

Miguel Branco

Blue Angel

September 15—November 04, 2023

Pedro Cera is pleased to present the third exhibition of Miguel Branco at the gallery.

Despite its ties to the past, the work of Miguel Branco is very much rooted in the present. Deriving images from the history of painting, Branco brings together multiple disengaged realities, making the image subject to a reconstructive process, where the ideas of realities' representation are set under continuous scrutiny. Representation of reality is instead achieved by a constructive process based on fragmentation and hybridization, defining terms associated, at the same time, with multiple aspects of our present-day society, culture, politics, and technology.

Appropriated from a vast image archive, based on references from Christian iconography, Northern Renaissance, Medieval or Flemish painting, but also from contemporaneity and imagination, Branco's paintings depict classical spaces with unexpected encounters. Composed through a surgical process of removal, distortion, replacement, and the merging of remotely distant realities, Blue Angel introduces a new group of wooden panel paintings revealing the dark side of our age, an age of uncertainty, fragmentation, and alienation from reality. Time and space, fundamental concepts that have determined human existence, are no longer universal constants, not here or in our digital paradigm, forever changing our ways of being and allowing for existence outside these categories.

Despite the hermetic quality of Branco's new group of wooden panel paintings and the illusive authenticity of the image, their nature, as well as their organization in the space, is non-linear and decentralized. Rejecting the idea of traditional hierarchical structures, the rhizomatic nature of these works and their organization instead opts for an associative reading, where seemingly remote realities and distant historical contexts are brought together in an attempt to examine our present. Using short allegories and metaphors while remaining faithful to the small, miniature format, Branco changes our perception through the abstraction of reality and the construction of a new universe of the familiar but also of the unknown.

Despite the apparent autonomy of the paintings, their organization in a large cluster insinuates a greater whole. Reminiscent of pixels, the organization of these paintings, suggests fragmentation, while at the same time points to the constructive potential of these works. The ghostly presence of the predeceasing image, a fragment from the past, plagues us from within the paintings, an image on the one hand familiar, on the other hand, anew and estranged. Images of angels and demons, images of life and death. It is an allegorical world composed of archaic references, haunting us from the past but also telling us so much about the future.

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The work of Miguel Branco has been featured in numerous Portuguese and International exhibitions. Selected exhibitions include Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (Paris), Pavilhão Branco, Museu da Cidade (Lisbon), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Lisbon), MUDAM, Musée D'Art Moderne Grand Duc Jean (Luxembourg), Culturgest (Lisbon), Museu de Serralves (Porto, Portugal) and Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lisbon among other.

Branco's work is part of the collection of the Ar.Co, Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual (Lisbon), Caixa Geral de Depósitos (Lisbon), Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Lisbon), Fundação Carmona e Costa (Lisbon), Fundação EDP (Lisbon), Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento (Lisbon), Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Luxembourg), Museu de Arte Contemporânea (Funchal, Madeira, Portugal), Museu de Arte Moderna, Fundação de Serralves (Oporto, Portugal), among other.