The matter of landscape
Miguel Fernández-Cid

1 Painting ought to be direct enough not to be a slave to itself. The transformation of materials, arranged on a surface is something which gives us, in plain language, the key to an emotion. The transcending of the purely craft or artisanate is in order for the reason to be questioned by thought, and thought by painting itself and by what we call sensibility. Thus commences a text written by Juan Hernández Pijuan in July 1992, in which he takes stock of the course he had taught several months before in Arrebola. The text brings together what we might consider to be spiritual keys to his painting: the act for action, for the act of painting, for an intense and continuous engagement; the pursuit of simplicity, of clarity, of order; the primacy of the emotion, of the sense, and the respect for that mystery which is, in the end, what imparts a special breath of life to the work of art. The text reflects above equally fundamental features: a certain apprehension of painting as a space equivalent between thought and sensibility, between analysis and emotion, between the reflective and the intuitive. Painting as a means of transformation of the material, of transcending an emotion. This way of understanding what he does states Hernández Pijuan's work in a unique locus, a work that is an encounter between formulas that are eerily different in spirit: the taste for compositional order against a decision to gesture, even the brief gesture of a short, insistent broadeness, the anxiety of resources and materials against the sensuality of the image; the usual ideality of the pictorial against a conscious character; the exigency with which they display their mental quality against the facility with which they reveal their迹象. Painting referred to a landscape that has no need to depict in order to name; an internalized landscape, centered into the matter of painting. A matter that is dense, opaque, full of marvellous sound.

2 Hernández Pijuan is generally considered as a cheerful, even confident, painter, this being essentially a response to the sensuality of the work from the mid-eighties, or to the elegance with which he situates himself in painting. The subsequent, and all but inevitable, classification is that of a lyrical painter. All too frequently, the qualification is thrown yet again from appearances, with no attempt to analyze the meaning of the painting or the depth from which it emerges. The colours, the dissolution of the elements, the route it marks out before arriving at the image, make Hernández Pijuan a more lyrical painter than many of his contemporaries or predecessors, concerned as they are to give form to narrative aspects or to lay bare the physical qualities of matter. Very often, the presence of the Mediterranean and the proximity of ‘Cipriani act as definitive arguments in the acceptance of this theme, lyrical inclination in this work.

There are, nevertheless, decisive arguments which indicate that this is not so much a reason, an ultimate objective, as a distinguishing feature. Fundamentally covert arguments which in effect serve to situate him in his true position. Far from seeking the poetic pulse in the finished appearance of his canvases, this is to be found in something that is by nature firmer, more solidly rooted the attitude. For all that this might seem somewhat counterintuitive, I believe that his approach is not so very remote from that of Philip Guston, of Muradina or of the later Matisse, to give examples that are diverse enough to help us arrive at effective conclusions.

If Guston's attitude is that of one who knows himself to be inexpressibly trapped by painting, who comes to the studio as if in the one space in which everything is governed by that pulse, Hernández Pijuan seeks a more open setting, a different landscape, a horizon without bounds, and this is what he finds in the Segarra, in Lleida, in the vicinity of the Fulpader Farmhouse.

The Gustan image is that offered by a 1960 picture. 'The studio', a small canvas, bandied in the classic manner, which marks out two fields, one occupied by the figures of the artist, wrapped in a banded cloak, holding in one hand a brush with which he traces the outline of a self-portrait on a canvas, and in the other the unpainted oil container. The pots of paint, the easel, a window, a clock and a light bulb are the elements that identify what space, time and spirit are captured in the painting. The clock, the light bulb, the disposition of the hands and the way that everything is brought into the foreground error to emphasize the inevitable character of the action: independently of whether or not Gustan experiences it as a drama, he is aware of his situation, and portray it in an act of knowledge and consciousness. Something similar happens in Hernández Pijuan, with the difference that he does not transmit a certain spirit of confidence, to which his innate elegance adapts itself. The consequent, however, is provided by the photographs which portray him in the act of painting, or in the moves towards which his painting resolves. To say nothing of the portraits in which he appears in front of a blank canvas, alongside pictures that have been turned to face the wall, or in the midst of the landscape, marking out a particular distance. The photographs in the studio show him posed before the pictures, looking positively as if it is not hard to see when there is evidence of an interior relationship, of an external silence. In

Materia de paisaje
Miguel Fernández-Cid

1 "La pintura debe ser lo suficientemente directa para que no sea esclava de ella misma. Formar transformaciones de materia, convirtiendo a una superficie en algo que nos dé, en lenguaje claro, la clave de una emoción. Sobrepasar el hecho puramente artesanal o de oficio para que la razón quede cuestionada por el pensamiento, éste por la misma pintura y por eso que llamamos sensibilidad". Así empieza un texto escrito por Juan Hernández Pijuan en julio de 1992, en el que se habla de las operaciones que podemos considerar claves anímicas de su pintura: el gusto por la acción, por el acto de pintar, por un ejercicio intenso y continuo; la búsqueda de sencillez, de claridad, de orden; la primacía de la emoción, de los sentidos, y el respeto por ese misterio que es, finalmente, el que transmite un hábito especial a la obra artística. El texto refleja otros rasgos igualmente firmes: cierta consideración de la pintura como un espacio equívoco del pensamiento y la sensibilidad, del análisis y la emoción, de lo reflexivo y lo intuitivo. La pintura como medio de transformar la materia, de traducir una emoción. Este modo de entender el trabajo confiere un lugar peculiar a la obra de Hernández Pijuan, encuentra entre fórmulas de ánimo casi antagónico: el gusto por el orden composicional frente a la vocación por el gesto, aunque sea el breve de una pintada corta e insistente; la ausencia de recursos y materiales frente a la sensualidad de las imágenes; el tono silencioso de los paisajes frente a un carácter evidente; el rigor con el que muestran su cualidad mental frente a la facilidad con la que descubren sus orígenes. Pintura referida a un paisaje que no necesita retar para nombrar: paisaje interiorizado, convertido en materia de pintura. Una materia densa, opaca, llena de rumores.

2 A Hernández Pijuan le suele situar entre los pintores alegres, incluso muy alegres, entendiendo fundamentalmente a la sensibilidad de sus obras de mitad de los años ochenta, o a la elegancia con la que está en la pintura. La calificación siguiente, y casi inevitable, es la de pintor lírico. En muchas ocasiones, el calificativo procede nuevamente de las apariencias, sin analizar el sentido de la pintura o el fondo del que nace. Los colores, la disolución de los elementos, el recuerdo que establece hasta llegar a la imagen, hacen de Hernández Pijuan un pintor más lírico que otros compañeros de generación y antecesores, preocupados en dar forma a aspectos narrativos o mostrar el lado frío de la materia. Con frecuencia, la presencia canasta de Tapies actúa como argumento para aceptar esa vocación cálida, brílida en rues Quedan, sin embargo, argumentos que no se tratan de una razón final, sino de un toco oculto, de fondo que no hacen sino llegar. Lejos de buscar en la apariencia fina, donde reside es algo por naturaleza, se suele encontrar un toco dispuesto, pero no creo que sea de la de Philip Guston, Moradina o el alarido de momentos que lo suficientemente dispares con sus efectivas

