convicciones máximas y concretas. La naturaleza nos protegió; nos apartó del Universo mínimo y del Universo máximo, dotándonos de una posibilidad de informarnos muy moderada, a escala humana, humilde. Ni microscopio ni telescopio orgánicos. Hubo que inventarlos. Durante un lapso incontable, cada uno prestó atención a la dosis de noticias que generaba su entorno más próximo. La invasión de los medios de comunicación masivos y portables terminó con la discreción natural. Estábamos abrigados por la incapacidad de ver y oír a larga distancia, ahora nos enfrentamos a una nueva intemperie ...el abismo de mirar y escuchar el planeta con una lupa y un amplificador en el bolsillo 24 x 7. Por eso propongo detenernos y aproximarnos. Esa es la precaución que se debe tomar, una vez develada la ceguera global: reducir la velocidad y tomar con-tacto con la superficie.

Hace unos años realicé una serie de exposiciones bajo el paraguas de un título, "Miopia Global". Los miopes van despacio y prestan atención, acortan distancias hasta lograr focalizar mejor que Braille. Propuse entonces, el contagio de la miopia para ganar modestia, visto lo poco que ve la vista. Había un paso más , tomarse con humor nuestra impotencia visual y proponer al optimismo como una forma de ceguera auspiciosa. Para eso estamos hechos; y no para la soberbia del águila que cree que tiene ojo de águila.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿También físicamente, en términos del espacio, hay una relación de escala con el ser humano? Por ejemplo hace un rato vino un grupo de estudiantes y la mayoría de ellos se agachaban para ver tus azoteas. Se bajaban para distinguir. Rara vez se ve en una*

exposición que la gente permanezca en silencio y se agache para ver la obra.

Marco Maggi: Los artistas disimulan pero en el fondo buscan que la gente quede muda o caiga de rodillas...

Guillermo Ovalle: *¡Lo lograste!...*(Risas)

Marco Maggi: Hace cinco años en el Colombo Americano, en una exposición que curó Estefanía Sokoloff, "El Papel del Papel", cubrí la enorme superficie del salón con capas de hojas de oficina. Sobre esa alfombra blanca y escamada había estructuras de resmas y una caligrafía de cortes muy diferente a la de esta exposición. En lugar de un laberinto sinuoso que impide avanzar sin prestar atención, como en esta muestra, instalé un piso de hojas movedizas que exigía descalzarse y moverse lentamente. Era una superficie inestable y se parecía a caminar en la nieve. La gente circulaba despacito y en silencio. Fue otra vía para proponer un mismo cambio de modales : nuevas normas de tránsito. La estructura general en la exposición del 2006, era un caos de papel, lo contrario al laberinto ortogonal y codificado por color de Optimismo Radical. Dos estrategias diferentes con un mismo objetivo: frenar y acercar. En Internet está disponible un video que documenta una instalación similar a la del Colombo Americano que realicé en el 2003, en el Centro Cultural de España en Montevideo (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WverwY-Cnn0&feature=related>)

Guillermo Ovalle: *Me gusta el término frenar. Insistir para que la gente observe, abra su capacidad de percepción, se dé cuenta.*

Marco Maggi: Nos damos bastante cuenta, el tema es que nos saturan con un bombardeo indiscriminado de conmociones. La censura en el siglo XX actuaba como una tijera, recortaba las noticias. La censura actual actúa por inundación. Somos víctimas de una indigestión semiótica provocada por una sobredosis de drama tan clamorosa, que impide toda reacción. La percusión de la información tiene un ritmo tan abrumador que nada obtiene la repercusión que merece. Actualmente prestar atención puede considerarse como una actividad subversiva.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Anestesiados.*

Marco Maggi: Exacto, dormidos y apurados. Sometidos a una capacidad muy limitada de percepción, agregamos un tráfico

inhumano de distracción por exceso de comedia o drama. Por eso creo que es oportuno abrir paréntesis, en lugar de generar nuevas tesis. Construir parkings, hiatos. Dibujar hasta que la densidad de la trama permita diluir y borrar. Bajarle el volumen gráfico al paisaje.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Hay algún lugar al cual te gustaría intervenir? alguna plaza pública, un museo, un paisaje...*

Marco Maggi: No. Lo que me gusta son los desafíos concretos que se presentan sin ir a buscarlos. Lo interesante es reaccionar ante una realidad específica. Libertad dentro de límites dados. Mis formatos son siempre estándar: hojas tamaño carta, marcos de slide, manzanas, rollos de aluminio de 12 o 18 pulgadas, prismas de acrílico en las medidas ofrecidas en el mercado. Nunca se me ocurrió diseñar un soporte o buscar un emplazamiento ideal. Me gusta sorprender lugares comunes bien definidos.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Buena cosa: la libertad a partir de algo contenido.*

