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JORGE MACCHI CA2M, Madrid, Spain

One of the earliest pieces in this survey of Jorge Macchi's work, 'Perspectiva' (Perspective), is *Zeno's Arrow* (1992), a short video (made in collaboration with David Oubiña) that provides a catchy cinematographic rendering of the ancient Greek philosopher's paradox about the logical impossibility of movement. Paradoxes of this sort, which pit reason against reality, perform a kind of cerebral ju-jitsu, making logic work against itself so as to flip it nicely on its own head – as does nearly all of Macchi's clever, adroit and often poignant work.

The artist combines craft with a kind of calculated surrealism. There is an analytic quality to the way he disassembles the visual world, only to reassemble it in his images – for, above all, Macchi is a maker of images, even when he works with objects that tend to be slightly skewed or disrupted. More than visual puns, Macchi's images are visual puns and, like puns, they often seem to have been lying in wait, discovered rather than invented.

The installation *Still Song* (2005) provides an example of this. Like a play within a play, it's a white cube within the white cube of the gallery. A mirrored disco ball hangs from the ceiling. Where the myriad points of reflected light from the spinning ball would, under normal conditions, have landed, Macchi has perforated the ceiling, walls and floor, as if the light itself has cut these rough holes. (Judging from numerous works on view, the artist clearly likes to make holes in things.) The impact of stepping into the environment of *Still Song* is as visual as it is visceral, as disorienting as it is disconcerting, as if someone had slipped something into your drink

at the disco. Yet, for all its whiteness and its ostensible festiveness, the work is somewhat dark: there's a sense of violence to these holes, as if they have been made by bullets sprayed from a machine-gun.

While not, perhaps, explicitly paradoxical, other methodologies employed by Macchi in disrupting the expectation-experience axis include Cagean inflected random operations, as in *Incidental Music* (1998) (the artist trained as a musician and often incorporates music and musical notation in his work); situationist-style psycho-geographies as in *Buenos Aires Tour* (2003); or the techniques of concrete poetry. Unlike many of the neo-conceptualists of his generation, however, Macchi seems generally uninterested in directly referencing his predecessors. The plaintive work *Parallel Lives* (1998) – a shattered piece of glass and its replica, placed side by side on a plinth – is, however, a clear nod to Marcel Duchamp.

Although billed as an overview of 25 years of work and despite offering so many wonderful individual moments, there is a feeling of incompleteness or imbalance to 'Perspectiva' as a whole – something that the occasionally contrived and clumsy hanging does little to alleviate. (Judging from the exhibition literature, the show held significantly more work in its initial iteration at MALBA in Buenos Aires.) Surprisingly, Macchi's wonderful watercolours are all but absent, as are his floor sculptures. While deceptively modest in its insistent use of the commonplace, the real range of the artist's work is greater – and his vision broader – than this exhibition implies: the adage 'always leave them wanting more' does not necessarily apply here.

George Stolz

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Above**
Jorge Macchi,
Still Song, 2005,
installation view