

Un mensaje para Anabel. A text of Óscar Alonso Molina and Juan Carlos Bracho for the catalogue *A message for Anabel*. Museo ABC. Madrid. 2011  
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## THE PROJECT

“A message for Anabel” may be defined as a non-linear project expanded in multiple directions, weaving a network of common interests and depicting a space where stories multiply in an on-going metamorphosis. It is a work that reflects on the power of images and the circularity of contemporary creative processes.

“A message for Anabel” is built up from minimum gestures and brief personal stories; also known as “landscapes of the memory”, in lower-case letters. A collective memory as a receptacle for the past in the present, not understood as a unique, universal and unalterable legacy, but rather as an expansive, unsettled concept that we all build based on our own experience, where all voices are welcome.

“A message for Anabel” gives us the possibility to build a shared story ranging from intimate to global matters. A process with a beginning but without an end that has undergone the following steps:

**I.** For years Juan Carlos Bracho has been conducting multi-page experiments using his home printer as part of the production process of his photographic pieces. These sheets, once printed and pasted, allow him to work with a scale model 1:1 and they can be easily pleated, transported and stored at a very low cost.

Parallel to the artworks that Bracho exhibited and put on the market, the artist has steadily built up a collection of multi-pages over the years, i.e.: sketches that often hang precariously from the walls of his home or studio, some of which have become gifts for friends, been destroyed or simply disappeared in the process of moving house, while others have been exhibited recently.

**II.** “A message for Anabel” follows that precise working methodology and accumulative nature that characterizes his artwork, deeply analysing and reflecting on the processes of consolidation of images, where the private factors of each spectator-recipient gain in importance.

The ultimate aim of this project is to create a new piece that only exists in a multi-page format. Such artwork –110 x 145 cm actual size– will be the only document of an ephemeral mural painting that will be freely displayed in a website that has been specifically created for this purpose. The website –in Spanish and English– will be accessible to anyone interested in receiving a copy of the unlimited edition of “A message for Anabel”. In this open project, the spectator-recipient will eventually become a joint participant in the artwork, as well as architects of an important part of its genesis.

**III.** During this period, every day applicants will receive, (in the e-mail address provided upon subscription) a numbered fragment in A4 format, containing a selection of the artwork. The last e-mail will enclose a nominal certificate with the number of the downloaded copy.

In order to create your own multi-page version of “A message for Anabel” you will only have to print and paste all the images following a few simple instructions that will be submitted by e-mail. You can also create your own version if you like.

There will be as many copies of the new artwork as participants. We will begin a multiplication process where you can participate by forwarding your message to those you wish. It is about creating, drawing and building an endless worldwide chain. The outcome will be an artwork which will become a metaphor of the channel where it is ingrained: the Internet –a universe which is not boundless but certainly unapproachable.

At the end of your collaboration you will be invited to submit a text and an image. They can either be reflections on the process, personal stories, or images of the assembled piece or any other piece related to your experience.

These materials will be compiled in a book comprising a selection of the received images and stories and a list of all participants in the project until the date of publication. There will be a daily update of all the information on the website that can be visualized in an interactive map.

**IV.** As in some of the artist's previous works, the starting point of "A message for Anabel" is a minimum gesture which is continuously repeated. In this case, thousands of messages will create a painted image with endless strokes of multicoloured lead pencil (red, green and blue).

Methodical and repetitive processes (painting and its repetition) where hazard will, however, be present once more in the project's dynamic and in the drawing: swings of endless stripes where the latter and its meaning will move unceasingly, depicting big landscapes and small stories.

A three-coloured painted mural: red, green and blue (RGB, name of the light-image) whose endless combinations are composed by electronic images that we consume compulsively through the endless screens which daily catch our sight.

**V.** What would we see, what would it mean then...? "A message for Anabel" is a reflection on images, interrogating us on the way we look at the present but also at the way we interpret our visual and emotional background. A painting where we can find as much as we are willing to give. Therefore, the recipient, with patience and perseverance, will create his or her own meaning, depending on the relationship that he or she sets with the observed object.

An experience that will be born in the past –whenever the participant decides to get involved in the project– set in the present and projected into the future, within an unlimited space generated by the new technologies; a place where coordinates seem to be reversed.

However, paradoxically, although "A message for Anabel" uses the Internet for its growth– a system which is a paradigm of promptness and omnipresence that speeds up an unceasing exchange of information of all sorts–, the use of the network will be rather perverse, as this is a project of slow gestation, dilated in time. We will be handling an image whose multiplication will not trivialize its meaning, quite the opposite: it will encourage the feeling of a collective thought in motion and the feeling that in art, as in life, stories never really come to an end.

All submitted images or stories, regardless of their aim, will be like an echo, a reflection on images' accumulative nature, fragility, limits and their power over our conscience.

## THE EXHIBITION

Juan Carlos Bracho breaks the Museum's walls. He opens up a gap and launches his work to the network of networks: the Internet, i.e.: the world. The project, presented under the umbrella of Conexiones –a program organized by Óscar Alonso Molina– is simultaneously exhibited on-line and in the Museo ABC.

“A message for Annabel” is the second exhibition of this cycle where artists who are somehow related to painting in any of its current expressions, are invited to participate in an exhibition that begins by choosing two works of art: one from the Santander Collection and another one from the Museum's collection.

For this occasion Bracho has chosen two pieces which, within their dialogue, draw a conceptual line ranging from very specific issues to generic matters. The piece chosen from the Museum is a portrait of the newspaper's founder, Torcuato Luca de Tena, and the newspaper's collection, painted in April 1929 by Joaquín Xaudaró; whilst the piece chosen from the Santander collection is a magnificent anonymous 17th century French still-life painting, executed in the vanitas style.

Based on those artworks, the artist has recorded two videos where a hundred works selected from both collections steadily merge, thus creating a new abstract image. After the exhibition, each one of them will be donated by the artist to become part of those collections they paraphrase and that were also the source of inspiration.

The exhibition subsequently reflects on what a collection is nowadays, ultimately understood by the artist as a network, a permeable fabric full of internal connexions letting some images penetrate while rejecting others, the final outcome being a peculiar composition where every spectator, every user is some sort of collector who takes decisions over that unaccomplished text. The artist will ultimately encourage us to reflect on the power and meaning of images and our relationship with them.

The set-up of the exhibition highlights Bracho's unique way of working: multi-page. Simple domestic impressions created by the artist as part of the production of his large-scale pictures. Every multi-page cuts these images into cheaper printings on paper. Once the pieces are pasted together, they provide a complete new image. Bracho's unique sketching method was presented for the first time four years ago in this museum during Madrid's White Night.

### **The on-line artwork:**

The project is presented simultaneously and democratically on the Internet at [www.unmensajeparaannabel.com](http://www.unmensajeparaannabel.com). At this website, following a few simple instructions anyone can receive a free and original image of the author on his/her computer. Such image will eventually be included in a multi-page that each one can assemble as desired. While the exhibition remains open to the public, part of this creation process will take place in the museum's galleries where the artist (particular, specific) is dissolved in a collective authorship (generic, universal).

“A message for Annabel” is the third collection within this project. In the case of the Santander and the Museum's collections, the sum of their parts has generated a new abstract and condensed image; in this case, however, a single image may lead to multiple interpretations, depending on the relationship established with it by all those responsible for its final configuration.

“A message for Annabel” is suggested as an image of complex nature, interrogating us about the

way we look at the present but also the way we interpret our visual and emotional background. A drawing where we will find as much as we are ready give.