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Ugarte's ghosts at the Barragan House

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By Martín Casillas

I became acquainted with Francisco Ugarte's (1973-) work a decade ago at the Enrique Guerrero gallery in Mexico City. Since then, each time he makes something I am sure that it will surprise me, just as now that he intervened the Luis Barragan House.

In that occasion, I was wrong, wrong with a work that measured 10 feet wide and 15 feet tall, with some dim-colored squares. It was an abstract composition titled something like *Madonna with the child* by Boticelli. After reading it, I could not refrain from roaring with laughter. Anyone could name that piece as the spectator wished to; after all, the colored squares could be a Madonna or any other thing or person.

Francisco arrived a moment later, with his twenty eight years of age; with the modesty and calmness of the good artists, he clarified for me that it was a digital picture of Boticelli's *Madonna with the child*. He only amplified it to occupy the wall. The squares were giant pixels. Surprise fact and reality converted into abstract art: somehow, the pixels kept at their bosom the image of Madonna carrying her child.

Now he intervened the Luis Barragan House (Gral. Fco. Ramirez 14, Col. Ampliacion Daniel Garza, 5515-4908) under the curatorial work of Viviana Kuri, who explains to us *how in a single cut, he vanishes the emotional and physical load of the house's contents and now it is some other place, but at the same time, It is the deep place that lies beneath immediate appearances.*

How could we change real object to turn them into ghosts? In which way we could put make up on Hamlet's father or on Mozart's Don Giovanni's Stone Guest?

A possibility for achieving this is using a magic rod and after casting the proper spells making them pale as the dead once the red blood that makes us blush when we get excited stops circulating.

Francisco Ugarte is a sorcerer now. He has arrived to the Barragan House with his magic rod to make real objects disappear and leave ghosts in their place. These ghosts adorn the interior of a house declared by UNESCO to be a part of the world's heritage.

Now it can be said that the house is haunted and if voices are heard during the night, maybe it is due to the secondary effects of this intervention and spell that accompany this piece which for sure will bring a greater flow of visitors, just as Maggie Smith did in London during a play in which she was appointed as the person in charge of a castle located in northern England. Few people visited the site; in order to increase the flow of visitors, she invented some tales that became ghost stories and anecdotes that after some time gave great fame to the castle turning it into the most visited castle in the United Kingdom.

For sure, Ugarte will increase the flow of curious visitors with his intervention. They will become witnesses of how reality transforms into something more complex. Contrasted with what Christo made on the buildings' exteriors, Ugarte made it at the inside, suggesting the possibility of enjoying a fresher look on things, after we dress

them or undress the- depending on the pint of view- and memory recovers what became forgotten due to Ugarte's spells.

Visitors will set their imagination free; ghosts will feel at home. And we, the ones who knew Ugarte will be once again surprised by his proposals and these static, brilliant and silent ghosts that suffered his change, hiding their nudity in order to preserve them from the onlookers.