Si la de Guston es la acritud de quien se siente por la pintura y acude al estudio con todo gravedad bajo ese puño, Hernández Pijuan, sin embargo, un paisaje sin el, donde se respira el aire de las cercanías de su mundo. "La imagen de Gustan es la que ofrece un don," una tela pequeña, resuelta el modo posible, ocupando una figura del artista, a teniendo en una mano un pincel con el autorretrato sobre un lienzo, y con la que nos enciende. Los botes de pintura, el cabal de una silla y la sombra son los elementos que identifican el lienzo al fondo de la pintura, el retrato colocado de las manos y la manera de de los que sirven para insistir en el carácter inequívoco de un paisaje que es un lugar para nombrar: paisaje interiorizado, convertido en materia de pintura. Una materia densa, opaca, llena de rumores.
effect, there are few paintings of which it can be said— as of his—that they contain a natural inclination to observe, and not merely to be observed. The image of solitude is strengthened on noting that the themes which provide the referents for his latest works are highly particularistic: a cloister, a cypress, an isolated house. He is separated from Guston by the chosen setting and the formal resolution of the painting, but the attitude is not at all distant. Both know that they are engaged in an undertaking with no possible end, in which all that is left them is to bear witness to their continuance, as to their existence. Those who see in Hernández Pijuan a happy, confident painter might not forget to notice that this confidence reflects the perception of the order that holds sway in his pictures, but that these are products of a depth from accommodating tensions. Not are the examples of Morandi and Mondrian very far away. Like the Italian, the painter needs only the slightest of props for commemorating a picture; he was not used to introduce variations, and the only changes he admits are almost spiritual, as in the conversion of a landscape into remembrance, and the last in the series of reminiscences into memory, undoubtedly one of the most felicitous transformations in his painting. The formal treatment is similar, at least in the last ten years: the themes are excuses for the painting, all that the painter need do is select those which provoke him most forcefully, those which from their temperature he feels to be the closest. If Guston’s choice was spatially more restricted and emotionally more expressive, Mondrian retards the affection for contained space, but in his moments of greatest serenity, Morandi sketches out, in his time, one of the most drastic processes for the annihilation of all formal recourses. Scarcely be suspected of figurative compliances, he has left as in his writings some of the most beautiful reflections on motif, on theme. Obsessed with transcending physical appearances, in order to arrive at the inner order of things, he set himself to realizing a painting that would not be “the reflection of the sentiments of our little personality”. Hernández Pijuan also posits his endeavor in terms of the transcendence of the motif, although his form of transcendence may he said to be warmer and more gestual. The one àplique is the concept, to embracing the totality through the line; the other focuses on the details, from which he constructs to extract the particular and the collective, which provide resource to the cold recipes of Mondrian’s flat washes. The ascension of the latter stands in contrast to the overlaying painting of Hernández Pijuan; the forms in contrast to the manner, Central Europe in contrast to the Mediterranean. And yet at the same time an identical consciousness of the mysterious quality of the painting.

Morandi, Mondrian, Guston, Hernández Pijuan, attitudes which approach each other in the spiritual: they are conscious of their solitude, immersed in an endeavor of which it is impossible to demand proximate goals, merely the continuance of the inevitable voice, reason and act.

In setting out to revise his progress as a painter in the form of a retrospective, Hernández Pijuan has opted to link together painting and landscape. He did it a year ago, in the Centre Cultural Teka Sala, in L’Hospitalet de Llobregat, and he does so now in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia. We might, nonetheless, to recall that his point of departure is located, in the early fifties, within that expressionist pulse with which many young painters were to reframe the intention for which they were born. It did not take long for an organizing spirit to make its appearance and, perhaps most important of all, a sobriety to which he has remained faithful, even in his moments of greatest sensuality. With the advent of the sixties, after a sojourn in Paris, he entered on a painting of informalist effects, with a tendency to mask tension with gesture and to render the picture through the reduction of the colour. These canvases (amongst which there are pieces of undeniable quality, as is the case with those belonging to the institutional collections of “La Caixa” and the Juan March) reveal evident differences from the language championed by groups such as “Dau al Set” and “El Paso”. Hernández Pijuan prepares his backgrounds in such a way that the informalist’s traditional coup de maître is transformed into a fragment and an element of tension. A subtle touch which, with the passage of the years, permits a widening that is equally landscape. These amounts, in turn, to the positing of the relationship between a uniform background and a handling of the brush in which its intensity endows the object with quality.

With the end of the sixties and the start of the new decade, the reorganization is clearly apparent. Apart from a “Homage to Lucio Fontana” (1971) that indicates which way his interests de la soledad se refuerza al comprobar que los motivos que dan referencia a sus últimas obras son elementos muy peculiares: un claustro, un ciprés, una casa aislada. Se le gasta a Guston el entorno elegido y la resolución formal de la pintura, pero la actitud no es tan distante. Ambos saben que acometen un empeño sin final posible, en el que lo único que resta es dar le fè de su mantenimiento, de su existencia.

Quienes ven en Hernández Pijuan a un pintor feliz, confiado, no deben olvidar que esa confianza surge de la percepción del orden que dispone en sus cuadros, pero que estos nacen de una tensión poco acomodaticia.

Tampoco son distantes los ejemplos de Morandi y Mondrian. Como al italiano, a nuestro pintor le bastan unos motivos mínimos para iniciar un cuadro, no ve necesario introducir variaciones y los únicos cambios que admite son casi anímicos, caso de la conversión de un paisaje en recuerdo, y la posterior de los recuerdos en memoria, sin duda una de las transformaciones más afortunadas en su pintura. El planteamiento formal es similar, al menos en los últimos diez años: si los motivos son excusas para la pintura, lo único que debe hacer el pintor es escoger aquellos que le provocan con más empeño, aquellos que por temperatura sienten más cercanos. Si la elección de Guston era espacialmente más reducida y emocionalmente más expresiva, Morandi reitera el afecto hacia los espacios contenidos, pero su resolución no habla tanto de índole como de orden en el interior frente al exceso. Para Hernández Pijuan el paisaje está en el origen del acto de pintar: su visión, su cercanía, provoca las sensaciones que quiere reflejar en cada obra. De ese momento salió pasó a una actitud más detergida cuando inicia el cuadro. Como en Morandi, ya no existe el motivo, diluido en la pintura, una realidad autónoma. La idea del paisaje ha dejado paso a la realidad del cuadro.

Mondrian trastó, en su momento, uno de los procesos más drásticos para analizar un cuadro formal. Poco sospechoso de complencias figurativas, dejó escritas algunas de las más bellas reflexiones sobre el motivo. Obsesionado por trascender las apariencias físicas, por llegar al orden interno de las cosas, se propuso realizar una pintura que no fuese “el reflejo de los sentimientos egípticos de nuestra pequeña personalidad”. Hernández Pijuan también plantea su ejercicio desde la superación del motivo, aunque su forma de trascenderse sea más cálida y gestual. Aspira una al concepto, a abarcar la totalidad desde una línea se fija la Rita en los detalles, de los que procura extraer lo particular y colectivo, sin recurrir al toque frío de las tintas planas de Mondrian. El ascenso de ese frente a la época de Hernández Pijuan: las formas frente a la mandarinas tienen su misterioso de la pintura.

Morandi, Mondrian, Guston, Hernández Pijuan acercan en lo anímico: se sabe solitarios, sean estos que no se pueden pedir metas próximas, sólo vos, razón y acto inevitables.

3 A hora de repasar su trayectoria en formato de un libro, Hernández Pijuan ha optado por enlazar pinturas de un año, en el Centre Cultural Teka Sala, de gato, y lo hace ahora en el Museo Nacional de Goya. Conviene, sin embargo, recordar que su estilo de los años cincuenta, dentro de esa época, cuando muchos pintores jóvenes buscan realidad, no tarda en aparecer un ánimo orgánico importante, una sobriedad a la que se pueden medir los momentos y dejas de pinturas más singulares.

