

Sabrina Amrani is pleased to present *The Last Photon on the Retina*, Paulo Lisboa's first solo show at the gallery, as part of Apertura Madrid Gallery Weekend



Paulo Lisboa's drawings are those without beginning or end. The mystery remains. The image happens when our eye has lost itself in them. Then the extraordinary is activated, the deep echo of a moment of light, as if one wanted to invoke the transitory. Although in these drawings everything that seems random or emerging from nothingness is orchestrated by a rigorous, very insistent performative process, in which the artist not only superimposes layers of charcoal, but also previously sands its surface, made of aluminum, to enhance the light. It is a retinal, physical, haptic painting. Everything is the product of a conscious choice, which is based on the dryness of the charcoal, which absorbs the gleam of light to dampen its reflection from the surface. The light thus emerges weakly from within the painting and the form declines like a blurry and enigmatic shadow.

Paulo Lisboa's work is based on the disconcerting, in an interstitial space that becomes shadow to be projected like a painting that fades. As if the white wanted to disappear. It is interiority that paradoxically illuminates in black, combining ashes and mild whites that function as passages of a mental experience. A stormy black, which captivates us in its temporality, in its disturbing calm. Because in Paulo Lisboa's drawings and light projections the image evolves more by intensity than by clarity, because it is something unfathomable. After all, as Deleuze points out, the task of painting is defined as the attempt to make visible forces that are not. More graphically he describes it as painting the sensation, saying that there are no sensations of different orders but different orders of a single and same sensation.

Paulo Lisboa's works emit an inner light and open themselves into the abyss. The image is suspended, the light is cut and filtered, blocked and projected into the uncertain. Time dilates and shapes gain density. The light is manipulated and the space vibrates. The sensation of

movement is always insinuated and our gaze is led to an infinite leap. As viewers we let ourselves be carried away by the image, but in that perceptual experience nothing is improvised and everything is the result of a prior investigation by the artist regarding the capacity of the image and visual phenomena to appear. It is about making the most of his poetics as an observation, as in Tarkovsky's cinema and that ability to transit or approximate the different scales. They are images that embrace the sense of loss that Georges Didi-Huberman refers to when he points out that to see is to feel that something is escaping us, in other words, that to see is to lose, as if forms only grew towards their extinction; as in the game of indefinite approximation that Paulo Lisboa leads us to, where any form of approach effectively means a distancing and vice versa.

In Paulo Lisboa's exhibitions, the chromatic harmony activates the poetic sense of space and time. His way of throwing shadow and light from the drawing cultivates a hidden dimension of the visual space, so subtle that it is capable of activating the rest of the senses, as if we were touching reality with our eyes and even the silence was eloquent. Radicality consists of achieving a balance, even when the image is taken to an extreme situation, to a place where its meaning is concentrated and suspended, to form its own place. The viewer must be a participant in all this and maintain interest in the image, because only from that attentive look will they notice that this experience that seems to be due to the manipulation of technical instruments is the product of a delicate manual intervention by the artist, which saturates the presence of graphite and uniformizes the line to avoid the mimetic and understand, like Merleau-Ponty, that it is not about us getting closer to seeing the works in themselves, but rather that through them we are able to imagine the world.

David Barro
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The Last Photon on the Retina
Paulo Lisboa

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