

On Irruption Series (SAGA), 2006

Footprints and tracks have constituted a significant part of the indexical imagery whose meaning I have been investigating over the past few years. Their accumulation particularly interests me for its allegorical potential to allude to a “ghost” event that took place and left a mark.

In my several architectural interventions in façades and interior designs since the mid 1990s, the images of tracks are featured as a sort of graffiti that I bring into play as an invasive “blotch” of implied temporal dimensions. The time suggested by these phantasmagorias is usually that of a voracious, vertiginous and nightmarishly symbolical occupation of a wall, building, or territory. (1)

Yet, the origin of the enlarged human footprints in this work presented in Taipei is quite diverse from previous marks and tracks. Whereas the animal footprints come from pictures used to identify different animal tracks, and the images of chaotic tire tracks are taken from commercial websites, the human footprints are actual impressions in ink taken from children’s feet. (2)

Later on these marks -- enlarged, reproduced, and serving as digital matrixes for multiplication -- made possible the visualities of recent installations in architectural interiors. (3) Now they swarm the external walls of the MFA Taipei, seemingly pouring out from the front doors and the first-floor galleries.

In the early conception of a visual narrative that could express the museum’s architecture and add meaning to this building, shaped as a gigantic ideogram for “well”, I thought of the original spring that flowed from that very spot. When developing the relations between my work and this architecture/well, I imagined extracting this flow from its entrails, possibly by rendering it as thousands of footprints that seemingly “ooze out” from – and at the same time, “penetrate” -- certain openings.

Furthermore, the volumes attached to the sides of the building have helped me interpret the architectural design of MFA Taipei as a sort of jug or great vessel, with many recesses – something I poetically associated to this island and the modern-day “saga” of its population. For this reason I have added “Saga” to the title of this work.

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Notes

1. Animal footprints in ***Gone Wild*** (1996), shown at the MCA San Diego hall and in ***Tropel*** (1998), on the façade of the São Paulo Biennial building. Tire tracks in ***Derrapagens***, exhibited at MAM-SP (2004); in ***Derrapadas***, at CCE in Montevideo (2004), and in ***Frenazos***, at the Antiguo Arsenal, during the San Juan Poly/Graphic Triennial (2004).

2. In 1998, while creating a series of works with children's footprints, I conducted a workshop titled ***O Artista e Eu*** at SESC Itaquera, in São Paulo. With the collaboration of a large group of children, I built numerous tracks with footmarks printed on paper sheets, which I then arranged inside and outside that cultural center.

3. Human footprints in the installations ***Intro***, presented at the La Mediatine Cultural Center, in Brussels (2005) and ***Irruption***, shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2005).