En el paso a los años sesenta, tras una etapa de formato, una pintura de efectos informalistas, tendía a un corpiño y resuelvo el cuadro desde la relación entre, las que existen ejemplos en los de las colecciones de las “Dau al Set” y “El Paso”. Hernández Pijuan prepara sus cuadros de manera que el golpe de maître se convierte en formato y elemento de esa pasividad, que pasados los años, apenas una recuerda. Se trata, definitivamente, de planificar la relación entre una y una pincelada cuya existencia perdura. En el final de los años setenta y el posterior a ordenamiento es claro. Aparte de un “Homage to Lucio Fontana” (1971) que indica por donde van sus intereses en esta época reflejan tanto las dudas cuanto los momentos, son telas en las que se han trascendido y quizás sería más lógico relacionarlas con la pintura, cuyas soluciones le asocian a lo italiano Fontana. Los rasgos distintivos
orden, el gusto, el equilibrio, la elegancia, y la introducción de un elemento que rompe esa estabilidad o realismo imposibilitado. Momentos convertidos por el pintor en previos a la revisión paisajís-
tica de su trabajo, no ocultan su lado diferente, su vocación solitaria y, especialmente en las últimas obras, la sutile ironía con la que sabe llevar esa tendencia hacia lo estable. En una conversación con Josep-
Lluís Segrí, a finales de los setenta, hacía Hernández Pijuan un lim-
pio balance de esta época: "Pasé de una figuración a lo Zahalea, muy hierática, a un terreno más libre, de una mano de la aba-
tracción gestual. Fui entrando poco a poco, porque soy muy lento, no se hacer salto sin dar los pasos intermedios. Y este trabajo de pintu-
ra gestual me posibilitó el irme liberando de toda la formación tra-
dicional que yo tenía. Por mi propia cuenta, fui descubriendo -desde estos primeros cuadros gestuales, un poco a lo Klone, a lo Saura, a lo de Kooning- que lo que me interesaba era el núcleo de relación en lo que quedaba vacío en el cuadro. Después viene el descubrimiento de aquello que ahora llamamos el espacio: el espacio pictórico, la superfi-
cie de la tela".

Vacio y espacio pictórico serán desde entonces dos de sus argumen-
tos principales. La llegada, el descubrimiento, no deja de ser lento aunque gusoso: "En la enseñanza de Bellas Artes, en el arte de aque-
llos años, el espacio vacío no contaba: tenía que estar todo lleno de cosas; la composición exigía llenar todos los ángulos, todo el cuadro. Así, a lo largo del trabajo, pedí a una niña, voy descubriendo el espacio de-
vacío. Por otro lado, la lengua del gasto comenzaba a fatigar, ya que el trabajo que realizaba con él se había convertido en una especie de elucubración de taller. Estuve unos dos años como buscando algo, y salieron cosas donde aparecía la figura humana, llevado en parte por el pop, hasta que me encontré con que aquel elemento gestual que en un momento dado era como un gasto muy pequeño y con un vacío muy grande, podía suscitarse por un elemento figurativo, y es cuando surgió el elemento óptico. Después, por el mismo proceso de trabajo, salen las gamas de color, comienzan a incorporar elementos del proceso mismo, y viene a incorporarse el elemento tijera, que se integra en las pinturas como un elemento figurativo más, como un objecto...".

La salida es una búsqueda de medida, a la que Hernández Pijuan ya no renunciará. Algunas imágenes participan todavía del espíritu del momento anterior, caso de "Doble esp-
"n con una superficie es dividida por la pro-
cinta métrica o una regla, que señala la r-
recta. El efecto es estricto en "Espagüetis" amb cintura de la división es vertical, mientras en "Regi-
... horizontal, la solución es más sutil. El

... Los distintos ocasiones, que el sistema respon-
día con un proceso en la imagen final, es un

debuta con experiencias surrealistas y co-

... que con una aguda revisión de los ele-

... Enunciado resulta obvio, pero la desnuda

... época -como conceptos y realidades- al so-

... la luz, determinan el recorrido posterior a la

... el cuadro de espacio, del paisa-

... y de la pintura como materia con emoción es tan sincera como lento y puntual-

... tramos cuadros en los que el color estalla, y se rebelan, llenes por alcanzar la supra-

... celebérrime pescador del Madrísten de Poc, ori-

... rientes de Lofoten y Mosek ("El sonido-

... guías y los vírticos o abismos son de tal ta-

... un navío es atraído por ellos se ve tragado

... trado a la profundidad, donde se hace ped-

... el agua de usuario y ministerio del agua de

... anímico la Ría de la que se siente más felic-

... pintura y tuvo un recuerdo para el paisajís-

... o en el eje central de su aventura. Su pal-

... su pintura y produce un efecto análogo pio-

... introduce continuamente sensaciones, se int-

... lucciones en el medio, en el entorno efigi-

... (la Noguera), entre campos de cultivo

... paralelo al próximo de La Segarra, es un e-

... dos pisos, en el último de los cuales situó a

... are progressing, the composition from this period reflects the artist's doubts as much as the search for a discourse of his own. There are contours in which some lines have sought to detect morphological elements, although perhaps it would be more logical to see them in terms of a reworking of painting where solutions bring him closer to the Iztlanos, from the primitives to Fontana. The distinctive characteristics are unmistakable: the order, the syntax, the balance, the elegance, and the introduction of an element that shatters that stability or reconfigures it as it imposes itself.

Maneras in which the painter has made proceeds to the landscape revisits of his work cause him to question their quality of difference, their solitary vocation and, especially in the latest pieces, the subtle ways in which they counter to bear this tendency towards stability. In a conversation with Josep-Lluís Segrí, towards the end of the seventies, Hernández Pijuan took stock of this period in the clearest terms: "I moved from a figurative in the manner of Zahalea, extremely hieratic, so free form, somewhere in the direction of gestural abstraction. I made me very little by little, because I go slowly. I have no idea how to keep from one position to another without intermediate steps. And this dedication to gestural abstraction enabled me to sit about liberating myself at all the formal training I had had. On my own account, I began to discover -from those first gestural pictures, which had a little of Kline, some Kline, some de Kooning - what I was interested in was the involved in relation to what was left void in the picture. After that came the discovery of what we now call space: the pictorial space, the surface of the canvas. "Voiced and pictorial space has since then been two of his principal lines of reasoning. The arrival, the discovery, have never been clear, of foreseeable. "In the teaching of Fine Art, in the art of those years, the void space counted for nothing: everything had to be filled with things; the composition called for the filling of every corner, all of the picture. Thus, over the course of a number of years' work, I have gone about discovering the void space. At the same time, I was starting to grow tired of the language of gesture, in that the work I was doing there had turned into a kind of self-

... referrals to studio painting. I was looking around for something else for a couple of years, and turning out their things in which the human figure appeared, prompted its part by Pop, until I realized that that gestural element which at a certain point in time was reduced to a very small gesso with a very large void could be replaced by a figurative element, and that was the figure of the cup emerged. Subsequently, through the same working process, the series of colours appeared, and it began to incorporate elements taken from the process itself, and the scissors element came to be included, which was brought into the paintings as yet another figurative element, as an object..."

4 The way we are proved to be a portrait of me, of proportion, which Hernández Pijuan has not so far renounced. Certain images still persist in part in the previous phase, as is the case with "Double black space" (1972), but in others the surface is divided by the presence of a length of measuring tape or a ruler, which shows the larger dimension of the canvas. The effect is strict and severe in "Space with centimetre of 146" (1972), while in "Yellow ruler" (1972), horizontal in format, the solution is more subtle. The painter has maintained on a number of occasions that the system corresponds to the need to introduce the process into the final image, in a practice that might be indebted to aspects of surrealism and conceptual art, but also has much to do with an acute revision of the elements of his work.

