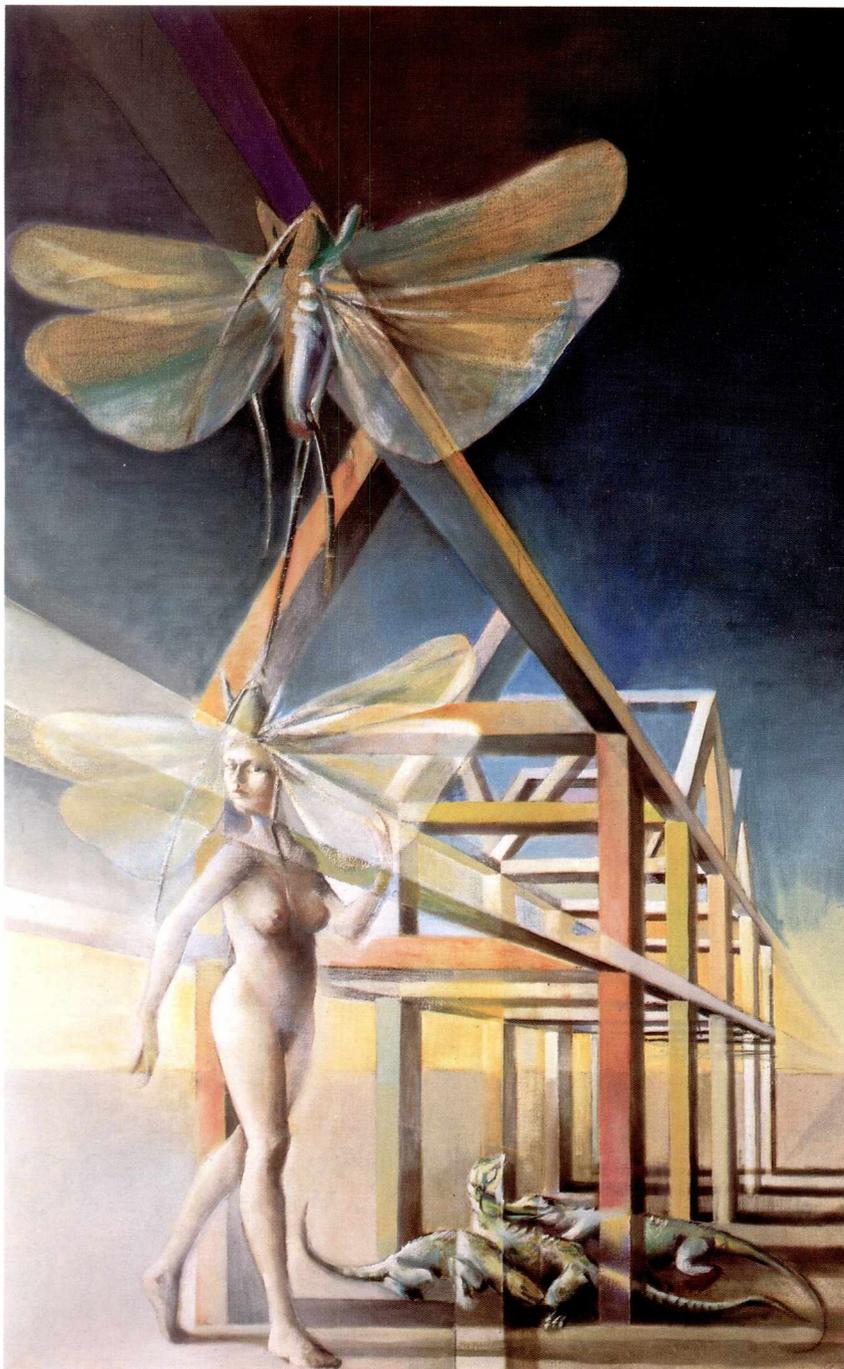


THE GEOMETRY *Of Desire and Dreams*

Alberto Ruy Sánchez*



Photos reprinted courtesy of Arnaldo Coen

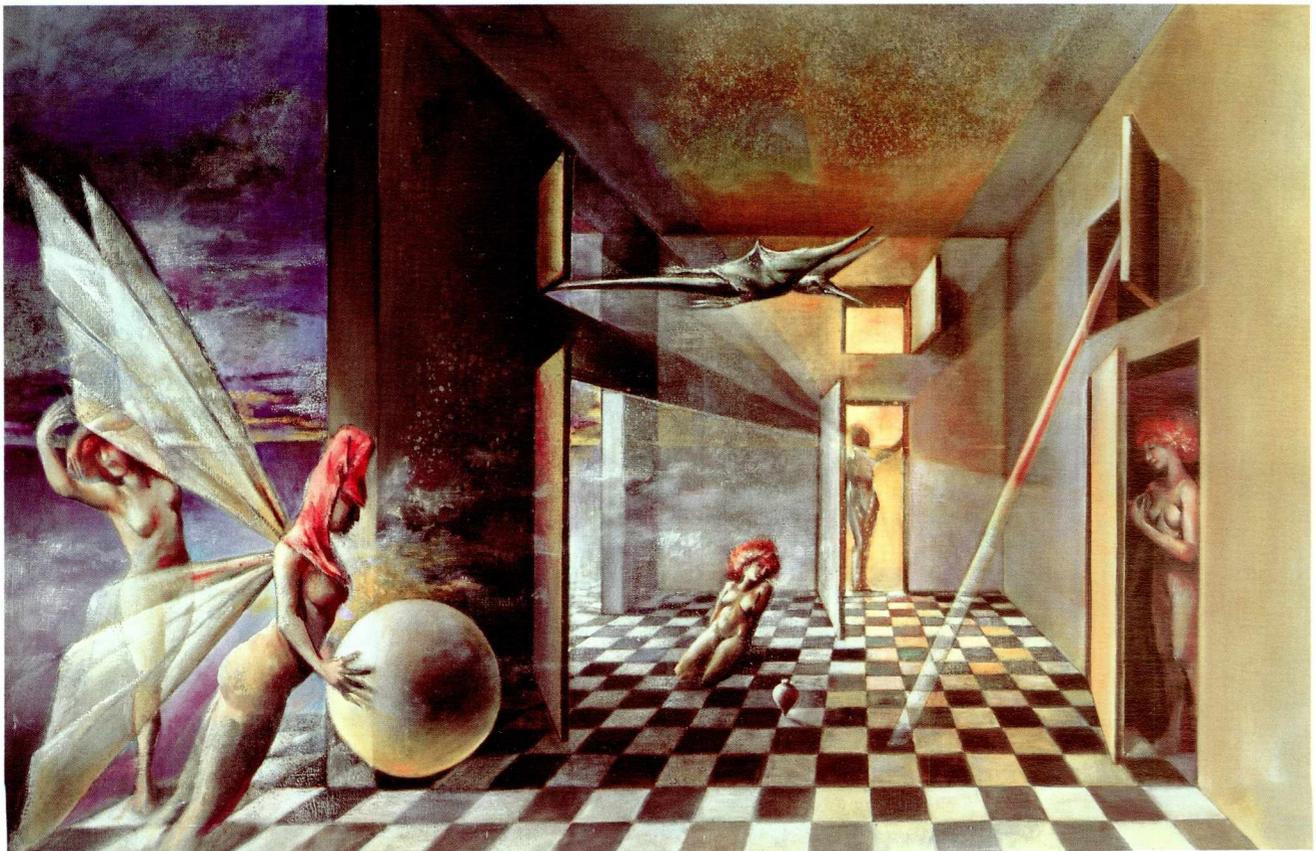
Bed of Transparency, 160 x 100 cm (oil on canvas).

More than a fiesta for the eye, Arnaldo Coen's painting is a carnival of forms pierced by a rainbow, a carnival of fleeting, disguised forms celebrating the immensity of the moment at the same time that the four sides of the cube that imprisons them give them new freedom. We are before impossible cubes, both limited and infinite. They hold us, but we can also observe them from without. One of their walls may be the picture itself, or the wall of the Museum of Modern Art where it hangs, or the large window to the rear, or the landscape we would see from that window. But the cubes are also objects inside the paintings, and their walls are windows through which clouds and balls enter, or they are swimming pools or secret doors that lead to the cellar of dreams, or reflecting pools or traps through which other cubes fall into the dark blue vacuum of the universe.

