

MARCO PIRES

X, Y, Z

OPENING SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER 16H00

2 NOVEMBER – 11 DECEMBER 2010

TUESDAY - SATURDAY 15-20H

Gallery Pedro Oliveira is pleased to present X, Y, Z, the third individual exhibition by Marco Pires here. The exhibit's title synthesizes the coordinates at the base of the cartesian concept of space and the relation between objects.

The exhibition spans the three rooms of the gallery and includes works from different series the artist works on simultaneously – the underlying intention is to create links between them, rather than to show them individually. The first series explores the connections between social space in its relationship with architecture and geometry, whereas, upon entering the second room one is left adrift when faced with the destruction of coordinates. In the third room, side-by-side with a drawings series, we see a fictional documentary work presented in book and photograph form.

Marco Pires' body of work, particularly in regard to the field of drawing, is developed in accordance with a dialectic movement of thesis and antithesis, or rather, affirmation and negation. This system stems from the utilizing and re-contextualizing of documents and images the artist collects for later intervention, suspending their scientific attributes and introducing new layers that open the works to new approaches and readings – a dimension from whence error, hesitation and variation emerge. This act of re-contextualizing pre-existing elements can be paralleled to the practice of *détournement* (variation), which, before being systematized and studied in the texts of the Situationist International, had appeared decades before with the use of collage, introduced by Picasso at the start of the XXth century and then reused by both Dadaists and Surrealists by mixing text, painting and pictures of all and any provenance in an attempt to subvert the bourgeois aesthetic values of the time. This is of course not Marco Pires' intention, as historically *détournement* as a subversive practice has evolved and followed social and artistic trends, fusing with music via punk and the DIY ethos, and ultimately being absorbed by the very capitalist system it aimed to put in question.

More relevant to Marco Pires is the recuperation of a ludic system stemming from the possibility of developing new paradigms based on the connections and associations between the objects and documents that are his point of departure, at once denying them and handing them over, thus creating new reading possibilities.

The small-scale drawings and the homogenous paintings of geometric, monochromatic shapes on photographs embody this study on variation: the former in a tense register of lines linking organic and geometric elements; the latter – monochromatic paintings on photography – erasing the geographic documents underneath.

In the second room we see 3 *monocromos, da série O mapa de Bellman's* (3 *monochromes, from the series The Bellman's map*) – the title of which is a direct reference to Lewis Carroll's *The hunting of the Snark*. In it, the leader of the expedition gives his crew a map to aid them in their hunt. Absurdly, this map is a uniform surface, a blank page. Stefan Kanfer sees this existential and absurd poem as a representation of the agony of man before the absence of coordinates, leading to drifting. This quest – fundamental for mankind – hides the horror of failure.

The series titled *Topoi* is presented here as a book of 14 colour photographs, two of which have been printed to hang on a wall and one slide. *Topoi* is the plural of *topos*, a greek word used in the 1960's by Alexander Grothendieck to define a mathematical object that aids identify a place, as postulated by his theory of "étale cohomology".

According to the artist, this series is an evolution in his work process, which had hitherto been developed within search and research frames, study work – as in a laboratory not directly linked to its study subjects. This series promoted direct incursions, the materialization of which found in photography its main outlet. Such an exercise called for pedological, psychogeographic incursions, as well as in-study registry. Here we may find an industrial design object, types of soil and vegetation, communication and transport structures, extraction of prime matter, a dwelling or a portrait, all together creating an atlas of images constituting an index of physical and social surroundings similar to scientific illustrations such as can be found in old geography books.

Marco Pires (b. 1977) received his degree in painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon in 2001 and has exhibited regularly since. His work can be found in the collections of the PLMJ Foundation (Lisbon), of the Junta de Extremadura (Spain), the Rios collection (Lisbon) and the PCR collection (Lisbon), as well as in private collections throughout Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and France.