It seems to be stating the obvious, but the subtext from which he subjected the support, the colour, the impulse or the light -both as concepts and realities -at this time, effectively determined the subsequent evolution of his painting. The discovery of the picture as a space, of the landscape as an emotional reference, and of paint as the material with which to give an image of that emotion as is as concrete as it has been slow and measured. Before 1980 there are no pictures where the colour bursts forth, the lower layers saturate and evil, struggle to come to the surface, in effect escape us. Like the fisherman in Picaso's famous story of the Madrísten, who recovers his fall into the currents of Lofoten and Mosek, ('the noise (to) heard several leagues off, and the voices or piet is of such an extent or depth, that if a ship comes within its attraction, it is inevitably absorbed and carried down to the bottom, and there beat to pieces against the rocks and when the water releases, the fragments thereof are thrown up again') and his subsequent salvation after observing the inner workings of the phenomenon, Hernández Pijuan spent the seventies learning the mechanism of the new space. He observed, noted and acted in consequence, as he was about to demonstrate in his canvases of the eighties when, having become the narrator of his tale, consciences of having found a path of his own, he installed himself in it and set about interrogating it.

On the occasion of the presentation of his Doctoral Thesis, in 1988, he reviewed the trajectory with which he wasppard, the last twenty years of his painting, and recalled the landscape which immediately assumed the central place in his
adventure. His way with words is as meticulous as his painting and, if produces an analogous effect, it looks descriptive, but constantly introduces sensations, interrogates itself, and finally finds the answers in the milieu, in the choice of surroundings: "Our farmhouse in Falquier (La Noguera), between cultivated fields of corn and in a landscape parallel to the neighbouring landscape of La Segarra, is an enormous Warren of a place, with a ground floor and two upper stories, at the top of which I installed my studio. From the middle of this eye dominates two vistas – open space and intimate space. From one, looking south, through an arcade enclosed behind great windows, the landscape, immense, is mirrored, slipping away in a completely open, infinite space until it arrives at the distant Serra de Prades range. The other, to the north, is seen through two small windows, traditional in the north facades of the country houses in the region, and due to the fact that these windows are set low down, the view from the studio is immediately cut off by the Serra de Comidi. This is an intimate, closed vista. We have virtually a bird’s-eye view of the cultivated fields. The little window frames the countryside, leaving it without sky, without horizon, with no limits other than those of the frame of the window itself. The landscape takes on the frontal character of the picture and only the rich monochromes of the colour and the surface which this acquires give it its element of image and expression. These two aspects – intimate and open – have played a large part in configuring the coming and going of my painting."

For the painter, the effect of these surroundings has not ceased to be magical. If Barcelona is the place where things happen at a rhythm of reality which painting cannot arrest, in the Segarra the opposite occurs: painting makes real the sensations provided by a landscape that is generous with these, but arrested in time. The work of these years is an intensive analysis, without conclusions. The condition of the surprising "Small double landscape" (1972) and the "Triptych I" (1977) is analogous. The former is a 33 x 24 cm. canvas has the quality of one of these short poems which, for all their rhetorical strictness, strike us as wondrous and immediate. On the face of it, everything about it would seem to recreate it in a place of purely secondary importance: the dimensions are smaller than the other pictures of this period, and its language still retains ephemeral details, as in the way of duplicating the image, or the lines and annotations which cut across it. Yet the balance, the perfect gradation of the colour, the intensity of the light and the rhythm let us know we are in the presence of one of his key, determining works in which a painter will return when he wants to recapitulate past situations.

"Small double landscape" is a discovery, as in to its way, a later yet parallel watercolour, "Two holm oaks." (1975) the study of the light, the degradation of the colour, the significance acquired by a matter when superimposing on it a natural background and, above all, the intermediary qualities and instiutions, the vestigiality of a holm oak, an element that has been incorporated into the painter’s own personal iconography.

During these years, Hernández Pijuan frequently turned to millimetre-squared paper as a support for private and watercolours. At times, then, of observation and measurement, of unhurried noting and sketching. In painting, as in the handling of the watercolours and prints, the exercise allowed a greater distance. In the recollection of a half-seen landscape, of a certain light over a field of wheat, Hernández Pijuan pursues not matter but sensation, and so the results come out in free and its interpretative lyricism. On occasion, the final exercise of putting the emotion on the canvas is mediated by complex mechanisms, such as the graduation of colour in the base of lines, the overlapping of schemes with very pronounced rhythms, or the emphasizing of certain effects through the sharpening of the formats. During the first half of the seventies, the solemnity of the chromatic solutions is pointed up by minimal annotations which can be interpreted as evidence of an ongoing process ("Landscape with marginal was 0-3/5", 1974; "Fire golden spaces", 1976). As we move on through the second half of the decade, the pictures evolve into coloured forms, through the intensified focus on their dimensions ("Vertical light", "Vertical shadow", 1977; "Horizontal", 1978), or the fragmentation of their surfaces ("Triptych 1", 1977; "Triptych II", 1980).

The temptation when considering these works is to refer them to Rothko and to the minimalism: just as in those which immediately succeeded them we can discern reminiscences of Monet and the Impressionists. Hernández Pijuan has shrugged off these readings, even at times when they implied a signal modernity of approach. His work, he is confident, is a response to the spectacle presented to him by the light on the fields of the Segarra. In consequence, his painting has gone on acquiring a cadenced rhythm, as if reflecting fields of wheat swept by the wind. The delicate layers of paint are laid one on top of the other in a gradation that simulates a slight or stable movement. It is possible to see such affinities with the artist whose work is most like Rothko, but the encounter will take place on the basis of personal hypotheses, such as the potential for mysticism which can be gleaned from the paintings. The informing spirit, nevertheless, is quite different.

As is that of the minimalists, however much Hernández Pijuan may deliberately reduce his colours and strive del mismo se dominan dos vistas - espacio abierto y espacio intimo. Desde una, hacia el sur, a traves de una arcada cerrada con grandes ventanas, el paisaje, inmenso, se va esculpando, resbalando, en un espacio completamente abierto, infinito, hasta llegar a la lejana Sierra de Prades. La otra, hacia el norte, se ve a traves de dos pequeñas ventanas, habituales en las casas norte de las casas de campo de la zona y, por el hecho de estar situadas, estas ventanas, a un nivel bajo, su vista queda ennegrecida trascada por la Sierra de Comidi. Esta es una vista intima, cerrada. Los campos de cultivo se nos aparecen casi a vista de pájaro. La pequeña ventana recorta el campo, lo deja sin circulo, sin horizonte, sin otros limites que los propios del marco de la misma ventana. El paisaje adquiere la fulloralidad del cuadro y unicamente el color en una rica monocromia y la superficie que intellectual ocupa es su elemento de imagen y de expresión. Estos dos aspectos - intimo y abierto- han estado configurando bastante los vaivenes de mi pintura".

Para el pintor, el efecto de este entorno no deja de ser mágico. Si Barcelona es el espacio donde las cosas suceden a un ritmo de realidad que la pintura aspira a detener, en La Segarra ocurre lo contrario: la pintura convierte en realidad las sensaciones que provoca un paisaje generoso en ellas detenido en el tiempo. El trabajo de estos años es un análisis intensivo, sin concesiones. Analoga condición tienen el sorprendente "Peint paisage doux" (1972) y el "Triptych I" (1977). Al primero (una tela de 33 x 24 cm.) le ocurre lo que a esos poemas breves que, pese a estar mediados, salen redondos y parecen inmediatos. En principio, lo tiene todo para seguir quedado en revi- mensiones de conjunto: su escala es inferior a la de los cuadros de esa época y en su lenguaje todavía permanecen detalles efímeros, como son la manera de duplicar la imagen o las lineas y anotaciones que interfieren. El equilibrio, la perfecta gradación del color, la intensidad de luz y el rito nos advierten de que estamos ante una de esas obras desmarcadas, a las que un pintor vuelve cuando quiere reco- mar situaciones pasadas.

