

1

TOGO DE LA GASQUE  
EDICIONES



**Domestic Mythology**  
**JOËL MESTRE**

Galería My Name's Lolita Art - Madrid (Spain)  
25 November 2005 - 20 January 2006



## Presentation

Since the first exhibition of the artist Joël Mestre (Castellón, 1966) in 1988, the iconography repertoire of his painting has always transferred us to an unconventional atmosphere. Thematically, he continues raising the coexistence of painting with other ways of expressions such as literature and even technology, without, for that reason, abandoning traditionally pictorial procedures.

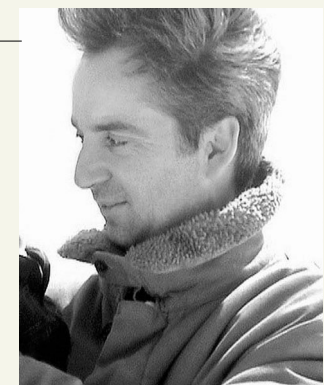
His recent work evolves from the Packaging series displayed in his exhibition in Chicago (U.S.A.) last year. The pictograms, urban signs, brands and names of companies have been disappearing in recent years. The elements with what he currently articulates the narrations are cardboard packaging, waste products of the consumption society, that instead of being motionless, show as an additional image may present itself and spread out from the first object completing the scene and, therefore creating a new figure.

The statement *Domestic Mythology* gathers two concepts with opposite connotations linked to create a new meaning. While *Mythology* transfers us to the imaginary genre, *Domestic* brings us closer to daily reality. Joël Mestre resorts again to a sort of visual oxymoron where painting coexists with other medium of different nature setting out paradoxical situations, new viewpoints about the references we are used to.

A graduate on Fine Arts in 1989, and Doctor by the Polytechnic University of Valencia in the 2005, he was awarded scholarship by Alfons Roig of the Diputación de Valencia in 1994, and ENDESA between 1999 and 2001. He was also scholarship holder in the Academy of Rome by the State Department in 1995. The artist took part in group shows such as *Muelle de Levante* (1994), and more recently in the cycle of exhibitions *Figuraciones* (2003) organized by Caja Madrid. His work has been present at the Arco (since 1994), Chicago (2002-2003) and Miami (2003-2005) fairs, at the Murcia Biennial (1993), Oviedo Biennial (1996) and at the European Biennial of visual arts of La Spezia (Italia) in 2000. His work has been exhibited at My Name's Lolita Gallery since 1989.

Joël Mestre has collaborated with the magazine Occidente (1999), Archipelago (2000), La Naval -Press of the República de Cartagena- (2003), Mundos (2003-2004) and Papel Elefante (2005) magazines, and recently with the Lars Magazine, where he presents an extensive article about Alberto Savinio.

Togo de la Gasque Editions





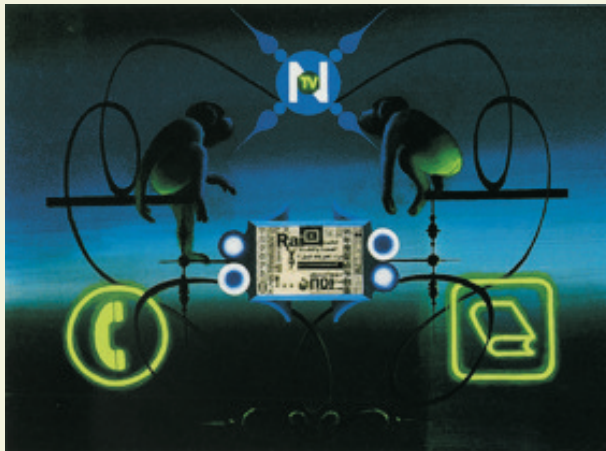
*Pioneer.* (2005). Pigmento y látex sobre loneta. 130 x 195 cm.

## Domestic mythology

Joël Mestre



**Paisajista ofuscado por la manera.**  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
89 x 116 cm. (1991). Col. particular.



