

Aparicao (Aparition)  
Review of Magda Schaaf's 1990 Art Exposition  
by Dr. Jorge Ruedas de la Serna  
Brasilia, Brazil, January 1990  
(Translated from original in Spanish)

The exposition of Magda's paintings, justly called "Apparition", which we have the pleasure of viewing today, is for me a true revelation. Magda is an ascending artist representing a new direction in Latin American painting.

Although Magda considers herself fundamentally self-taught, in spite of the rigor of some of her work, one can not consider that she has a naïve nor much less a primitive pretension. Actually there is here a new vision of the world and nature. Her work is eminently cultural with strong symbolic content which refuses easy or vulgar interpretations.

In each one of these paintings there is an emotional content which has risen from the struggle between images revealed by the intellect and the very personal experience of the human condition of the artist, the concrete condition of being a woman, a daughter, and a mother at once, of being born and giving birth, of being part in the generation and regeneration of nature, of the miraculous renovation of the world. "I love all of the symbols of the mother," which are all symbols of herself and of her capacity to create. This capacity to create and generate come to Magda by way of her capacity to know.

In medieval Gnostic philosophy there were angels that, after tiring of living in paradise, descended to contemplate the world and to transmit to the women the knowledge of nature since as angels, they could not leave any descendants on earth. The women who dominated the secrets of nature were prohibited from approaching the tabernacle of the temple, the navel of the world, the sacred center of the Eleusinian mysteries.

Thus the marginalization of women has begun. Marginalization in the strictest sense, which is to be and live and survive in the periphery of the world, of the sacred world, be relegated to the margins of the unconstituted, the fluid, the demonic. Marginalization which consisted of separating them from the knowledge, and thus, from the capacity to create, even though it was impossible to keep them from procreating.

This is the marginalization that Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz suffered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, punished by her superiors for having the nerve to refute a sermon by Father Antonio Viera. Sor Juana Ines del la Cruz is expressed in one of the more complex paintings by Magda. "Sor Juana came dancing" Magda told me, in a dream-like vision. In this painting, inspired by the reading of \* by Octavio Paz, the symbolic image of Sor Juana appears divided between the heretical knowledge of the world and the heretical female body. This female body that the young Sor Juana had to hide in the clothing of a man in order to attend the university. Symbol of the lacerating struggle, the false

\* *The Traps of Faith*

struggle between the feminine being and knowledge, that is nothing else than an expression of the alienated, the inhuman struggle between the sexes, between "the masculine and feminine".

Magda's harmonic artistic sensibility takes her towards a search for a solution to the contradictions in love, life, and in nature, in preview of a world ecumenical by excellence.