"Peint paisage doux" es un hallazgo, como es a su modo, una acuciada posterior paralela, "Dues alines" (1975): el estudio de la luz, la degradación del color, la importancia que adquiere un mo- mento cuando se superpone sobre un fondo matizado y, junto a tantas insinuaciones y calidades intermedias, la rotundidad de una encina, elemento que se incorpora a la particular iconografía del pintor. En estos años, Hernández Pijuan recurre con frecuencia al papel mil- limerado como soporte y realiza grabados tanto, de observación y medida, de acuarela, brechas en la soluciones de la acuarela, frente a la solución de las acu- racio dice adquiere mayor distancia. Del recuerdo de una luz sobre un campo de trigo. Hernández Pijuan emula el motivo solo la sensación, de ahí que el rito y se interprete lirico. En ocasiones, ejer- ciones al lento se ajusta a complicada lagradual los colores apoyándose en líneas, ritmo muy marcado, o enfatizar algunos ejes. Durante la primera mitad de los años, las cromaticas se ven puenteadas por los colores pueden tomarse como pruebas de un paisaje artístico de acabado. Monet y los impresionistas. Hernández Pijuan es una escritura, incluso en momentos en la modernidad de planteamiento. Luego, en lo especifico de que le ofrece la luz sobre los colores, y como consecuencia, su pintura va tomando un relleño campos de trigo zonados en el doble de pintura se superponen en una gradació- niento ligero pero estable. Es posible buscar como Rothko, pero el encuentro se realizaran con aspectos, como el posible mimetismo que se establece. El último instigador, sin embargo, es bien de los minimalistas, por más que Hernández Pijuan sus colores y persiga quedarse con- métodos. No existe herencia americana, ni vocación de mitar campos de color o enfrentarse abiertamente en una pintura de gesto am- minuto, lenta, de pincelada corta e insi- sis, de la insistencia. Pintura de aparien- tendiente a la serie. La Segarra todavía es pr-
plotar, imagen primera: basta la impresión general, la luz, el color, el movimiento, para disponer la respuesta de la pintura. Muy distinta sería la que provoque cuando a esa presencia se añadan los recuerdos y, especialmente, cuando ambas situaciones queden transformadas en memoria, épocas que se corresponden con la sucesiva armazón, plástica y teórica, de Hernández Pijuan.

5 El acercamiento paulatino al paisaje, su análisis, se produce por dos vías que se convertirán en indiscutibles en su obra. En el uno, la temporalidad; en el otro, lo reflexivo. Que el predominio final corresponda a la primera se aprecia en la resolución de los cuadros. Cuando opta por superficies monomóricas, los colores elegidos son los de la naturaleza: el verde, el amarillo, el ocre. Una impresión luminosa, una temperatura, son utilizadas para evocar las sensaciones producidas por la realidad cambiante del paisaje. En algunos casos, se podrían recomponer la luz y el momento detenidos, analizando las capas que componen la pintura. El ejercicio resulta especialmente atractivo en aquellas en que la extrema desigualdad provoca que los colores se disuelvan, confundiéndose sus límites en sutiles vibraciones. Pinturas de rumores, sin motivos, donde el color orea y el espacio apunta un movimiento, una dirección. “Como la brisa que la sangre orea sobre el oscuro campo de batalla” empieza una de las más sorprendentes vi- mas de Bécquer, poeta que ignora goza de la devoción de Hernán- dez Pijuan. Los cuadros y, especialmente, las acuarelas de los años se- tenta, no parecen negarlo.

Las obras que cierran la década introducen pequeñas pero significati- vas variaciones. La primera, el establecimiento de una nueva relación entre soporte y pintura, que se concreta en un alegorismo de las te- tivias. Coincide con una época de desnudas pictóricas, de eliminación de lo accesorio, de resultado son formas de color, en las que la mate- riá ocupa el espacio con tanta precisión como cuidado. Cuadros que actúan de escala y refieren su tiempo, trabajados muy encima, re- sultan en una superficie que termina significándose como un campo labrado o una especie de piel, sensual y estricta.

Nada resulta azaroso: ni las dimensiones, ni las calidades del soporte ni la materia utilizada. El pintor recurre al lápiz, en un movimiento riñónico y corto, muy mantenido, cuando quiere resaltar el gesto (en estos casos, no ocupa totalmente la superficie del papel, dejando que la imagen, pese a su densidad, respira), cuando la sensación es menos enérgica, más detenida, utiliza la acuarela, color, al modo del paisaje que se evoca, y la tela, la superposición de capas no tiene la misma de la forma, de la escala, de las obras marcadas por su verticalidad (las de 1978).

En los grandes formatos ("Triptych I" y "II", y "Horizontales", 1978), las superficies al vacío, en absoluto frío. Un tono dorado se perciben las vibraciones de los que se circun
nature of the space, image and texture that I was trying for required to be configured through small brushstrokes superimposed almost systematically, since they were a function of that same “non-expressivity,” and the desire to find a way was obliged me, moreover, in addition to all that it meant conceptually, to cut off that gesture that had lost all meaning and had already started to impress me as much more “sympathetic.” I could say, then, that at that moment the tools themselves opened up new avenues for me. And if my interest in drawing had been left somewhat on the sidelines by the fusing of that atmosphere more than of any image, in returning to a gesture with greater visual scope, more marked by the brushstrokes, the will to draw returned.

The confession is uncompromisingly drastic, and does not stop at merely enunciating the situation: “In order to describe this process towards the immediate I will have to refer back to the works I produced in the early eighties. With one or two exceptions, they showed me for me a crisis, a sign of the presence of the image of the space travelled, rather than running deep, possesses itself of the surface. Less than brushstrokes charged with intention, these become touches, the atmosphere becomes real, and the painting goes off.” The rejection of a certain facility in the exercise of the craft reflects, nevertheless, other more powerful reasons: “I was moving from a color and a surface that had some significance to a color that was not mine, to a color and a light that I imagined were atmospheric, more impressionistic, and in fact I cannot have understood which, moreover, in view of the hardships of my landscape cannot have been right for me. From the hardness of ‘my landscape’, then, I shifted to a visual exploration of a landscape I had not personally experienced.” This is the declaration of a problem: he cannot be convinced by the results because they are the product of an unassuaged situation, of his having allowed himself to be carried away by pauser’s effects, by their invitation to play, their seductiveness, and his neglect of the motive, the circumstance that into the process in motion.

It is likely that a less self-critical painter would have recalled the discoveries made during this period and, perfectly pleasibly, would have been eager for more, was probably used to more, and the urge to move forward by those who saw in his work one of the few points of contact between Spanish painting and “minimalism” practice outside Spain, or who analyzed it in American terms and went round mounting platitudes about his attachment to “all-over” surfaces. Hernández Pijuan rejected these interpretations, no doubt because he was aware of the real motives that actually guided his steps: as he had never ceased to be a solitary painter and since, although far from arrogant on this score, he knew what the painters round about him were seeking to do, he thus felt himself bound by an obligation to set himself apart, to reaffirm his difference. In facing up to this challenge, the solution seemed to become clear: that which is meaningful is given moment (the degradation of the colour in order to evoke the impression created by the landscape), begins to lose its validity as it moves further away from its true source. The self-criticism was thus directed at complicity, the loss of radicalism, the absence of tension. The overlaying of five layers of pigment led him towards a kind of painterly effectiveness. He rejected this as evidence of a facility that results from stagnation and remoteness from a vision of the source: the picture of this period has ceased to be a reflection of this vision, and become instead an all too comfortable pictorial resolution of it. The seductiveness of the pigment tempted him to stay beyond the colours of his first choice, inspired by those of the landscape (yellows, ochers, greens). In the midst of this crisis, he realized that his way of handling these pictures (small brushstrokes, a little material applied in successive layers) had abandoned gesture and drawing. The option now was to recover these, and led him to a rapid theorizing of the picture, in a reaffirmation of a more ritual pulse in the act of the painting.

