**MARIPOSARIO**

**Curator's text by Lorena Muñoz-Alonso**

**Lucía Pizzani's Solo Art Show at *Oficina # 1***

*Mariposario*, Lucía Pizzani’s debut exhibition at *Oficina #1*, continues the research process the artist has been developing throughout her most recent work; it explores the relations between the natural world and gender issues as an intuitive meeting place for her studies in biology and her artistic activity. Recent art projects like *Orchis* (2011) or *The Unknown of the Seine* (2012), lead Pizzani to a novel by Richard Le Galliene that narrates the main character's obsession for a funerary mask that resembled the face of his late beloved; a story with a tragic ending that uses the symbolism of the night moth *Acherontia atropos,* known by its white human skull shaped spots.

Departing from this sinister yet romantic image Pizzani started working with butterfly shapes. This kind of insect is particularly meaningful at a symbolic level, due to the fact that in its short life cycle -sometimes of only one day of duration- it goes from caterpillar to chrysalis, and then into butterfly state; and once its reproductive function is achieved, the insect dies. The shocking metamorphosis process from slimy caterpillar to one of the most beautiful and flashy species in the natural world, illustrates to perfection the concept of “becoming”, a key notion in Deleuze's thinking which defines the idea of movement in its purest form. More than a final or intermediate product, “becoming” is the dynamics of change itself, not focused on accomplishing a certain goal or final state, but a permanent one.

This idea of transformation and constant change, viewed as creative process, underpins Pizzani's work and is of particular relevance for understanding her approach to the body, her work with organic shapes and the questioning of the creative act from a feminine perspective. The *Capullo* series (2013), a group of enameled stoneware, represent the most explicit concretion of this idea of transformation. The stoneware pieces have been modeled in a wide variety of chrysalis type shapes. By freezing the moment of transformation from caterpillar to butterfly indefinitely, right before hatching, the insects forever suspended in a state of becoming. The sculptures are aesthetically fascinating; with their brilliant curves, folds and organic colors they invite to be touched and looked at carefully, with time and dedication. But their sinuous shapes are also disturbing, suggesting huge insects and organs. Pizzani takes the interior outside and reminds us of our physical contingency and frailty. She invites us to reconcile body and soul, opening a phenomenological and metaphysical chasm.

The second group of artworks is the *Lepidópteros* series (2013), a set of drawings created wit a manual printing technique developed by Pizzani that become an inventory of sorts of traces and footprints. The resulting drawings look like butterflies, but the diluted ink endows them with a phantasmagoric appearance, as if we were looking at the stains the insects have left on the paper as they beat their ink loaded wings only a few seconds before disappearing again.

Pizzani chose carefully the lepidopteran species featured on the series, focusing on their different symbolisms. There are two specimens, the *Nabokovia faga excisicosta* and te *Karner blue nabokov*, that are named after the writer Vladimir Nabokov, one of them having been discovered by him. This writer was a consecrated lepidopteran, since he dedicated much of his leisure time admiring the ephemeral quality of these creatures, comparing them to art itself for the non-utilitarian delight they produce.

Another featured species, the *Attacus Atlas,* has characteristics from which the artist derives certain violence, given that it only feeds during its caterpillar stage, shutting its mouth permanently once it reaches the butterfly stage. These species and the White Witch moth are particularly big, generating different legends and dark myths. This is also the case with the Yellow Tail, known in Venezuela for being a plague and harmful to humans.

The interesting thing about these drawings is that, besides their many implications, their emptiness affords the spectators the opportunity to project his or her own mental landscapes, as if they were looking at the famous Rorschach test. Lucía Pizzani offers a series of ink drawings as beautiful as they are demanding: understanding them is up to us, as it happens with her sculptures.