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PRESS-RELEASE

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MARCO PIRES DISPLACEMENT MAPS

SEPT 29 - OCT 27 2007

OPENING FRI SEPT 28th, 10 PM

TUESDAY-SATURDAY 3 PM - 8 PM

Not only is it easy to lie with maps, it's essential. To portray meaningful relationships for a complex, three-dimensional world on a flat sheet of paper or a video screen, a map must distort reality. (...) To avoid hiding critical information in a fog of detail, the map must offer a selective, incomplete view of reality. There's no escape from the cartographic paradox: to present a useful and truthful picture, an accurate map must tell white lies. (...)

Mark Monmonier in "*How to lie with maps*"

The exhibition *Displacement Maps* articulates several different lines of action and many different means of expression which come together in the continuous research that Marco Pires has been carrying out into cartography, specifically about the concept of the map and its inter-disciplinary relationship with the constantly changing notions of representation that define the practising of contemporary visual art.

Marco Pires is interested in the analogy between cartographic representations and painting, as well as the identification of the error and of fiction, in the representation and interpretation of landscape as defined by Mark Monmonier in the book "How to lie with maps", and which deals with the impossibility of achieving reality itself. It is from this reality that the process of artistic mediation in Marco Pires becomes feasible.

His works arise from a procedural activity of distancing that follows several different stages; research; choice of printed or digital cartographic images, namely cities with complex layouts and an orthogonal nature, studies of natural terrain or territorial planning, and then, through means including photography, the projecting, elaborating of masks and three-dimensional models, the images undergo a shifting, refuting and formal decontextualising of the conventions of the discipline (ex: of scale or perspective). The shifting is then accentuated and made real on new supports such as glass, aluminium, paper, canvas or photographic prints.

It is at the moment of the final intervention that the error and falseness factors are mimicked and take on a connotation of criticism in relation to the systems of representing reality. The unforeseen aspect in this practice is reflected and decides the structure of the works. It is through an accumulation of paint with varying densities and tones, the flattening of planes, the juxtaposing of structures and the uncertainty of shapes that the policy of the image moves away from objective representation and stops being landscape or even just abstraction in order to become a strategic place for artistic conception and production. In this way there is an expanding of the possibilities of interpreting and translating a space and the visible.

In reading his works one notes a complex game of the relationship among the several different artistic traditions of representation, art criticism and the use of terrain or urban development from the politico-economic point of view.

His works not only refer to premises about the physical space, but also reflect principles of a social space (a social space as a space for the construction of culture, civilisation and the constitution of the environment). Conceptually, and taking into account the formal process of reflection and decontextualising that the images undergo, one may clearly see a dimension of political and social critique in his works, which is present in the generative disciplines of Geography, namely in Geopolitics or in Psycho-geography.

Psycho-geography is defined as the study of the precise laws and the specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organised or not, on people's emotions and behaviour. It is relevant to bring in the concept of "dérive" as stated by Guy Debord; in a "dérive", one or more people during a certain period of time, forget the usual motives for movement or action, their relationships, their work and their leisure activities, and become motivated by the attractions of the terrain and by unexpected encounters. The fundamental premise of drifting is that people should explore the urban environment that surrounds them creatively and without any imposed preconceived ideas in order to more consciously understand the space they live in, and consequently their existence. One does not recommend the aid of a map in drifting through *Displacement Maps*.

Susana Gaudêncio, September 2007