Lebenglik, Fabián, "El hombre de la burbuja" [The Man of the Bubble], *Página/12* newspaper, Buenos Aires, June 10, 2003.

The National Museum of Fine Arts presents in two of its ground-floor rooms—and a distribution hall—a retrospective anthology of Miguel Harte (1961)—a characteristic artist of the nineties—covering the period 1989-2002 and curated by Patricia Rizzo.

Harte's work—fundamentally objects, of all sizes—initially condenses in the "inclusions" that the artist inserts as supposed accidents within the fabric of deceptive surfaces such as formica, first, and Martilux automotive paint, later.

What at the beginning of the nineties is barely a tiny inclusion like a transparent tear that bursts into the formica, with the passage of time and Harte's artistic growth, develops until becoming tiny included worlds, so that the drops transform into bubbles and spheres: microscopic self-generated and self-sufficient worlds, in which an entire artificial nature grows, where strange creatures (hybrids between insects and humans) coexist surrounded by an environment that suggests both the submarine and intergalactic hypothesis. Either of the two reveries functions as a microcosm.

From the initial tears *Sin titulo*, 1991, passing through the transparent resin that, as an accidental spill on a folding formica table, contains a fly *La mosca*, 1991, to the bubbles that gain in size and become independent from the surfaces that contain them to emerge as enormous autonomous worlds *El jardin filosofico*, 1998, Harte's work is of growing complexity, advancing toward the hypertrophy of "inclusions," like abysses opened from faults, craters, fissures, orifices, tunnels, and other accidents that emerge under the protection of magmatic surfaces.

The inclusions grow inward into the forms that contain them, or overflow those same forms, which can no longer serve as a container.

Harte's incrustations are clearly disruptive. In this sense, the idea of the "fault" as a rupture of a supposedly eternal and naturalized logic is notorious in the piece *La quebrada, 1997,* in which the fault is put into operation as a linguistic irruption.

Always in his work bubbles are born that appear on the apparently impenetrable surface of formica or automotive paint. Harte proposes a closed fabric, apparently impenetrable, that offers itself as a deceptive visual fabric. If the work ended there, "only" there would be to see a set of subtle variations, chromatisms, and undulations, obtained by the manipulation of the material. On those surfaces a falsification aesthetic is played out, in which all supposed nobility (of metal, for example) is replaced by imitations.

But what for Harte could have meant the discovery of a material (which allows him an industrial finish) is in reality a trap for the eye, a sought-after imposture. The magmatic materiality and, as

advertisements say, the "covering" power of that kind of paint, serve as the sweet aroma—the striking color or the disturbing forms—of carnivorous plants to attract insects. Precisely, many of Harte's bubbles are inhabited by rare insects.

The small—and then not so small—worlds encapsulated in bubbles look like the materialization of obsessive and recurrent delirious fictions. The relationship between Miguel Harte and Sebastián Gordín must also be noted—two works in the exhibition recover this exchange of poetics: both microcosms complement and feed back on each other.

Harte's incrustations usually contain asphyxiated self-portraits of the one who, with spiral and bulging eyes, finds himself trapped in foreign bodies. They are worlds on an infinitely small scale, which include complete cosmogonies within the framework of a reinvention of nature where new and strange vegetables, animals, and minerals proliferate. The detail and meticulousness of those small worlds is as astonishing as it is delicate: in the midst of those plants and rocks, deeply introspective stories develop, as if the artist were manufacturing an insect of the Harte family and from that creature generating an appropriate habitat to contain it, beginning with the amniotic atmosphere and organic food. In this sense, Miguel Harte's pieces seem to chain together as if they were part of a new theory of biological evolution.

In *El Jardin filosofico*—a large-scale work—an enormous transparent pyramid supported by roots gives life to an idyllic and strange landscape, at whose center rises a tree and at its foot there is a lake—with water that is set in motion at regular intervals. In the tree's crown grow clusters with tiny faces, while an insect-Narcissus contemplates its mirrored image in the lake.

Dreams of liberation or asphyxiating and Dantesque nightmares, collective and private utopias, as time passes, the growing inclusions become autonomous to the point of—literally—radicalizing themselves: that is, transforming into giant plants and roots that, like vegetation from another planet, grow until they contain renewed inclusive formations: other bubbles, as part of an infinite story that reproduces itself inevitably to make its way toward new dreams, nightmares, and utopias.