**En casa de Narciso TV.** (1996)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
54 x 73 cm. Colección particular.

[...] *yo creía que quería ser poeta, pero en el fondo quería ser poema.*"

Jaime Gil de Biedma  
*Las personas del verbo* (1975)

**I**t has not been very long since a weird proposal was made to me. Honestly, I had preferred something more conventional, such as a portrait of a distinguished writer, even of the Argentinean Bustos Domecq (1), a difficult but not impossible labour to carry out. The current exhibition does not have a direct connection with the above mentioned proposal, but the story and characteristics of the still unresolved work could play a role within those legends and emotions that make painting great and unique.

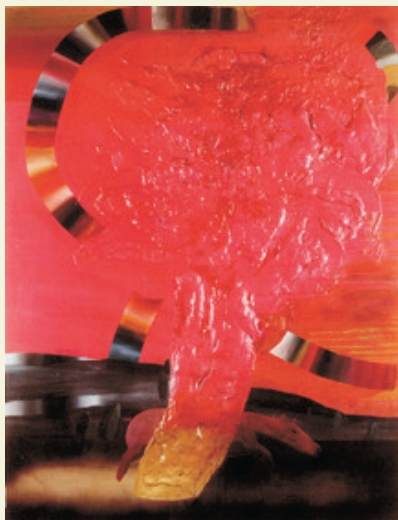
I met an old friend of the University in the Castellón seaport almost two years ago. After our academic time, we had kept on sharing interests for some years. Afterwards, life made us go on our own way. His experience and temperament as an artist was developing toward that of a moderate collector, and nowadays he has some of my first paintings in his collection: *Paisajista ofuscado por manera* (1991) and *En casa de Narciso TV* (1996).

A long time had past since we had last talked, but that was not an obstacle for him to make me a straight proposal. Such was his fascination for painting that he started to consider the idea of turning himself into one. Within his last wills, there was the desire of finding a reliable person that, when the very time came, used his ashes as a pigment by converting them into raw material for a painting that eventually could be displayed at a museum or collection.

Some days later he wrote me apologizing for tackling such a delicate subject in that way, and thanked me for not having thrown him straight from the pier into the sea. In his letter he said: *I seriously thought about this idea for long. I would like to involve someone I admire as a painter, and to whom at least, I was bound by a moderate friendship. I would be proud if you turned me into a painting, closing the circle, of course, as long as you don't snuff it before I do.*

---

(1) Honorio Bustos Domecq was a created fictitious author to together Adolfo Bioy Casares and the Jorge Luis Borges.



***Paisaje atocinado.*** (1991)

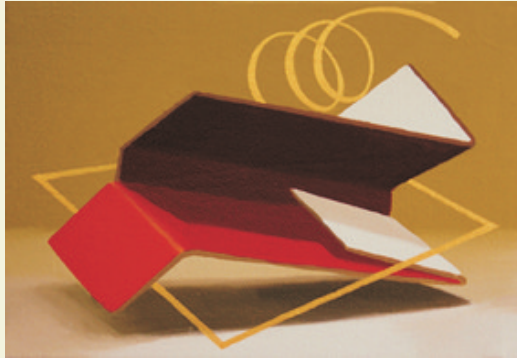
Isocianato, Polioli, Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
195 x 150 cm. Colección particular

This proposal, happily still unsolved, did not leave me indifferent. I would have preferred that he asked me for something easier such as spreading his ashes through El Corte Inglés or some of the mythical pubs he used to go and from where such ideas arose.

