

Ronald Christ, 1984

The world of Alpuý's work –cohesive and consistent from sculpture to painting and prints and even to more architectural forms like screens and doors- concentrates the essential, primal world of a man in nature, in *ilo tempore*, in the time before there was a time, in the space of no known place, which he distills:

My nature is no more than a suggestion of nature, and the shapes representing it in my paintings try to express essences which, through plastic means, carry us, back to origins. So my Nature is timeless and its space so idealized that it does not call up the connections of space determined and limited by reality

He paints nature inhabited by undifferentiated mankind accompanied by the equally selfsame creatures of a plant and animal life. The world of everywhere at no-time, when the questions of where do we come from? And where are we going? Rest unasked and answered, because such passages organizes the still being here, in this distant now.

Alpuý's abstract suggestion of nature returns us, however to a perceived essence of the real. "Reality and Nature", he says, "are the sources from which the artist must work. For me that is a law". If his constructions abstract in order to "suggest" that is not because he abstracts constructions, then works exclusively from them; no, Alpuý works from life in the literal as well as figurative sense. Some eight days before Torres-García death, Alpuý recalls, the master called him to the couch on which he laid and advised him never to forget drawing and painting from life. He never has. He still works with live models, producing figurative works whose observation informs his essentials fabrications.

As a corollary, we might note that while Alpuý's work is idealized, his nature denaturalized, his visual world concurrently recalls and records the plains of Uruguay, which he knew from childhood. Not the infinite pampas so typical of Argentina and so desired by Borges, but the friendlier, more intimate open spaces where horses and cattle graze close to men, and men gather intimately with one another and trees and rocks and springs. He has stripped this world nude –trees and clouds and rocks and equally nude as people –but it is a world imagined, envisioned from a real one.

In this world, all the elements configure separately. As the paratactic compositions hold forms in related disjunction, his mythic narrative, if we call it that, divides the elements distinctly, if not always totally. Earth, air, fire, and water usually occupy separate portions of the canvas, whether ordered horizontally, vertically, or circularly; and components of the segregated zones separate powerfully even while interrelating. (No matter: all points on a circle rest equidistant from the center.) The formal perspective of the paintings guarantees this separation, making compositions that are laid out at our visual feet like maps, which we see from above and read as though on a parallel plane.