

# GALERIA HEINRICH EHRHARDT

Sarmento

The Perfect Home

From December 19th 2019 to February 15th 2020

Julião Sarmento is presenting his second solo exhibition at the Heinrich Ehrhardt Gallery. Under the title *The Perfect Home*, using key concepts of recent gender theory, the pieces on display question the hegemonic social and political discourse.

Each of the ten monochrome paintings that make up the present installation, painted in different colours and distributed around the room, are associated through inscriptions, situated on the edges of the canvases, with predefined roles that link the colours to certain rooms of a house (*The Perfect Home*), while simultaneously establishing connections between those colours with spaces and famous feminist texts of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

From the outset, through scenes, images and simulations, and using sculptures, paintings and performances, Sarmento's work has explored the power exercised over women, false roles of femininity, domination and subjugation, cliché and fetish, as well as the political dimension of these when it comes to understanding the ideological foundations of Western history of art.

In this exhibition, these gender roles, assumed throughout much of history and questioned by pioneers such as Linda Nochlin – who have shifted the paradigm and fractured the solid structure of analysis and perception which was previously the basis of a false, hypocritical and perverse understanding – address domestic themes, specifically of the home, and the assumption of certain rooms in relation to associated social spaces, and their corresponding functions usually linked to gender, based on the establishment of the hegemonic discourse.

We are unable to say whether Sarmento's work is a criticism of the system, because it essentially establishes a series of inevitable contradictions that feed the same dominant discourse. It is not about reclaiming something through the eyes of a Western, white, male artist, but moving as far away as possible from the supremacy of this gaze conditioned by assumed cultural constructions.

Thus, we find ourselves before a series of paintings which surround the spectator and which, hung between stripes of grey, provoke a reading that goes beyond the visual. Sarmento's allocation of a political and social dimension to the colours that uniformly cover the entire surface of the paintings eludes this narrow reading, shaping a broader vision through references to *The Female Eunuch*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Sexual Politics* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, among others.

Ruling out any decision of a formal nature in the mounting of the pieces, their distribution is purely chronological and so the combination of colours obeys only the association Sarmento has created between colour, room of the house and feminist text, and the order in which the works that the cited texts belong to were written and published. The voices of Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Kate Millet, Naomi Wolf, Susan Faludi, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Roxane Gay are the ones that count, in *The Perfect Home*, the exhibition and history.