He recognized humbly that he had not completely developed the idea on his own. The origin of this project could be found in a thought by Jaime Gil de Biedma where the poet questioned the reasons that drove him to write instead of keeping on reading. In the answers he found the key. He wanted not to be a poet but a poem. Since the moment my friend read "*Las personas del verbo*", he confessed being obsessed by this idea; *at least, the painting lover, defeated by it or by circumstances, may feel the joy of being used physically. His mortal remains being ever displayed in some artistic way. It is worse for the literature lover. He only may aspire to become a character modelled by other hands and to know in what way this character will keep some of what he was.*

About Jaime Gil de Biedma, he remembered a wonderful interview Arcadi Espada and Ramón Santiago made him in 1981. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of August of 2000, almost twenty years after the carrying out of the interview, it was first published in El País. The lucidity of Biedma surprises me, particularly those strategies of literary creation that have so much to do with the painting I am more attracted to. Biedma upheld, with a certain irony, a state of controlled and deliberated schizophrenia, connecting and disconnecting wires depending on the situation we were in, almost an oxygenation approach.

Most people in this profession are united by the fascination and power of painting. But I think that beyond the medium used, the treatment or aesthetic affinity, a conductor thread between many authors linked by a particular sense of humour exists. Regarding all this, I remember the extraordinary efficacy of something as insignificant as an adhesive created by Rogelio López Cuenca. The birth of a story from an abstract painting of Pablo Palazuelo was as revealing as if it was carried out from an Arroyo's painting. It is not odd that Palazuelo is a reference for many of us. In a text he published for an exhibition at the Museo de la Casa de la Moneda, entitled *Dos abstracciones* (1998), he was both appeasing and drastic at once. The literary activity of a painter with an almost underground appearance such as Alberto Savinio was surprising. It was also staggering knowing of Matt Mullican as an author who writes about local customs.



***Volito Doing.*** (2005)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
38 x 55 cm.



***La lengua de Siemens*** (2005)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
38 x 55 cm.

I have not been able to give a firm answer to this proposal at the moment; I find it difficult to make a long-term commitment on a subject like this one. I am afraid that when the time comes, all my sense of humour and pictorial irony my friend talks about and in what he is so interested end up reduced to an insupportable silence and an exasperating quietness. I am afraid that I may react in an unforeseeable way, and not fulfil his will. I may end up putting his ashes in a bottle and throwing them away to a bottomless cliff. Even if everything was recorded, I have to recognize that the sacrilege of transforming them in a video instead of in a painting would be such that I would never forgive myself, seeing myself pursued for ever and ever by a ghost which would threaten me with a slipper in his hand, asking me to explain my treachery.

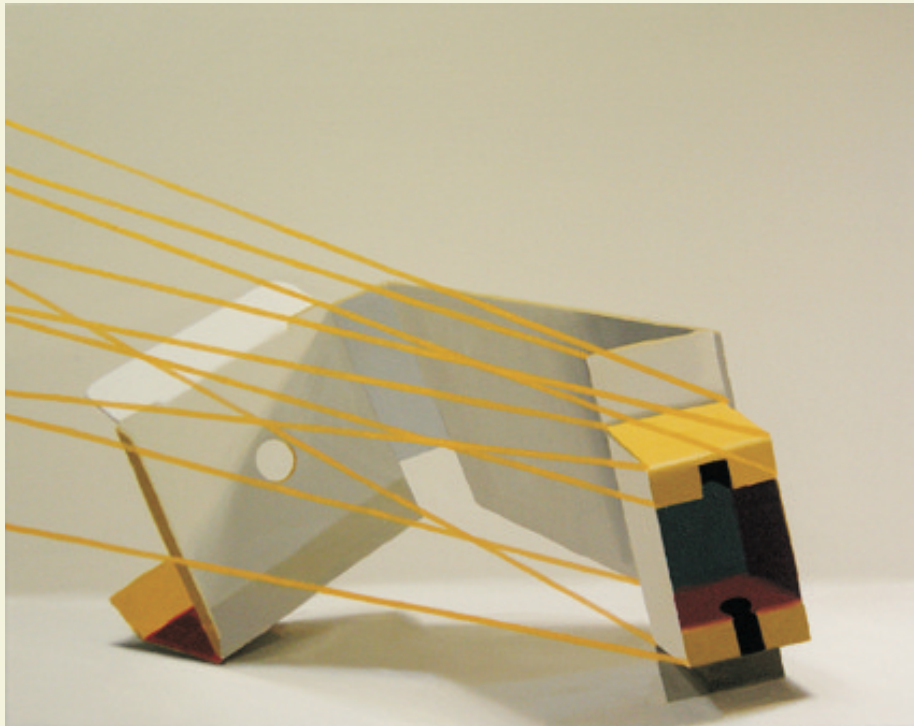
Currently I think that my pictorial technique is quite orthodox. Despite it is a synthetic tempera from pigments and latex, there are no many mysteries in the procedure, apart from the fact of having been using it for fifteen years in no more than three hundred paintings. For some time I enjoy challenging visually to those that considered the oil technique as a paradigm of the real painting. I was also cheered up by the possibility of providing this basic technique with more elaborated procedures to those the painting of the 80's got us used to.