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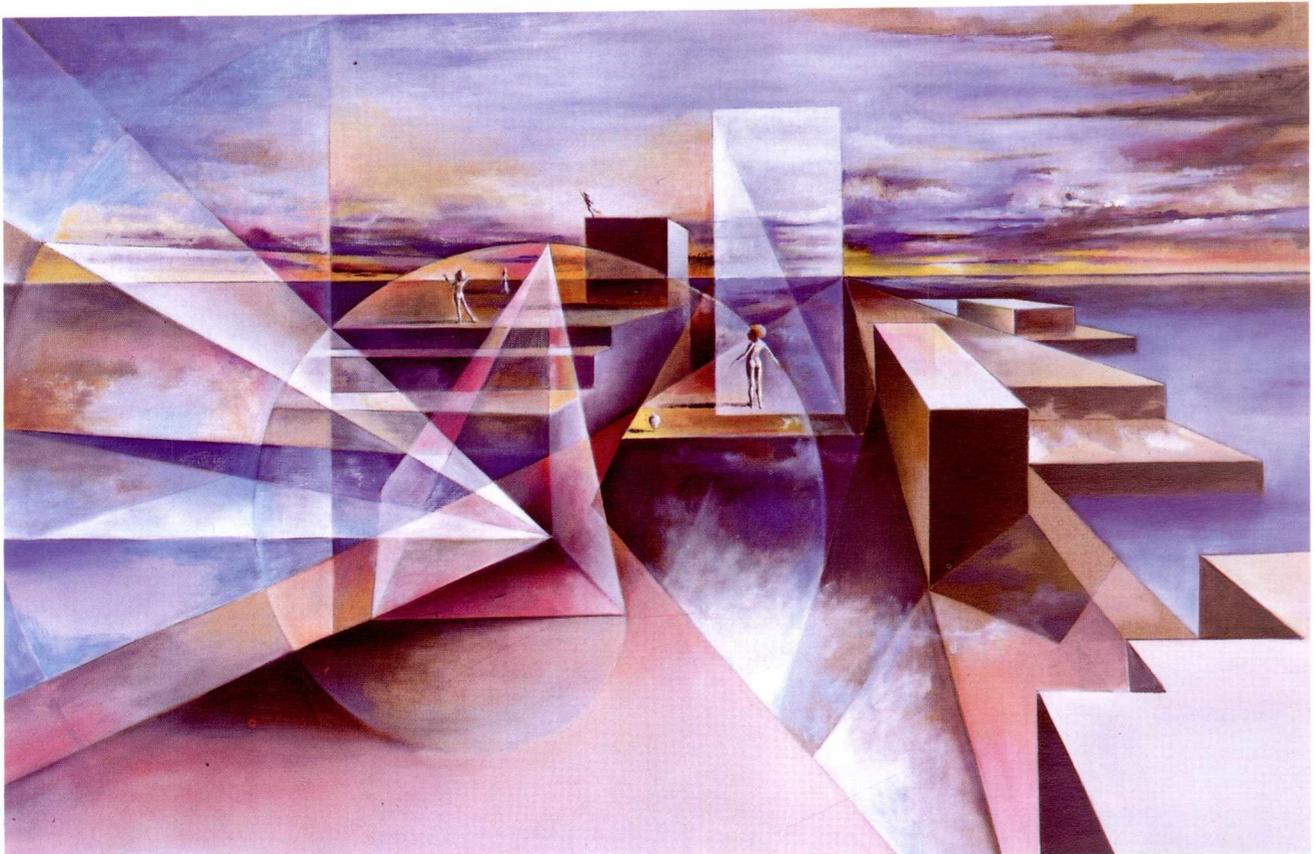


A Beat of Time, 120 x 180 cm (oil on canvas).



Throw to the Sun and the Moon, 100 x 160 cm (oil on canvas).





I See You in What I look At, 120 x 180 cm (oil on canvas).

Opposite page: *In an Unending Present*, 200 x 150 (oil on canvas).

But nothing —no wall, horizon or vacuum— seems to stop Coen's carnival. Perhaps this is because as it runs its course, which both subverts and diverts, it creates a universe: as the viewer's gaze wanders over the paintings, it realizes that each is a planet unto itself, just as each mind is a universe unto itself. And his universe moves in festive procession, propelled more by the luminous force of play (and of smiles) than by the force of gravity. However, in the universe of Arnaldo Coen, the tides rise and fall like the heavy breathing of the color that so often twinkles speckled with white. The purples separate

like an evening sky yielding little by little to the night. The force of the moon —which naturally is a cube— ends up imposing itself. It is the time when lizards become unicorns and fossils, stars. Minotaurs shake their sex in a cube as they whisper into their beloved's ear, "I am a prisoner of your enormous freedom."

At this final hour which is also eternal —detained, or rather, delayed— in these paintings, the lines are no longer a succession of points but of intensities. Bodies are no longer what they seem: *from the geometry of the flesh arises the dream*. These paintings exhibited "on the edge of time" show us that we are all

geometry, relationships among bodies, mystery and mechanics of forms, human landscapes pierced in turn by the curved illusion of color and the straight illusion of perspective. As the magnetized center of the exhibit, a nude woman lies on a dune that is also a pyramid of straight ridges. The rainbow tangentially touches her breast like a sting of life that infects her with dreams and impregnates her sand-colored body without yet untangling the dark forest of her womb. In essence, the music of the spheres and the cubes tries hesitantly to reveal a secret to us. But, "How can what is not said at all be said?" 