Ultimately, what we are witnessing here is a debate between rationalism and the tendency towards systematization, towards an approach based on mental hypotheses. Hernández Pijuan decided in favour of the first option, convinced that that is his way of being as a painter, in painting. At the moment that he made this decision, he was conscious that for a painter of his technical skill, with such a facility for the use of colour, the path was he turned back on would not have proved sterile. He adopted – perhaps because this was the moment when the change of course was most dramatic – a drastic resolution. He had previously hinted at the possibility of working on the margins, a possibility signalled by the watercolour and oils which take Eugène Delacroix as their subject. It is the tone in which these are realized that from a secure basis for relating his attitude to that of Philip Guston. The two versions of “Hougourdilliers at Son Servra” announce the break. The more closed and compact resolution of the work from the late seventies (the “Tripsec II” from ’77, the “Dryps” 1978 has lost its iron character, has dissolved away. The colour, and a brushstroke that draws itself out and unless itself are still dominant. The menston, los utensilios me abrieron nuevos caminos. Y, si mi interés por el dibujo había quedado algo marginado por la fijación de ese ambiente más que de una imagen, al retornar un gesto de mayor recorrido visual, más marcado por la pincelada, volvió la voluntad del dibujo”. La confesión es drástica y no se detiene tras enunciar la situación: “Para describir este proceso hacia lo inmediato tendí a remitirme a las obras realizadas en los primeros años ochenta. Con algunas excep-ción, se me va perfilando una crisis, unos años bajos, de autoimplicación. Es el momento en el que las grandes superficies duras y ten-sas voy a los recorridos visuales que, como tales, se me quedan en pinturas de ligeros toques superficiales, aconsejables, en los que el gesto del recorrido, más que la profundidad, se adueña de la superficie. Más que en pinceladas con intención se convierten en toques, el recorrido se batiamente y el cuadro se ablanda”. El rechazo a cierta facilidad de ofi-cio tiene, no obstante, razones más poderosas: “Pasaba de un color y una superficie con significado a un color que no me correspondía, a un color y a una luz que pretendía atmosférica, más impresionista y que en realidad no debía de entender y que por la dureza de mi paisaje tampoco me debía de corresponder. De la dureza de ‘mi paisaje’ pasaba, pues, a un recorrido visual de un paisaje no vivido”. Es la constatación del problema: no pueden convencerles los resultados por que nacen de una situación inhabilizable, de un haberse dejado llevar, por los efectos pictóricos, por su juego, por su reducción, y haber re- legado el movimiento, la circunstancia que agita el proceso.

Probablemente, un pintor menos autocrítico recordaría los hallazgos de esa época y, por qué no, se apuntaría a lecturas favorables, como la de quienes veían en su trabajo una de las escasas conexiones de la pintura española con los presupuestos “minimal” o los analizarían en clave americana y repetían coletillas como el gueno por las superficies “all over”. Hernández Pijuan rechaza esas interpretaciones, sin duda porque conoce los motivos que desencadenan sus pasos: como nunca ha dejado de ser un pintor solitario y, aunque no presuma de ello, conoce lo que pretenden los pintores con los que se le relacionan, se ve en la obligación de desmascarar, de afirmar su diferencia. Al en-frentarse a ella, la solución parece clara: lo que en un momento tenía sentido (la degradación del color para evocar la impresión producida por un paisaje), empieza a pedir a medida que se aleja de su verda-dero origen. La autocrítica tiene como punto de mira la complacen-cia, la pérdida de radicalidad, la ausencia de tensión.

La superposición de finas capas de color pictórico. Lo rechaza como prueba de un estancamiento y lejana con respecto a la duros ya no son una reflexión a partir de esta-tética acomodada. La seducción de los colores meta selección, que le había llegado, se daba cuenta de esos cuadros (pincelada pequeña, prácti-camente) había se le daba y dibujaba. La que le lleva a una rápida reordenación de pulso más vivo en la acción de la pintura.

En el fondo, a lo que asistimos es a un del to la tendencia a la sistematización, a un estilo más mental. Hernández Pijuan se decía convincente de que es su forma de estamento en el que decide ese giro, es consi-tor de su oficio y con su facilidad para resu-mando los fondos y superponiendo pro-porciona la tensión, el camino que aban-Adapta, y tal vez se trate del momento de un brusco, una resolución drástica. Previe-idades de la obra marginal, como señalar que toman como motivo las buganvillas, es el que hace pensar que no se aventurala con la de Philip Guston.

Las dos versiones de "Bougourdilliers a Son Llido. La resolución más cerrada y compacta, las setenta (el “Tripsec III” del ’77, el “Dryps” rácter férreo, se descomponen. Todavía do-celada que se abalaza y desliza. El efecto je los colores no se desvían al modo de los de que la imagen desaparece, persiste...

Los cuadros de buganvillas sirven de cier-ne de Hernández Pijuan. Como si hubiese fij-i, las obras posteriores marcan otro rum- la atención tal vez sea el sentido exhibi-ndarse más que a un motivo dibujado dante las formas, las formas, por lo tanto, por un color encendido. Con ser...
impressionist effect is real, but the colours do not disprove here as Monet’s do; there is no danger of the image disappearing; the sense of eeriness persists.

7. The bougainvillaea paintings serve to bring in a close Héméné Pépin’s most systematic period. As if he were now facing his gaze on the details, the subsequent works mark a different rhythm. The first thing to comment on is perhaps the images’ sense of eeriness, dominated by the presence of a motion dream with a lower line or reinforced by blurring values. For all their importance, these details are not unique; the painter not only selects the formats but delimits an additional field in its interior. In “The blacks and the viola” (1983) this is achieved by means of a superimposing of layers, not in the gradual fashion of earlier years, but in a fuller and more sensual manner, preparing the contrast of the leaves outlined in each of the sections that present is the one adopted in pictures such as “Landscape” (1984); here the internal limit is signalled by means of a thick black line that intensifies the sensation of being in front of a window, and the determination to embrace the pictorial space as an autonomous reality is reaffirmed. This formula allows him to establish an engaging dialogue with the motive of the landscape, handled with an ample, expansive gesture, advancing out from the centre towards the edges.

The somewhat spectacular resolution of “Landscape” is an indication that the spirit is returning, that the crisis is past, opening up new perspectives. The abundance, even the generosity with which the works of this period are handled (”Cypresses in the Seiga”, “Landscape with black cypress, I”, 1985), announces a significant opening up. The restrictions have been left behind, the pictures have something of the quality of expansive, loose drawings, showing a dominance not only of the material but of that way of defining in terms of the negative that is most characteristic of drawing. These are glorious years, full of joyful discovery, and this is reflected in the outdoor paintings; the interiors (”Transparent interior”, 1985) reveal an almost obsessive insistence on illuminating a blurred, indistinct subject, rather in the manner of Giacometti’s paintings.

If we compare the treatment of landscapes and of interiors, it seems clear that while the former announce the possibility of reworking the pictorial space, the latter adopt an insistent tone we weight associate with someone in pursuit of an image. The rencontre with landscape is the determining factor; the concrete use is no longer to salvage the sensation provoked by the colour of a field of corn, but to evoke the recollection of the details of a lived environment. This mode of evoking landscape as recollection is one of the principal arguments for the process of renewal, but the definitive step is revolved in its conversion into memory.

