

# 3 + 1

Um Momento

GABRIELA MACHADO

28.04.17 – 17.06.17

OPENING 28.04.17, 7 – 10pm

## *Painting offbeat*

Gabriela Machado's trajectory as an artist is disconcerting. It is disconcerting because it is free and nomadic, and because it does not conform to the canon of the discipline.

Although it can be recognized as painting, there is a ceaseless to and fro between scales, supports and materials in this work that expands the boundaries of the practice (the possibilities of recognition) and imparts fluidity to the process of naming. There is also constant experimentalism, a complete chromatic freedom and the liberation of gesture as an extension of a physical or psychological state rather than the codification of a formal legacy or lineage.

And the offbeat rhythm directly engages the body, which "trembles and swings like a hand drum" and constitutes the imperfect and organic standard-measure, the combustion that activates the permanent return to daily work. "Without drive nothing rolls out", said the artist about the delicate and fragile management of freedom and the will-to-make during a group conversation recently published in a monograph dedicated to her work (*Automatica Edições*, Rio de Janeiro, 2016) in Art Bra collection.

Essentially the paintings featured in this show were made at two different moments: a twenty-day residency in the Hamptons (Long Island, NY), during which she proposed producing a small format painting per day; and in Lisbon, where, along with persisting on small scale works, she tackled larger scale formats. Although produced in far-between locations, the two sets of works are connected.

In the Hamptons, Gabriela Machado swayed to the duration of natural cycles amidst a liquid landscape dominated by the lake opposite the studio where she worked. It is well known that lakes are states of mind, horizontal screens on which time is delayed to the rhythm of our perception. But lakes (some made famous by different artist throughout history) are also painting exercises on the indiscernible: duration, translucency, the movement of things seemingly still. Made "sur le motif", the tiny paintings create a succession, a circulation of sorts, like variations on the same theme: the lake or, in other words, a central fragment into which, or from which, flow pictorial masses of colours pure and impure. Some are recognizable as landscapes, others as abstractions. In some a still-nature irrupts, in others a monkey appears *impromptu*, perhaps as a strategy to break the rhythm of painting, as a way to evade norm, style and historical time. In the more recent paintings, already made in Lisbon, the change of scale signifies more than a mere enlargement, more than a transposition; it signifies a new field of exploration: they are like an abyss, a plunge into the ocean.

Particularly striking is the proposal that seeks to bring into coincidence two places and two times that are so precisely delimited in the exhibition space. However, in the mounting of the show it is irrelevant whether or not the viewers are able to clearly discern the atmospheric density, the light, the chromatic variations; the way in which the artist guides us into the territory of the image, physical and emotionally, with the memory of our biological body and the experience of our cultural body turns the visit into a permanent openness to that which is familiar in the unknown and vice-versa.

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Returning to the subject of circulation mentioned earlier in this text: everything in Gabriela Machado's practice induces an organic experience, everything spirals forth, everything is in motion, always, and up to the opening of the show. In Lisbon, during intervals in painting, she looked for images, black and white photographs, traces of bygone times, clues to lost gestures, spectral presences that flesh out possible places. And those images insinuate themselves in the painting: maybe those places were even already there, transposed, transliterated, poured into painting.

Painting is a complex territory. To continue it is necessary to forget its history, to propose the construction of a collective, shareable body rather than a *corpus*. "To speak about art is also to speak about the collective. To understand what has been done is to understand what is being done. We create our own feeling from the proposed world", says Gabriela Machado in the aforementioned conversation.

Nuno Faria, April 2017

Translation; Rui Cascais Parada