

Cartography of a Journey

History emulates time, is depository of actions, witness to the past, example and advice of the present, warning of what it is to come.

Miguel de Cervantes

Italian futurists were visionary at the beginning of the XX century, when they wanted to capture speed and movement in their works of art. Marinetti, in Point Four of the first “Futurist Manifesto” (1909), stated: “*We declare that the splendour of the world has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed.*” And something characteristic of our days is the speed at which everything is happening: one day something is innovative and modern, the next day it is already obsolete. This is why it is difficult, and maybe even more in the field of art, to distinguish between classic and modern, true and false... We will really need the passage of time to see what is valuable enough as to become part of art history, and what disappears from time as a simple marketing product, used and promoted by capricious and interested trends.

This vertiginous pace is leading true artists to create on a continuous basis with a clear intention: search for the new and, at the same time, for that which is authentic. Also, there is the search for personality, that is, to find a world of your own that makes a difference with the others. We cannot forget that artists, as intellectual, have always been deeply immersed in the society to denounce problems and, in many cases, with a view of the future that leads them to get ahead of their time.

Precisely, Cristóbal Toral’s works make us think of all these artistic positions. Already in the seventies, he was clear that painting entails different functions. This is why in some of his early paintings he portrayed a hot issue of today: the drama of emigration. In such paintings as *Los Emigrantes* or *Emigrante muerto*, he displays real characters shaken by the tragedy of movements. In these two pictures (of a large size) painted in 1975, Toral uses a dark, almost tenebrist palette, and the realism with which he paints his protagonists takes us to the Spanish pictorial tradition. In these works, his typical suitcases and parcels, which make us think precisely in that constant movement, in that restlessness that obsessed futurists, already started to appear. When we penetrate into his particular world, we are permeated with different hints, seeing beyond the “suitcase” object. In some of his works like *La Llegada* (1975) we can feel rootlessness, chaos and solitude. A mysterious woman, with her back on us, confronts a tide of luggage. His characters are endowed with remarkable timelessness.