8. The works of the second half of the eighties together make up an almost wholly constituted whole within Héméné Pépin’s oeuvre. The attitude which informs his work is that of an assured painter who knows what he wants to paint and how to do it. A painter inevitably committed to painting, his confession leaves no room for doubt: “There are days when the decision to make a start proves difficult. Times when, in the studio, you feel yourself empty, without the necessary tension. I look, I arrange my papers, I commune with the finished paintings, work started or abandoned, I go through my notebooks, I walk backwards and forwards in my space as if waiting for something to spark off the provocation. But I need to be there every day, without deserting my post, in order to try to see in train once again that dialogue with the picture, with its space, with its image, in order to provoke that crucial moment of beginning, which will generate in its dialogue as an unfavourable process. A dialogue in and on painting.” The painter knows himself to be trapped and, far from concealing the fact, engages in that daily search. The painting is not due to reveal itself in his isolation, his dependence, that tenebrous solitude from which the greatest achievements emerge. The Segara continues to be his setting, but the painting no longer reflects the flashes of the seances, nor even the more emblematic emphasis of the first half of the eighties. The segara is a space that has transformed itself into memory, a space that merges with the limits of the support for each work. The pictures then emerge singly, silently, a cathedral, a sleigher, a courtyard, a house, a cypress, a flower; the motives evidently repeat themselves. The variations are minimal, and effect a disposition, a balance, a control, a counterweight. They can never be other than excess for the engagement in action that transcends them, that overshadows them. The sea is the space, a reference, but the painter salutes it as memory, which makes his practice more restrictive. More demanding, more drastic; we know that memory is oleaginous. The motives, inevitably, are concentrated. The cathedral, the chioser or the house tend to identify one with the other, like the space of a painter whom it would not be feasible to see in the image of the cypress. The cypress in the chioser will be seen as a metaphor for the painter in his studio: the attitude of watchful vigilance is the same. The house ultimately comes to stand as a reference for the pictorial space.

no son únicos: el pintor no sólo selecciona el formato sino que delimita un campo adicional en su interior. En “El negro y el viola” (1983) se consigue mediar una superposición de capas, no al modo gradual de años anteriores, sino de un modo más sensual y pleno, preparando el contraste de las hojas perfumadas de violeta. La solución que permanecerá será la adoptada en cuadros como “Paísaje” (1984): señalando el límite interno de la imagen mediante un trazo negro, que acarrean la sensación de estar ante una ventana, y se refleja la voluntad de acometer el espacio pictórico como realidad autónoma. La fórmula le permite establecer un atractivo diálogo con el motivo paisajístico, resultando de esto, a menudo, una apertura significativa. Las restricciones quedan, los cuadros tienen algo de dibujos amplios, sueños, con dominio tanto de la materia cuanto de eso de modo de definir desde el negativo, más propio del dibujo. El modo de dejar ver la tela, incorporarla a un juego casi especial, estableciendo diálogos entre dos zonas, una vacía y otra llena, dividadas por una flor que se recorta como un objeto, enmarcarla de una de esta época. Son años de esplendor, de hallazgo glososo, tal como reflejan los cuadros de expón al interior; los interiores (“Interior transparente”, 1985) marcan una insistencia casi obsesiva por iluminar un motivo borroso, un poco a la manera de los cuadros de Giacometti.

Comparando los tratamientos de paisajes e interiores, parece claro que mientras los primeros anuncian la posibilidad de reordenar el espacio pictórico, los segundos admiten un tono insostenue, como si persiguiera una imagen. El reencuentro con el paisaje es determinante: ya no se trata de esconder la sensación provocada por el color de un campo de trigo, sino evocar el recuerdo de los detalles de un entorno vivo. Ese modo de ver el paisaje como recuerdo es uno de los principales argumentos de la renovación, pero el paso definitivo radica en convertirlos en memoria.

8. Las obras de la segunda mitad de los años ochenta componen el conjunto mejor armado de la producción de Héméné Pépin. La actitud desde la que trabaja es la de un pintor que no quiere pintar y cómo hacerlo. Pintor al desnudo, su confesión no admite dudas: “Fácil tomar la decisión de empezar. Es una cuestión, no de hacerlo. Con la mirada vacía, sin la tensión necesaria, el paisaje con los cuadros terminados, empaquetados, nos dice que por ese rincón de que algo produce la provocación a todos los días, no descartar, con el fin de tener otro cuadro con el que esa es una propuesta que acentúa más el diálogo como proceso imprescindible. De esta manera, el pintor se sabe cernido y, lejos de ocultar su trabajo, no lo oculta ni en el estilizado manto de los ochenta. La Segara es un espacio, un espacio en memoria, un espacio en que se confunde de cada obra. Los cuadros están enclaustrados, un patio, una casa, un cuadro, un espacio, con su particularidad. Las variaciones son un retrato de un cuadro, un retrato de una época. Son años de esplendor, de hallazgo glososo, tal como reflejan los cuadros de ese periodo; los interiores (“Interior transparente”, 1985) marcan una insistencia casi obsesiva por iluminar un motivo borroso, un poco a la manera de los cuadros de Giacometti.
the drawing that engages in debate with the thick paint of the background, a scoring that pushes it up, converting many of the more recent canvases into subtle bas-relief. A personal calligraphy over an opaque material, with no other elements than the strictly necessary. Silences of plenitude, with lines defining a space interior to the support, with a use of paint whose application suggests bodily effort. Layers that seek to occupy the surface in its entirety, leaving small openings that make it possible to see those that lie beneath them. A painting that is flat and at the same time general; neither concerned with qualities nor in search of the gradations of earlier periods; it reaffirms its situation, its power to summon up light, to reflect it. A light that slides over the canvas, exposing each painting to view, denial of tricks and of chance, naked. Its complicity is not required to simulate atmosphere whose some exists; the details of a landscape are of no importance when what is being crossing for is its memory. A painting that is dense, in plenitude, almost corporal.

There is a continuous successive work of the first order of magnitude in these years. Initially, she scripts transmits an affirmative plenitude, sensual in the abundance of material, in the strength of the colour, in the nuances produced by the thickness with which it is applied. A drawn motive (or schematic as to be almost sketched) ends up giving the work the tension and the equilibrium it requires. This happens with "Green, black, white" (1986). A major work from this period, amongst those that reaffirm their faith in the material, in the firm belief in the exercise of painting. If the painter had complained that in previous pictures he had himself been led astray by a certain sense of aesthetic comfort, he is now concerned to give greater stability to the image, going on to take pleasure in effects that adapt perfectly to his objectives. A rectangular format, common to most of the works he undertakes from this time on, whose implications are reinforced by the green border which signals its limits: an opaque interior space, apparently flat but tremendously rich, extracting maximum benefit from the flux and abundance of the paint, the way in which the material girds forth. The exigency of that mysterious, dark, black surface is subtly counterpointed by rippling greys, and, to a fundamental degree, by the inclusion of non-figural motifs, positioned with a symmetry that is by no means rigid. A plenitude of enthusiasm. "Green, black, white" suggests a parallel with the "Landscape" of '84: the time and the sense of security have changed, but both are significant, central works. Within a short space of time, Hernández Pijuan evidences both that intensification of spirit and the inner tone manifests in "Clouded black landscape", behind which it is easy to make out a different spiritual condition, or "Cathedrals" (1986), an image dressed in a more drastic fashion, a foreboding if his subsequent works are to be, following the painter's habitual way of progressing, marked by his determination to distance himself from any system as soon as he intuits the first trace of consecration.

