daniel agra

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Between photography, abstraction and visual poetry, his practice springs from the visible and overflows it. Reality, for him, is raw material, a territory where landscape, memory, matter and perception enter and return changed: subjective, experimental, conceptual. From this idea everything else hangs.

First there is a departure. Photography leaves behind its documentary duty, that old office of witness. In Abyssurbs, Cloudscapes, Gallaecia Perpetua-Intempore, Génesis, Ensueños de Teseracto, neowabi and ArsKúu, the camera stops attesting and begins to interpret. The image becomes a mental space, a place where what we see is no longer enough: what pushes us to imagine weighs as much.

This expanded photography stakes everything on one exact point, the place where a photograph begins to behave like a painting without ceasing to be a photograph. Texture, framing, shifts of perception, the slow erasure of the recognisable: all of it carries the viewer from “what is this?” to a deeper question, “what does this make me feel?” These images ask for acceptance. The reference falls away, and what follows is a surrender in which photography evokes what resists representation: interior states, memory, time, a certain way of belonging.

That painterly quality owes nothing to digital retouching. It arises in the act of photographing itself. Daniel Agra uses no editing or retouching software: he develops the raw file, his negative, only with the camera’s own software and its basic adjustments, and every abstraction, every visual effect, happens optically and physically at the instant of capture. There is no single technique behind the work. The experimentation changes with each project, among his own filters, nd filters, different lenses, combinations of devices or the particularities of a piece of equipment, because the procedure is part of the perceptual inquiry itself. After that there is nothing left to simulate. The real changes at the moment of capture, in the light itself, before it becomes a file, and when a work later intervenes on the photograph, as in ArsKúu, that intervention is physical and he declares it.

One inquiry, long and patient, runs through the work from different angles, and in it there is not a single arbitrary image. Its question never changes: how can an outside reality become an inner experience?

Abyssurbs wrests photography from the passive mirror and makes it an instrument of knowledge and sensitive critique. Its language springs from the crowd and its silence, from a bustle that does not communicate, from a physical closeness that never becomes human closeness. The same transformation keeps changing skin. In Cloudscapes it rises to the sky, which ceases to be landscape and becomes a pictorial surface in mutation, where clouds, light and emptiness raise an open iconography, legible through memory, dream or spirituality. Gallaecia Perpetua-Intempore carries it to water and to time. The camera gives up cataloguing the territory and starts listening to it; nature becomes perceptual matter: water as substance and as method, the land as atmosphere and collective memory, an instant that will not hold still because here only movement endures. Génesis returns to the origin. Light does the founding. There is nothing left to recognise: colour and energy at the exact moment of taking form, and the further the image drifts from the familiar, the closer it comes to what we feel without knowing how to name it.

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Ensueños de Teseracto turns it into a conceptual inquiry into how we construct the reality we perceive, a proposition about perception, consciousness and visual freedom. In neowabi it descends to the built city, to the party wall and the weathered façade, where imperfection ceases to be a flaw and becomes a form of truth: a beauty that appears only when we stop demanding that the world be complete, stable, recognisable, perfect. And in ArsKúu the image no longer halts at the surface. It becomes matter; matter, object; object, space; and space, once again, experience. A displacement with no end, in which the interior is not represented: it is inhabited.

One biographical fact weighs on all of this. Daniel Agra is self-taught. His practice grew out of decades of professional work in fashion and raw materials, long before his artistic activity settled around Fine Art and abstract photography. Perhaps his fine sensitivity to surface, texture and the matter that changes comes from there, a sensitivity that ended up at the centre of his language. It explains in part images that stand firm against obvious meaning, able to hold several readings at once without asking permission or offering explanations.

There are exhibitions and collections in Spain, the United States, Greece, South Korea, Italy and other countries, and that international record proves that his language travels. The argument, however, lies elsewhere: in what his photographic inquiry brings to the current conversation about image, territory and subjectivity.

Daniel Agra widens the formal limits of photography and makes of it an instrument of perceptual inquiry, a medium able to graze dimensions of experience that literal representation barely reaches. For him abstraction is a way of going deeper into reality, as simple as that. And what he brings back is the visible turned into a territory of memory, perception, subjectivity and thought.