**Battistozzi, Ana María, “Delirante mundo artificial” [Delirious Artificial World], Clarín newspaper, Buenos Aires, November 7, 1998.**

More than a century ago, when the Industrial Revolution began to show the first signs of what enlightened reason called progress, artists—especially the Romantics—took refuge in an idealized natural world that they made responsible for the melancholy that this course of events provoked in them. Since then, industry and nature have never gotten along well.

Over the centuries, the struggle settled into known results: little remains of that old and longed-for natural world. Every organic material finds its equivalent today in an industrial product: plants, stone, wood, skin, flowers, or marble reach us in seductive falsifications that seem to speak of a dispute settled in favor of the artificial.

This is, apparently, the comfortable terrain on which Miguel Harte's work has unfolded in recent years: at the opposite pole from romantic sensibility. However, not everything is calm on the finely finished surfaces of his industrial paintings. In the depths of his seas of pearlescent enamel, the rumor of a whirlpool loaded with threats has been stirring for some time. Revealed little by little in craters and gashes, that underground latency has been threatening to burst forth in a confused torrent of stones, algae, and small vermin.

The Domain of Fiction

One might say that this is the particular way in which Harte's work refracts the insoluble antagonisms of reality. It does not announce or represent them, it makes them emerge in its internal fabric converted into metaphor. But it has reached the point of liberating them by expelling them from the neat channel of its exterior appearance.

In this latest exhibition of his at Ruth Benzacar Gallery (Florida 1000), his natures, until recently imprisoned and kept as relics, overflow to achieve an autonomy of reverie. They have finally abandoned their microscopic burrows, illuminated with dubious glows, to achieve their own light in the domains of fiction. A flight to the territories of imagination that nevertheless does not nullify the tensions; it simply transfers them to another space where the struggle continues between winged beings, born from copulations of men and insects. A tiny fairy world nests in bells and crystal bubbles while a pearlescent tree, with multiple faces and roots that never stop growing, improvises an open spectacle for whoever wants to settle into it.

Gaston Bachelard said that the miniaturizing imagination belongs to all times and appears in the dreams of natural dreamers. Thus, he also recalled that prisoner who drew on the wall of his cell a tunnel and a small train on which, making himself small, he climbed to disappear into the darkness before the mocking gaze of his jailers. "One must surpass logic to live the greatness that exists within the small," he concluded his story.

Like Bachelard's prisoner, these latest works by Harte surpass the spurious logic of the

industrial fake and convert it into dream material. They populate it with fantastic visions that extend the frontiers of the real. In them coexist mythological beings, tree-men and mirrors of agitated waters that recreate impossible stories. In his "*El Jardin filosofico*," nature, conceived as pure artifice, acquires the expansive force of delirium. It is no longer a double, but something that has a life of its own; that has grown in the dynamics of excess and ended up breaking the external rigors of form.