I must confess that I am not a restless painter about technique. I prefer to change my medium than to distract myself with culinary aspects. In my last year as a student I thought in a different way. Then, anything could be part of my work. I remember that I was once about to loose my vision and skin by using a highly toxic product. Two industrial components, isocionate and poliol, that were used as a thermal insulating, combined gave as a result a material of similar density to paint but with the extraordinary capability of quadrupling its volume when it got dry; A light drawing could be transformed in a couple of hours in a surprising orography. I was so into the work that I did not take the proper measures, and the experiment, with which I spent some weeks, almost hurt me seriously.

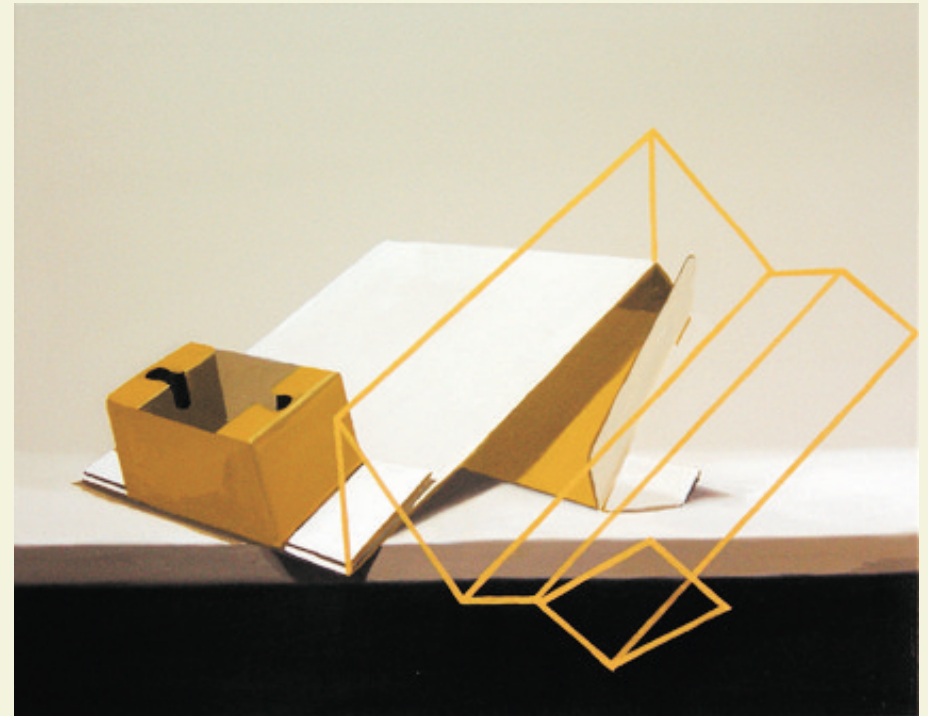
To go on this assignment today, I would have to make a small effort technically. I could look for what I still have of Sigmar Polke about procedures and I may possibly agglutinate my friend's ashes with a material as perdurable as an encaustic or some vinyl and industrial latex. Thinking of his dear Frank Auerbach I would eventually make him a painting. Today my answer would be affirmative as I know that only a few kilometres separates us. I would tell him to count on me. I can easily imagine us going together to see the result on some wall of a museum or collection and we would kill ourselves laughing.



