

## PRECOLLAPSE. Bringing down the curtain before anything starts.

Jordi Pallarès, 2018

Many are those who recognise Grip Face's work in the streets. The evolution of his language is a fact, and even more so in his exquisite notebooks. His iconography has gone through continuous refinement along the years, presenting itself as saturated, or dismembered images, in a visible and isolated disconnection. Precollapse concentrates three of his most recent iconographic elements: the mask, the wall and the rubbish. All three suggest ambiguous images, confused between them, and to any of us. Classic and apparently easy metaphors (and maybe they go unnoticed for this very reason) to refer us to the individual, his limits and all the things we keep generating. By wearing a mask, we risk it being confused with our own face or, even worse, its ending up representing ourselves even more than our own face. Now, haven't we learned to deal with each situation that stalks us? Even so, a wall is not perceived in the same way by all those who stand in front of it. Like the mask, it can be, and not be. If the wall is a vertical construction used to divide or limit spaces, the walls can be either divisive, or retaining walls. In Precollapse, Grip Face has worked in a spiral in the way his works occupy the space in the Pep Llabrés Gallery. He boarded up the spaces through which one could access, he placed lighting backstage, he painted texts and images on the wall and on wood but, above all, he most definitely entered the third dimension. A large piece of fabric with neatly-organised bricks represented on it slides down the wall and enters the floor. Just perfect. It could be held up as a flag, displaced like a subtle curtain or be rolled up like a metal blind. In any of these cases, seven rubbish bags are right there on the border. Expectative. Had the wall been loaded vertically, it might have started to scratch off and probably, the backdrop would have fallen before anything could even start. Grey over pink. This project supposes, among other things, a scenographic exercise that contemplates selected approaches to reality. Images that are being overlapped, stains, doodles, and fragments of textures, in a dramatisation in which nothing is really what it appears to be. The shape of the registry.

In Precollapse, the colour palette is precise, intentioned and is generated through two colour bases: the pink one (water soluble ranges going from magenta to "love pink"), and above all, that of greys. The presence of the first one compensates and delays the arrival of this dark grey, close to collapse. Neat aesthetics in which our blindness is demonstrated when confronted to what we have in front. A paradoxe accompanied by bitter chuckles, a predictable complacency facing what is exposed, and a pink smiley that smiles intermittently, like a joker to so much pictorial neatness. A pink that Grip Face has been reclaiming for years, as part of a personal struggle that stops him from giving into values imposed by society. Hyperaestheticity. In this process layers are fundamental. Each piece of Precollapse concentrates a quantity of layers that, through reserves, hides everything that we are. An ephemeral action in both its realisation and its hiding, typical to the street interventions the artist raises scrupulously, documenting it all before being hidden away, so that the spectator only sees the final result. Pieces that deserve being seen from behind too.

Layers that are still masks being used as placebos to a reality we like and in which anonymous faces appear, along with the iconography mentioned above. Portraits of ambiguous expressions with stains and a lot of facial hair, through which one can sense what is behind. Diptychs. Icons of comedy and tragedy. The same ones that observe how their own rubbish, once deposited in bags, acquire worrisome and disconcerting shapes. A rubbish that the artist dared to exhibit, depositing it in the very gallery. Organic or inorganic, it is post-removal rubbish as such. Bags that represent us and expose us, by reminding us the quantity of refugees being piled up similarly along the borders. We generate walls to avoid or deter seeing the other, while taking the rubbish out to sterilise our own selves. Greys or pinks, they are walls of European shit. Colours that blind us, like Grip Face points out in parallel works such as *Black Rubbish is the Future* (2018). An online video project that circulates ironically and threateningly. A teaser that berates us. A document that reports our inevitable mutation. Borders, plastics, bags...rubbish... When everything is irreversibly jammed, no one will say he had not been warned. We will end up pulling each other's hair and we will hide like strangers behind the backdrop.

Precollapse is not Grip Face's first indoor solo project, not even in Mallorca. Even so, it is maybe the one that brings together his most mature, personal and committed work. *Descompuesto en un presente incierto* (Miscelanea, Barcelona, 2015) was a title that, back then, established a state of being, represented in a piece of work in which different faces were divided uncomplainingly while facing a reality that was hard to believe. A project that preceded *Black Faces* (SC Gallery, Bilbao, 2016-2017), in which the artist made a necessary and visible individual and collective masquerading, and that came out as the result of his interventions in different European cities. The flagging of a mask as a wink to what we are. To this flip-side we all have, and that extrapolated a series of billboards intervened with from behind, in the *Exported Items* project (Jan Arnold Gallery, Vienna, 2017). This line of inquiry on our own contradictions continues in *Doors without destination* (CCA, Andratx, 2016). An indoor as well as an outdoor work that consisted in protecting and hiding images in deft dialectics between the container and the contained. An inside/outside dialog in which the wall became a weird protagonist. Namely, in a fragmented fashion, the bricks have taken part in many of his projects as things that appear and disappear. Within the public space, reproducing it or giving it visibility implies a certain assessment of this other story of the city. Of the rawest, deepest, and most authentic face of any wall. In *Óbices de una quimera millennial* (Espacio Solo, Madrid, 2017), Grip Face realises an extraordinary intervention on the internal walls of a lift. A whole challenge for such a transiting vertical space in which faces with bittersweet expressions appear as trapped half-way between suggestion and dispossession, and again, as wall fragments. Be it in his ascent or in his decline, the spectator witnesses a cathartic process, while observing (himself), through the window of the lift.