In "Cathedrals", the architecture has been transformed into lines of reference that affect not only the reality they denote but also — and perhaps above all — the victorious space. The next step is visible in "OIkos landscape 2" (1987), with a charged, material background that recurs in all the finest pictures of this period. The process bears little relation to the systematic precision of the seventies: the control that was exercised there, based on the division of the canvas, is replaced by an almost turbulent action; the paint inundates the canvas, leaving the marks of its passage plainly visible. The layers of colour battle with each other, but there is no pursuit of facile effects, and in fact the way of painting tends to amass, insinuating as it does virtually the entire surface of the canvas. Pictures such as "OIkos landscape 2" (1987) or "Comité II" (1988) link up with the finest innovative spirits of the Spanish painting of these years, to which Hernández Pijuan contributed not only as a painter but through his work as a tutor at the Escuela de Bellas Artes in Barcelona. His teaching activities began in 1976 and, annually for a practicing artist, base continued ever since. It is significant that his students have the highest regard for him, expressing gratitude for his capacity to transmit a firm, confident attitude towards painting that has no need to resort to irony to stimulate their work. "I confine myself in correcting faults of orthography", the painter remarked in a recent interview. "The most frequent of these in Art Schools, if one amongst the students themselves, derive from emphasizing a painting that is already finished. I feel that the students should discover their own language and not paint in ways that have been done before." An attitude that is simply the continuation of that which he upholds in his own work. In the last few years, Hernández Pijuan has referred in the same terms to painting and to landscape; it is not for nothing that capturing the latter is the aim of his painting. The brownstones transmits a spirit that is happy, but at the same time tense and full. As if they compared, as a body of work, a subtle description in which the detail and the whole are united as one. "Annointed landscape" or "OIkos space" (1989) are empty spaces whose distinct character announces a revision of intentions that become evident in canvases such as "House and cypress on white" or "Landscape with house and trees" (1989), where, after touching the mythical degree
zero of painting the void, his work opens up to broader landscapes, translated into his own personal iconography.

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The eighties stand in abundance: a solitary cypress, a rounded bough snub, a bower, the lines that delimit the memory of the landscape dominate the elements and are aware of the contours; in others, generally where memory is at work ("Memories of the Segura", 1989: "Memories of Events I", 1990), he divides the space, crossing it by making it, in characteristic fashion, more descriptive. In the nineties, the landscape drawn new life from the appearance of clouds and changing lights. The first of these elements is silent forms, announcing that the action continues, in the enigmatic simplicity of "Cloud and Rain 5" (1990) to the density of "Pink cloud" or "White cloud 2" (1991) the second allow him to look abroad at the function of colour, demonstrating his perfect mastery, in spite of acting on the basis of strict selection and using dark pigments. This period also sees a resurgence of the drawing, the line, whose arabesques occupy almost the whole surface of a number of canvases (the series "Marchen", from 1991-92).

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Any review of the last twenty years of Hernández Pijuan's work makes it necessary to point a number of considerations which could as easily be starting points as conclusions. It is unworthy, for example, that in a context as strict as the Spanish scene when it comes to grouping artists together, he remains the sole defender of a particular project. Even a convention such as that which links him with Rafols Casamada as constituting the most cohesive branch of their generation loses its validity if we analyze their actual practice (in Rafols Casamada the lyric is more animated, while in Hernández Pijuan it is an almost intuitive response). Hernández Pijuan's willfulness is also apparent in the matter of his heirs: there is no one who seems guaranteed to pursue his line of inquiry, for all that there are many who wish to adopt his spirit. Our painter, possibly in consequence of the intensity with which he appears on the scene and the foresight of his subsequent self-interrogation, is one of those artists who tend to exhaust the territory through which they pass. At the same time, while his is by its very nature a lonely domain, he belongs to that special group of painters who enjoy the respect of their peers, and this as a result not just of the quality of his image but of the vigour of his undertaking and the unimpeachable equity of his attitude, to say nothing of the silence with which he presents his achievements. There is another resonance which affects him, one consistent with his being seen as a Mediterranean painter. Having said this, we ought to make it clear that where this has a bearing on his work is in terms of the cultures of the region, rather than the maritime environment as such. Hernández Pijuan cannot deny his classical vocation, his taste for measure, for harmony. This offers the justification for his involvement in processes of formal restriction, although as soon as these start to take on the attributes of a cynosure the virtuoso side of his character rejects them completely. The basic references would seem to be linked in particular to the surface, the contact with the material, the way of covering the surface, the panoply of colour, the presence of a schematic design that is clean and full, and the Segura as landscape (the countryside rather than the water). Measure and scale are arguments which order virtually all of his pictures. Few painters bestow such importance as the form of a canvas, or on its qualities (the roughness, the grain, or the weight of the paper). In extending slightly the longer axis of a picture, he concentrates to make the entire more uniquely his own. In subsequent delimiting, albeit never rigidly, an interior space, he increases the tension of the few elements arranged within it.

It would be no exaggeration to look in his painting for an equivalence to the classical order, nor would it be inappropriate to interpret his iconography in more or less symbolic fashion, beginning, for example, and not solely on the basis of appearances, with the proximity of the self-portrait and the figure of the cypress. It would be legitimate, too, to insist on the importance he concedes to the drawing and the colour, or on the influence his dedication to his graphic work has on his painting. This is visible in the bas-relief quality of many of his latest compositions; when he grasps the material to draw an outline, this seems to be the direct cause of the conceptual cleanness and sureness with which he addresses his contours.

With regard to the drawing and the colour, their presence has been crucial since the early seventies. The drawing serves as a support in moments of doubt, and in the eighties it is incorporated with conclusive force. As for the outline, it is enough to recall its importance at the moment of reflecting the impression provoked by the landscape. What is significant is that this has received its vitality despite the fact that in the canvases the support is minimal, and the paint has become increasingly dense and opaque. Colour converted into the matter of painting.

"Návolo i pluja 5" (1990) à la densidad de "Návolo rosa" o "Návolo blanc 2" (1991); las segundas le permiten replantearse la función del color, demostrando su perfecto dominio, pese a actuar desde una selección estricta y recurrir a tintas opacas. A esta época corresponde también un resurgimiento del dibujo, del trazo, que a modo de arbolece ocupa la práctica totalidad de algunas telas (la serie "Marroc", del 91-92).

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Recobrar los veinte últimos años del trabajo de Hernández Pijuan obliga a realizar algunas consideraciones que tanto podrían ser prevalas como finales. Llama la atención, por ejemplo, que en un panorama tan estético como el español a la hora de agrupar a sus artistas, permanezca como defensor solitario de un proyecto. Incluso ese covalencialismo consistente en unirlo a Rafols-Casamada como vertiente más colorista de su generación, pierde sentido al analizar sus comportamientos (lo lúrico está más animado en Rafols Casamada, mientras en Hernández Pijuan es una solución casi intuitiva).

La soledad de Hernández Pijuan se nota también en sus sucesores, no hay quien prospere con garantías su línea de trabajo, aunque sí muchos a los que afecta su espíritu. Nuestro pintor, tal vez por la intensidad con la que entra y por la fuerza con la que posteriormente se interrumpa, es de los artistas que se tienden a afrontar sus pasos. También, aunque este territorio sea esquivo por naturaleza, pertenece a ese grupo especial de pintores a los que los compañeros respetan, y hay que pensar que tanto por la calidad de sus imágenes cuanto por el rigor de su propuesta y lo impenetrable de su actitud, aparte, por qué no decirlo, del silencio con que da a conocer sus logros.

Existe otro acuerdo que le afecta, consistente en verlo como pintor mediterráneo. Siendo cierto, habría que aclarar que lo que le implica son antes las colores de ese entorno que lo acuosuro. Hernández Pijuan no puede negar su vocación clásica, su gusto por la medida, por la armonía. Se justifica así su entrada en el surrealismo los rechazos de pleno. Las referencias pictóricas (las superficies de color, el manejo de cubrir las superficies, la gama de un dibujo esquemático, limpio y pleno) (los campos de trigo antes que el agua). Medida y escala son argumentos que ordenan sus cuadros. Pocos pintores dan tanto impulso, incluso a sus calidades (la rugosidad del papel). Durante el siglo xxi ha gestado la armonía, el rigor y el estilo. M. F. C.

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