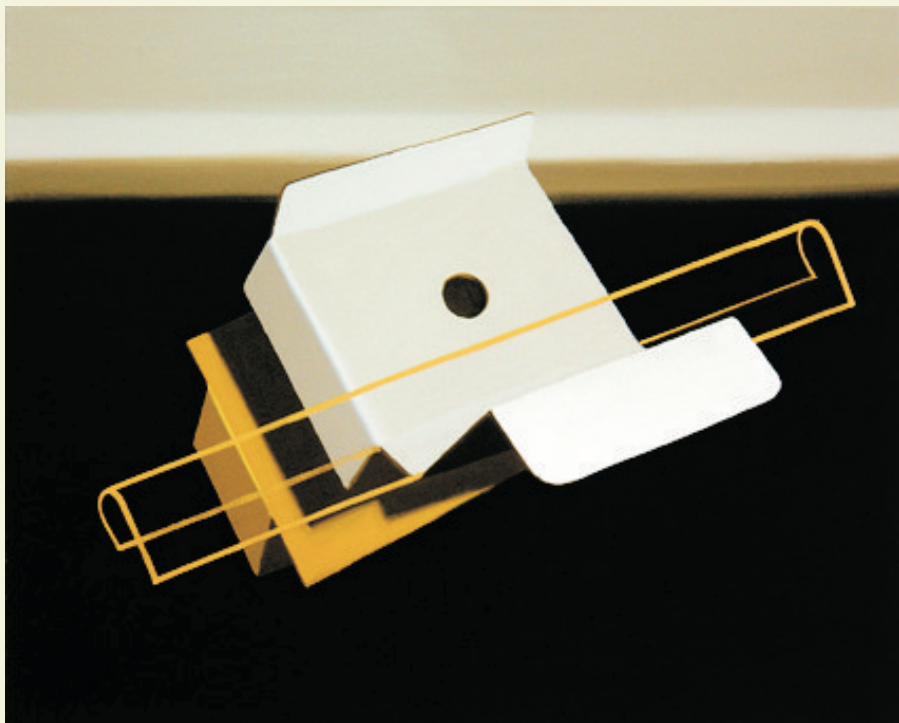
***Mitología Audio-Grundig.*** (2005). Pigmento y látex sobre loneta. 130 x 195 cm.



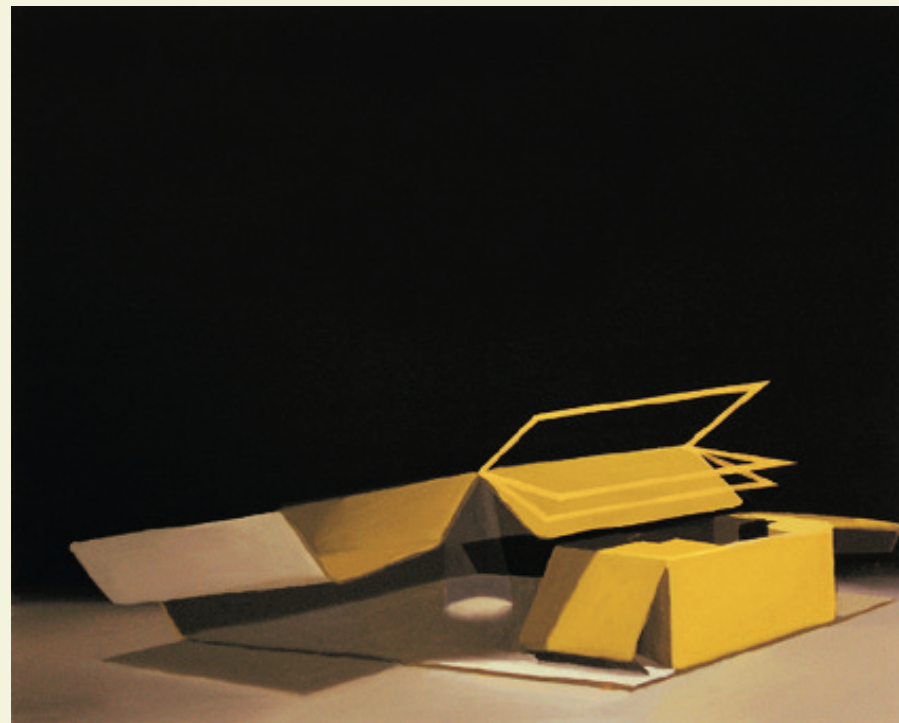
***La vida de Volito 1 (Cometa)***  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
73 x 92 cm. 2005



