



Paulo Monteiro
29/10 2019 - 20/12 2019

Mendes Wood DM is pleased to present Paulo Monteiro's first exhibition in New York, bringing together a new body of paintings and sculptures.

Monteiro continues his ongoing reconciliation of the dual forms of painting and sculpture by constructing a narrative between them. Continuously exploring the margins and limits of shape, Monteiro utilizes negative space as a medium in order to make his paintings feel like sculptures, and his sculptures feel like paintings. His palette oscillates between predominantly cool and warm tones, dark blues and a variety of reds that at once create an interlocking depth and almost strident contrast; his whites and greys offer a tactility akin to that of his drawings.

Monteiro began his artistic practice in the 1980's by precariously assembling found wood into compositions that simultaneously suggest motion and collapse, focusing on the expression of the material. In the last decade Monteiro has turned to pieces of rope, scraps of wood, cardboard, aluminum strips, and clay for the foundations of his sculptures. The sculptures on view in the gallery begin as clay slabs that he splays open, dissects, and squeezes with his hand until an animated interior reveals itself. The same conceptual unfolding process is applied to his painting technique, with inversions and constructions operating from the center of the painting. Paint is pushed to the edges of the canvas, creating forceful, physical borders. It is common that two paintings made with the same strokes appear different, dependant on the canvas's color, shape, and scale which he varies greatly.

While a malleable physicality suffuses through his works, Monteiro has also been preoccupied with exploring the possibility of the line for most of his career, manifested as strokes in his work on paper, relief in his paintings, and cuts in his sculptures. His lines are never completely straight nor do they follow a logic, in a Deleuzian sense they are "pulling in both directions at once" (Deleuze, Gilles. *The Logic of Sense*. 1969.), existing in a space between the affirmation and negation of space.

This radical plasticity in relation to the viewer led Monteiro to his "constellations"—configurations of his paintings and sculptures— which deal with the physicality of the object in relation to the artist and viewer, much like one of Willys de Castro's *Active Objects*. It is through the careful positioning of the negative space that these "constellations" take on form. Monteiro also achieves this through his sculptures formed by the negative imprint of his hand and fingers molded in clay and later cast in bronze or lead. His subject here is the interior life and inner drive of objects and in his words aims to "bring life to something lifeless."

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Paulo Monteiro (1961, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo.

Monteiro began working as an artist in 1977, drawing comic strips in a style influenced by cartoonists such as Robert Crumb and George McManus and the renowned Brazilian caricaturist Luiz Sá. Between 1983 and 1985, he was an integral part of the group Casa 7 alongside Carlito Carvalhosa, Fábio Miguez, Nuno Ramos, and Rodrigo Andrade. Together these artists participated in exhibitions at MAC – São Paulo, MAM-RJ and the 18th São Paulo Biennial in 1985, bringing Neo-Expressionism to the forefront of the São Paulo art scene. In the late 1980s and the early 2000s, Monteiro immersed himself in his sculptural practice. His return to painting over a decade ago brought a new level of consciousness to his work.

His works have been featured prominently in exhibitions such as *The Empty Side, Zeno X*, Antwerp (2018); *Coleção MAC Niterói: arte contemporânea no Brasil*, MAC Niterói, Rio de Janeiro (2017); *The outside of distance*, MISAKO & ROSEN and Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo (2017); *Building Material: Process And Form In Brazilian Art*, Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles (2017); *The inside of distance*, Office Baroque, Brussels (2016); *The inside of distance*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2015); *Casa 7, Pivô*, São Paulo (2015); *Empty House Casa Vazia*, Luhring Augustine, New York (2015); *Paintings on Paper*, David Zwirner, New York (2014); *Where Were You*, Lisson Gallery, London (2014); Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2008); 22nd São Paulo Art Biennial (1994) and 18th São Paulo Art Biennial (1985).

His works are in numerous permanent collections, such as MoMA, MAM-SP (São Paulo Modern Art Museum), Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, MAC-SP (São Paulo Contemporary Art Museum), MAM-RJ (Rio de Janeiro Modern Art Museum) and Niterói Contemporary Art Museum.

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