Marco Maggi: Si. Algo limitado y compartido, cotidiano. Creo que la característica de la libertad, la única libertad posible, es la que establece límites precisos. Todo formato estándar no es otra cosa que un conjunto de límites inalterables, un punto de partida riguroso que exige focalizarse e impide irse por las ramas. Lo hiporeal o infraordinario es un reduccionismo; suprime posibilidades infinitas e irrelevantes.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿De dónde viene el gusto que tienes por el papel?*

Marco Maggi: Soy esencialmente superficial. Me gustan las superficies. Huyo de las profundidades y los contenidos. No hay nada más superficial que un papel; es solo superficie. Nuestra región, América Latina, tiene un stock venerable de ideas. Un stock más que suficiente. Toda idea naciente provoca simpatía y tiene como primer vocación ser clara. Toda idea clara aspira a ser fija. La historia de las ideas demuestra que todas ellas terminan siendo consideradas como entusiasmos precarios personales o colectivos.

Las ideas decaen mientras crece mi entusiasmo por la calidad de las tabletas cerámicas, las chapas de grafito, los papeles impermeables, los prismas acrílicos, los lentes de policarbonato. Dibujar es dialogar con la superficie. Trabajo siempre con materiales blandos que permiten la incisión, marcan el pretil entre el dibujo y el grabado. Una hendidura o un gofrado que libera mínimamente la línea del plano.

Guillermo Ovalle: *El más profundo de lo superficial.*

Marco Maggi: Dibujar con un lápiz blando sobre una hoja de aluminio de cocina Reynolds permite generar relieves impalpables. Por el contrario, una mina de grafito H9 hiere en su recorrido el papel Yupo o un claybord de Ampersand. Al terminar un dibujo uno mira con luz rasante las líneas hendidas por el grafito y parecen ríos en lo más superficial de la superficie, el pelo del agua. Tengo el mayor respeto por los intelectuales serios y los combustibles pesados. Ellos se ocupan de los abismos y yo prefiero surfear ("Si quiere un mensaje vaya a una mensajería.")

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Pintaste alguna vez cuando estabas estudiando, o, alguna vez hiciste escultura formal con vaciados? Toda tu obra es básicamente un dibujo.*

Marco Maggi: Si, soy dibujante. Cuando las palabras ya no alcanzan para nombrar las cosas y los números insisten con ser exactos, el dibujo es el único medio apto para dejar de entender. Hice un master en grabado y nunca hice una edición. La única excepción fue una invitación del Drawing Center de NY para festejar los treinta años de la institución. Trabajé la chapa "aniversario" y la edición la hizo un maestro entrañable, Greg Barnett. Es un díptico generado con una sola chapa. Trabajar con una punta sobre el cobre es una maravilla pero encarar una edición, me resulta ajeno. Cuando estudiaba en la Universidad me detenía al terminar una chapa y no me acercaba a las prensas. La punta seca o el agua fuerte no necesitan tinta ni papel. Mi serie de dibujos sobre papel de aluminio se llaman Soft Plate (chapa blanda) y mis dibujos a lápiz sobre papel Slow Edition (edición lenta). Cuando dibujo a lápiz sobre papel intento repetir el mismo dibujo: ediciones lentísimas y muy limitadas. El papel de aluminio es una chapa de grabado insuperable por su maleabilidad y al mismo tiempo por negarse a toda posibilidad de edición. Prensarlo terminaría con la información. Las ediciones de grabados cumplieron la función de multiplicar el contacto con la gente. Hoy esa función popular la cumplen Internet y los archivos de alta definición. Para hacer una edición infinita y realmente barata basta con publicar la imagen en el web con una calidad que permita su reproducción más perfecta. Perdón, ahora me acuerdo que tu pregunta era sobre pintura y escultura. Nunca hice escultura tradicional... ni moldes, ni cincel. Pinté en la prehistoria pero jamás me lo tomé con rigor ni interés. Pintando siempre sentí que adornaba o maquillaba un dibujo. Me interesan los materiales que tienen el color incorporado y admiro a muchos pintores que son capaces de incorporar la luz con la misma naturalidad