***La vida de Volito 2 (Desdoblamiento)***  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
73 x 92 cm. 2005



***La vida de Volito 3 (Vuelo)***  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
73 x 92 cm. 2005

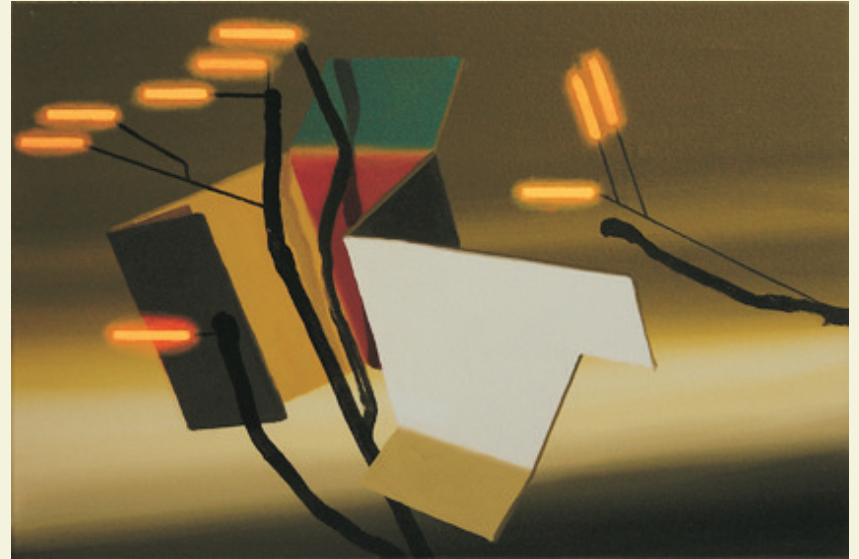


***La vida de Volito 4 (Despedida)***  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta  
73 x 92 cm. 2005

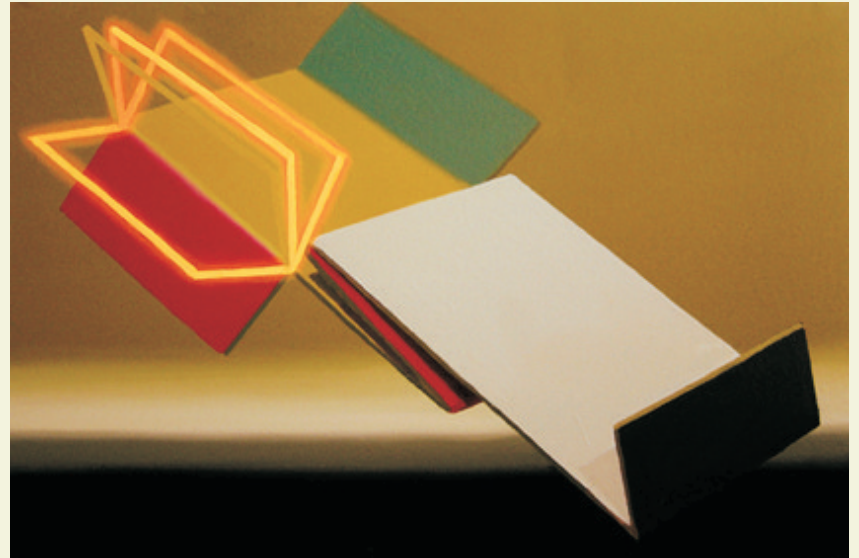
**Mitología doméstica** (2005)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta.  
195 x 150 cm.

