

MNNCARS

escultura

Evaristo Bellotti

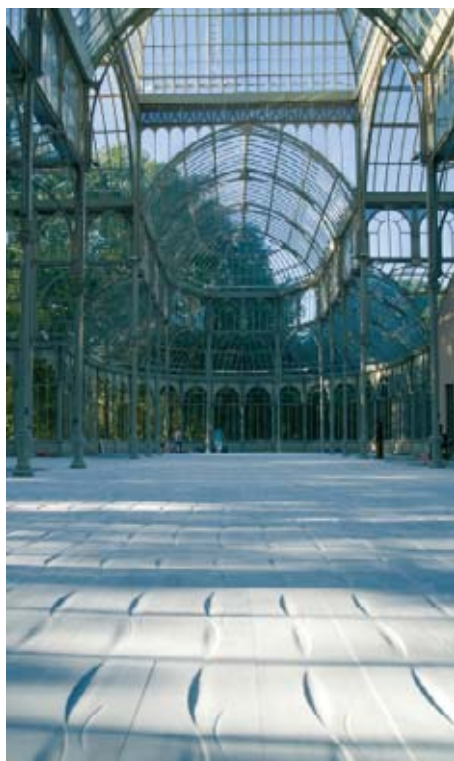
19 September - 8 December 2008

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Throughout the last three decades Evaristo Bellotti (Algeciras, Cadiz, 1955) has been consolidating his own sculptural language. A language not subjected to stylistic limits but keen to investigate the possibilities offered by the sculptural renewal carried out by the different avant-gardes at the beginning of the twentieth century. "An a-style (rather than an anti-style) as a strategy aimed at returning the sovereignty to the individual", as the artist himself writes in his book *Escritos a pie de obra*. Throughout his long trajectory he has shown a constant interest for the classical culture of Greece and Rome, for the collective memory of the peoples of the Mediterranean, embodied in works dwelling on the idea of fragment, of ruin. "My interest in the fragment and archaeology stem not so much from nostalgia as from the pleasure of witnessing the effect time has on things." The passage of time shapes the archaeological material, subjecting it to metamorphoses. His sculptures are not only a throw back to a mythical time but also manage to affect the surrounding space by radiating

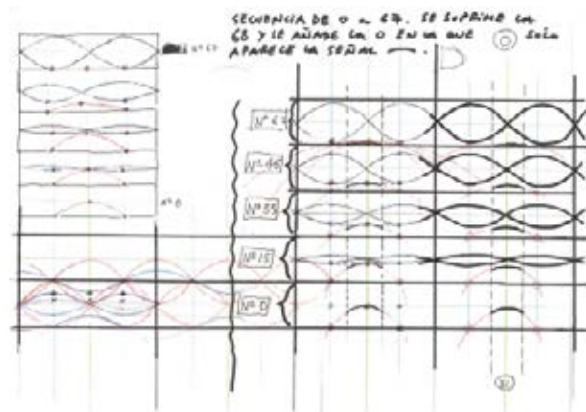
a natural fluidity far removed from anything stationary.



escultura (fragment), 2008.
Marble from Macael and water. 19.12 h

as Aurora García points out in the text to the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, "it is not our belief that Bellotti sets out to dwell on the sacred or other religious considerations of one kind or another, but in a contemporary reflection on form and its capacity to adapt to change by transforming itself both to the contents of art and to the requirements of human perception throughout time".

According to the artist's own words, *escultura* is an exploration of the limits of Sculpture. It is not an alternative but rather the overcoming of all the manacles that restricted its range of activities. It is, following again the words of Aurora García, "a spatial extension close to planimetrism, (...) a gradient proposal where the role of bulk is replaced by a surface floating between the emergence and the disappearance of form, (...) Bellotti has conceived a new skin with which to pave the flooring of the Palacio de Cristal, 'a skin, according to the artist, with its swellings, its depressions and folds' but somehow running away, in all its variations, of any chance encounter by means of the conceptual and formal application of a geometric reasoning".



Preliminary drawing for *escultura*, 2008.
Felt pens and graphite on paper

Bellotti considers that the Palacio de Cristal is a phenomenal modifier of perception. Having forfeited its original role as green house, the visitor becomes an object of the container, induced to take on a reflective stance. In this construction he has found the ideal place in which to house his *escultura*. A total of 3.204 pieces of white Macael marble, each measuring 100 x 33 x 3 cm., cover the entire floor space -a thousand square meters- of the Palacio de Cristal. Just over half the pieces have been carved out in relief following a double-curve line according to a design worked out on paper bearing in mind the floor plan of the Palacio. The water, poured on the slabs, lodges itself on the depressions present as a result of the curves, thus creating puddles. The reflections of light on water as well as the natural process of evaporation makes this a changing work, subject to the fluctuations of light and room temperature. In Bellotti's own words, "*escultura* is a fragment of the outdoors".

The work is navigable with bare feet. The possibility to step on the puddles and feel the depressions ploughed into the marble turns the spectator into an ambler and the volume of sculpture into a landscape. The presence of water upon the undulating surface evokes the water's edge, the strip of beach made wet by the coming and going of the waves. A landscape firmly rooted in the memory of Algeciras-born Bellotti, a landscape that goes beyond the physical experience to connect with the legacy of all the cultures that at one time or another roamed that coastline. There is also at work, unavoidable in any idea of splashing in water, a clearly playful element that belongs in the epicurean position adopted by the artist himself in the face of the sensory perception of his work. "I pursue the conservation of a certain know-how -explains the sculptor- that celebrates pleasure and encourages all imaginable types of sensory perception, in life as in art."

Marble and water are both recurring materials in his work, as allusions to an aquatic mythology or as the real matter of his sculptures. The powerful symbolic character of water, purifying element and symbol of death and renaissance, can lead us to think of *escultura* as somehow embedded in the sacred. "Bathed in rain, *weathered*, outdoors, the sculpture acquires the patina of the sacred", writes Bellotti. Notwithstanding, and



escultura (fragment), 2008. Marble from Macael and water. 14.20 h



**Museo Nacional
Centro de Arte Reina Sofía**

Palacio de Cristal.
Retiro Park
Tel: 91 574 66 14

Admission free

October to March (inclusive):
Mondays - Saturdays: 10.00 - 18.00
Sundays and Holidays: 11.00 - 16.00

April to September (inclusive):
Mondays - Saturdays: 11.00 - 20.00
Sundays and Holidays: 11.00 - 18.00
Tuesdays closed

Illustrations

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