que la línea. Mi única relación con la luz son las sombras. La sombra de un papel plegado o la sombra que genera un corte sobre acrílico. Esta última es una técnica que llamo "sombra sobre papel" y consiste en enmarcar de manera muy formal un papel en blanco con passe-partout. Sobre el acrílico que lo cubre grabo un dibujo con un bisturí de oficina. Al iluminar la obra, la línea sobre acrílico desaparece y proyecta sobre el papel una sombra de altísima definición, una línea que parece trazada a tinta china. El observador no ve la realidad (la línea grabada en el acrílico) y tiene un acceso diáfano a la representación (sombra proyectada sobre papel). El dibujo, directo y borroso, es la herramienta ideal para fijar los huesos de la incertidumbre. Tiendo siempre a una reducción de medios y eso me vuelve a alejar de la pintura o el bronce; empecé trabajando con lápiz sobre papel; ahora puedo dibujar con menos: lápiz sobre lápiz (dibujo de grafito sobre chapa de grafito) o solo bloques de papel o acrílico con cortes.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Consideras la obra de NC efímera?*

Marco Maggi: Si. Es una instalación con fecha de vencimiento: vence el 17 de diciembre del 2011; si alguna vez se quiere repetir tendrá que ser en este mismo espacio ya que es totalmente específica. Tengo grandes amigos obsesionados con la trascendencia del papel libre de ácido y la tinta inorgánica. Controlar la luz, la temperatura y la humedad. Jacob Elhanani es un extraordinario dibujante, trabaja tres meses en un dibujo pequeño con la certeza de que sus materiales son eternos. Mira su obra desde esa perspectiva. Yo trabajo meses en un dibujo con la certeza de ser mas precario que el papel o la fruta. Tuve grandes sorpresas en ese terreno; por ejemplo: la serie de obras dibujadas sobre manzanas Macintosh. En el proceso descubrí dos hechos nada comunes: una manzana puede secarse sin descomponerse; en pocas semanas se transforma en un fósil de buena madera y conserva el dibujo realizado en ella: un archivo perfumado y estable. Por supuesto la manzana debe ser de la estación. Si fue congelada esta condenada a una desaparición perentoria o sobrevida artificial. El agua de la fruta por debajo de cero grado rompe la célula y a partir de allí la deshidratación pierde toda posibilidad de ser natural y armónica. La segunda condición es que el corte del dibujo no interese la pulpa, no tenga mas profundidad que el espesor de la cascara exterior, porque la fruta a imitación de los seres humanos tiene dermis y epidermis. Con esas dos precauciones la manzana se deshidrata lentamente durante 45 días y puede conservarse por décadas. Hice un video con Ken Solomon que documenta ese proceso, una foto cada 10 minutos durante un mes y medio. El video que

estuvo tres años expuesto en el MoMA puede verse en YouTube: (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4aJhdJI1dZI>).

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Has dicho que la idea central de tu proyecto es la superficie, cómo argumentas el contenido de esas superficies, hay un contenido, no hay contenido, es solamente la superficie?*

Marco Maggi: No hay un contenido. Es una lata vacía, y tampoco importa la lata. Lo único que se ofrece es la ceremonia de abrirla y la oportunidad de hacerse cargo del vacío. Envasar una pausa o un dibujo para leer sin apuro ni esperanza de ser informado. Este ejercicio sobre la percepción nada tiene que ver con la meditación, es evidente que el vaciamiento interior es lo contrario al vaciamiento objetivo. Si logro mi propósito cuando dibujo, la superficie, a un par de metros de distancia se ve como una hoja en blanco.

Mas cerca, una hoja casi gris. Desde muy cerca existe la posibilidad de excavar en el campo visual en busca de un significado. Un plano, otro plano y ningún plan. Hasta concluir que la realidad se hizo ilegible y las artes visuales, invisibles.

El contenido o la meta vendría a ser el tránsito, recorrer la obra ayuda a perder la noción de escala y permite visualizar el tiempo.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Hay algún tipo de identidad que quieras proyectar, ya sea más personal, ó política, ó social, ó de cualquier índole?*

Marco Maggi: En la pared central de la muestra cuelgan una cantidad de sobres sin el menor mensaje.

Repito: "Si quiere un mensaje, vaya la mensajería" – Onetti siempre tiene razón.

El mismo fenómeno se da en la vertical de slides o las plataformas de hojas de oficina. Materiales casi obsoletos que fueron hasta hace poco esenciales en el tráfico de ideas, programas, denuncias, recetas, consejos, imágenes o demás recomendaciones.

Lo único que me animo a sugerir es la demora y la proximidad, como si fuera un manual de uso o un plan de gobierno. En este caso el slogan de campaña sería: la paciencia es la ciencia de la paz.

La obra es en sí misma consiste en ser. Esta ahí y es. Así como hay obras que llaman la atención, otras llaman la intención.

