

GALERIA HEINRICH EHRHARDT

circular spaces

Gonçalo Sena

From September 9th to October 30th 2021

A strange form of communication between two entities takes place within an artificial aquatic realm. Unintelligible energies are exchanged, conveying possible metamorphosis and alchemical processes. A visitor from a fictional world drops an uncanny clue that speaks of distant travels into *circular spaces*.

Gonçalo Sena's visual and tactile experimentation is inscribed within a wide enquiry into the poetics brought about by our perception's paradoxical and limited grasp of non-human temporalities. Raw construction materials, structures from mainstream industrial manufacture, cast metals, and natural elements, build a dystopian narrative of urban experience, sparking an existential question regarding our situation within a rapidly shifting material world. The exhibition *circular spaces* suggest a sort of fragmented garden of encoded meanings, where proportion and serenity are achieved through a subtle sculptural elaboration, a complex layering of rough and soft elements that generate a theatrical aura of mystery.

A personal meditation around landscape, débris, functionality, design, and the irreversibility of physical mutations in the life of objects as well as in the natural world, brings together a series of sculptures, drawings and objects into this large installation. Sena's interest towards the liminal spaces between built environments, industrial production, function and form, and entropic processes found in nature, denotes a keen curiosity towards organic developments, a heightened appreciation for the beauty found in decay, and the persistent consciousness of material impermanence.

Fragility, contemplation and absorption are important elements as we enter this scenography of sorts. Two totem-like sculptures create a silent dialogue, mirroring over a pool of water, in what might seem like a dystopian movie set. *Fonte Fóssil* leans on the wall. The irregular marble slab is an industrial leftover recovered by the artist in Lisbon, whose surface's erosion is a testimony to its former life. This discarded aspect confers to it a sort of melancholic dignity. At the center of the sculpture is a hollow bronze cast resembling an unknown torso, like the frozen palpitation of an absent lover. It is a convex universe of tenuous metallic shades, with irregular perforations allowing flow of water, igniting possibilities of renewal and life-giving force. These and other similar shapes are important in Sena's research, as they refer to another place of liminality in matter found in nature: when an organic form is halfway between inert and still infused with life, between being a natural architectural remnant and a vessel for the next cycle. Sharing the same dark pool, *Fonte Fóssil* dialogues with the sculpture *To intrude on Nature's way*, both breathing from the same water. The free standing metal and stone body holds at its center the bronze cast of a tree branch that was violently extruded by Filomena storm in Madrid in early 2021, and found by the artist at La Casa de Campo park during a spring excursion. As such, the original marker of a traumatic physical event is evoked, its catastrophic meaning transmutes, displacing itself into a new ecosystem, where its inherent fragility and unpredictability settles an aesthetic balance. Like possible entities or geological clocks, these sculptures are witnesses to the exhibition's timekeeping, taking part in our collective ritual. As an invocation of a good omen, coins are thrown into the fountain's water, speaking to the fortuitous encounters that may happen in the space, and posing a facetious approach towards economic volatility, possible values of transaction, systems of belief, and chance.

This sculptural scenography is punctuated by a constellation of ethereal drawings where sections of circles are traced in graphite and acetate, reverberating through the walls and echoing the water's repetitive frequency in a precarious and trance-inducing ode to unadorned simplicity. This set dialogues with the hypnotic canvas *Maré vazia*, where the physical sensation of a receding oceanic tide is strongly conveyed in a haptic and soothing way; its surface bears the marks of a laborious, meditative and somewhat rough stages of material treatment in the studio, generating an artificial feeling of

immersion. A stiff, yet, extremely lightweight, cuttlefish bone constitutes the work's axis. It's worn out quality contributes to this notion of immensity, as the beauty it has acquired by the passage of time is revealed, bringing the perfection of ancient natural life forms to the current moment, and releasing the possibility of coexistence. This overall atmospheric feeling is strongly emphasized by the fountains' acoustics, as these incite moments of stillness and a quiet awareness of our bodily presence, bringing the exterior world into a temporary halt. Punctuating the main room's composition, a concrete rock rests on an incomplete chair, like a strange fossil remnant from a distant chaotic scenario. With a low voice, *Rocha Rouca* mumbles tales through its porosity.

by Natalia Valencia Arango, independent curator.



Coinciding with *circular spaces* at Heinrich Ehrhardt Gallery, the project space El Escaparate at Bar Benteveo (Calle Santa Isabel 15, Madrid), presents a series of exhibitions scheduled between 2021 and 2022 that opens with *Maré vazia* de Gonçalo Sena, visible from September 10th.