

ARTFORUM

Guillermo Kuitca

THE DRAWING CENTER

35 Wooster Street

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Guillermo Kuitca's ongoing "*Diarios*" develop atop lapsed, cast-off canvases. Drawn taut across a circular table in Kuitca's studio, each is left to accrue residues of the artist's quotidian routine for spans of three to six months. The completion of each *Diario* abides by a temporal logic, rather than a set of aesthetic or conceptual concerns, such that the end of one, more or less, marks the beginning of the next, and so forth. Far from yielding a homogeneous iteration, Kuitca's successive production begets a dizzying stylistic dispersal where to recuperate means to preserve as much as to destroy.

Installed in the Drawing Center's recently renovated main gallery, the seventeen "*Diarios*" on view chronicle the period from May 2005 to September 2012. The abandoned compositions that double as surface and support survey Kuitca's past two decades of painterly concerns. Opera house seating plans, oblique genealogical charts, and splintered maps appear under messy layers of graphite, marker, and ballpoint pen. Lines delimit forms—a block letter, a flower, a face in profile—then trail off into an absentminded elsewhere. Swatches of paint and pastel border scribbles that seem to have been executed in distracted states of boredom or daydream, while deposited items—the fingertips of a glove, a mound of pencil shavings, a strip of orange pills—attest to the table's erstwhile use. Words and numbers coalesce in hermetic marginalia of personal contacts (DOROTHY 9863-2216), impossible equations ("34 = 136"), and unfiltered musings (GARAGE MAHAL, MAGRITE / MARGARITE / MAGRITTE, LA JUIVE, CABLEVISION, PIZZA HOUSE), evidencing thought processes that conflate the banal and the abstruse. Each tondo retains the unsettled feel of a work-in-progress, and Kuitca lingers in this irresolution, privileging enigmatic gestures over legible constructions.

Affinities with Cy Twombly's graffiti paintings somewhat anchor the formal diffuseness of the "*Diarios*." Yet Kuitca's ambitions are more expansive, and more personal, than a simple excavation of modernist styles. Doodling atop these dense, discarded works seems to provide a means of attenuating the influence of the past and clearing space for the inchoate, the incidental, and the unforeseen to surface.

— Courtney Fiske



Guillermo Kuitca, *Diario* (19 June – 6 November 2009), mixed media on canvas, 47 1/4" x 47 1/4" x 1 5/8".

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