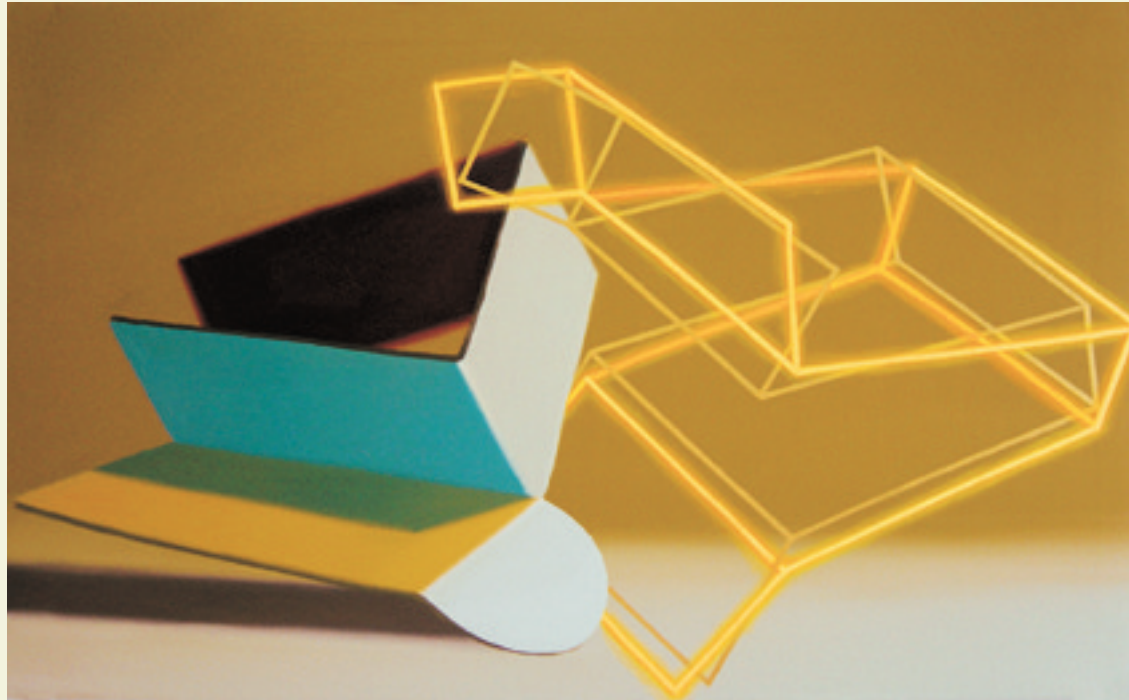


***Tramonto y Tramontana*** (2005)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta.  
54 x 81 cm.



***Payasa*** (2005)  
Pigmento y látex sobre loneta.  
54 x 81 cm.





**Opas y amenazas** (2005) Pigmento y látex sobre loneta 89 x 146 cm.



**Galería My Name's Lolita Art**  
C/ Almadén, 12 . 28014 MADRID (ESPAÑA)  
Tel. 91 530 72 37  
[madrid@mynameslolita.com](mailto:madrid@mynameslolita.com)  
[www.mynameslolita.com](http://www.mynameslolita.com)

**Ediciones Togo de la Gasque**  
VALENCIA (ESPAÑA). 2005  
[edicionestogodelagasque@ono.com](mailto:edicionestogodelagasque@ono.com)