Guillermo Ovalle: *¿Hay alguna memoria asociada en el proceso de ejecución del proyecto, ó esperas que el espectador tenga algún tipo de evocación?*

Marco Maggi: No. Cuando dibujo o corto papeles, tengo determinadas estructuras y una sintaxis que une esas estructuras, el interés es crear algo visualmente polisémico que no tenga otra función que reclamar un sentido.

Guillermo Ovalle: *De cualquier manera cuando tu obra se vea en 200 o 300 años va a tener una identidad muy clara de principios del siglo XXI, en particular porque usabas un tipo de papel que seguramente ya no existirá en 300 años, en ese sentido será una memoria histórica, aparte de toda la construcción visual que es lo que cuenta.*

Marco Maggi: No tengo expectativas en ese sentido, pero si me interesan, los materiales que se están usando o dejando de usar; ellos por su cuenta marcan un momento. Nosotros sabemos de la obsesión que tenían artistas, curadores, gente vinculada al arte, con los slides; y los vimos desaparecer de manera brutal. En diez años pasaron del esplendor a ser un artefacto de museo; no existen más. Eso marca notoriamente nuestra época, la muerte del slide.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Muerte de las resmas de papel bond...*

Marco Maggi: Si. Hablan del paperless pero estamos cada vez más empapelados. La crisis financiera del 2008 en U.S.A, y la crisis financiera del 2011 en Europa, tienen en común la multiplicación geométrica del papel. Contratos de hipotecas, seguros, emisión de moneda, bonos vanos y soberanos. Papeles que generan otros papeles que garantizan otros papeles y siguen imprimiendo.

Guillermo Ovalle: *En un mundo que trata de ser digitalizado...*

Marco Maggi: Pero es así. Un mundo tan contradictorio como este reportaje que será publicado en papel y agregará mas información a un mundo que definimos hace un rato como saturado de datos e ideas "originales".

Guillermo Ovalle: *Veo que vas en contravía, porque muchos artistas contemporáneos escriben un texto de su obra, quieren controlar el mensaje, su intención. De hecho, muchas universidades les piden a los estudiantes de Bellas Artes que hagan ante todo una propuesta escrita, un texto y luego la obra, una sustentación que se hace cada vez más común. Tú vas por la vía contraria, en un momento dado te pedí un texto para una ficha educativa y sentí gran resistencia...*

Marco Maggi: Todo mi trabajo es previo o posterior a la certeza. Soy lo contrario a un iluminado, soy un apagado.

Guillermo Ovalle: (risas) *Eso está buenísimo, es interesantísimo. Cada vez la gente está ingiriendo más información, alimentándose más, me hace pensar por ejemplo en los Estados Unidos donde hay una epidemia de obesidad, ¿no?* Pero, pasando a otro tema sé que vienes de una familia de artistas, de intelectuales, ¿cómo creciste?, lo pregunto porque me interesa mucho esa parte de contextualizar, ¿de dónde vienes?

Marco Maggi: Vengo de una gente muy querible.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Estoy seguro de eso.*

Marco Maggi: Mis padres disfrutaron de un Uruguay que en cierta medida todos añoramos sin haberlo conocido, es el de la mitad del siglo XX, salimos campeones del mundo en Maracaná mientras gozábamos de un estado benefactor superavitario y humanista. Los dos eran muy jóvenes y tuvieron muchos privilegios de índole cultural, algunos de ellos basados en desgracias ajenas como la Guerra Civil española, que hizo que llegaran a Uruguay intelectuales extraordinarios. Mis padres estaban en el epicentro de todo eso, lo que se llamó en Uruguay la generación del 45; mi madre era novelista, toda su vida escribió ficción y ejerció la bondad como oficio; mi padre escribe teatro y practica el ensayo, la historia y todos los domingos el periodismo de opinión. Mi hermana es ministro de Tribunal en el Poder Judicial. Digo siempre que ellos se quedaron con las ideas y yo con el espacio que las separa, un espacio similar a los corredores que forman la grilla de resmas en la exposición.

Guillermo Ovalle: *Como en La Hojarasca de Gabriel García Márquez. ¿Tienes un recuerdo de infancia que relaciones con Optimismo Radical?*

Marco Maggi: Siempre me dijeron que en la familia de mi madre eran todos optimistas y, desde siempre, mis mejores amigos fueron radicales.

Entrevista de Guillermo Ovalle con motivo de *Optimismo Radical* un proyecto de Marco Maggi en NC-arte del 20 de octubre al 17 de diciembre del 2011.

(Cortesía Marco Maggi)