MAISON POMBO
By Bárbara Golubicki

"Querido Teto: sin comentarios" (Dear Teto: no comment), reads the caption to an image of a dishcloth through whose holes we can spy Pombo's eyes. A relic doesn't have to be beautiful, or whole. Its value lies entirely elsewhere, in the fact that it is a surviving object that, due to contact or proximity, retains something about the bodies it has touched. It is the quintessential used artefact. Which is why the shroud is the star of relics, within it functions the transfigurative process by which precariousness and remains are converted into an extreme form of presence. The negative created by a few marks becomes a faint face staring back at us from a remote distance.

In 1990, with *Mantel* (Tablecloth), a piece of green and white checked cotton with plastic appliqués, pea cans, and nylon tassels sewn into it, Pombo opened up a space of sacred domesticity that he would continue to expand to this day. It is this, his famous 'square meter' to which he returns in Dear Teto: no comment with the added value of experience. Those first gestures of care developed into a delicate way of imbuing beauty and reciprocative attention to things from a world where no one expected them to be pretty. In this series, Pombo sharpens his tailoring skills, moving into the universe of textiles like a neighbourhood craftsman, a mixture of creative director and born sewer, radiating the anxiety of someone trying to fix a garment moments before it goes out on the runway or immediately after being examined in the mirror; the final touches to a display window before the curtains are drawn. Where the tablecloth, on which things are supposed to be spilled, spattered and dripped, was pardoned from its original role and gleamed impeccably, the dishcloths are presented in all their material existence, soaking, drying and rubbing different substances. Only instead of crumbs, stains or liquids, Pombo combines scraps of oilskin, cloth, hessian, padding, dish and floor cloths, vaseline, cotton and polyester or waxed threads, sisal and linen, plastic bags, polystyrene balls, synthetic raffia, aniline, plastic, glass and glitter beads, and even polyurethane paste membrane mixed with dust that he gathers from under the motorway in the Buenos Aires neighbourhood of Constitución. In doing so he is mending and patching, stitching and sewing, dyeing and inking, an art of upcycling, as though he were preparing to work in a space where materials are not naturally poor but have been impoverished by an economy of the gaze and consumption before which one must enhance their resilience and dignity before reintroducing them into living circuits.

Jorge Gumier Maier once spoke of his 'tendency towards excessive decoration' and 'cosmetic vocation', and of the relationship between his objects and manual skills, crafts and interior decoration. Perhaps to this list we should add fashion design. That is to say, not so much an affinity to Arte Povera, as Martin Margiela (and his used clothing made from discarded studio materials) or Rei Kawakubo who turned tears, irregularity and deterioration into anatomical structures. But we need to add an asterisk here. It is hardly difficult to imagine Pombo next to a mood board combining samples, palettes and textures, surrounded by patterns, cuttings and seams, dyeing and draping, but it is not only in the world of action that we see Pombo as a working class couturier. *Querido Teto: sin comentarios* contains more intense and significant meaning that was always lying latent. From the beginning, Pombo has indulged in a passion for surfaces that finds its fullest expression in the synthetic, industrial world of clothing.

This is not simply a fascination with surfaces and superficiality in its most literal sense but a process of understanding with a freedom that cannot be bought off by the history of art or any of its categories, affiliations or schools. Does Pombo work with an 'archive'? No, he rummages in his inner basket of cast-offs, manipulating the figures and forms of his personal rubbish, producing trashy objects that he knows someone is going to love, with the amnesiac energy with which high fashion merges with pret á porter and the sales bin before finally reaching the street. An innocence earned through a short term memory, a belief not in conservation but reclamation and exposure to the cruel world once more, with one eye on the market and the other on the heart, presenting a collection for a season that always seems to be just around the corner.

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MARCELO POMBO
Querido Teto: sin comentarios
Oct—Dec 2026
BARRO