

**Valeska Soares**  
*Double Margin*

9<sup>th</sup> April – 24<sup>th</sup> May 2014

For her first solo show at Max Wigram Gallery, Valeska Soares presents a series of works that revolve around the dual condition of time, considering its nature and the shapes it can assume.

Striking in the exhibition is the way in which the artist transforms the past history and use of objects, dotting them with a whole new life. Soares' work is traversed by the presence of old materials: books and other printed matter; pieces of furniture or of home decor, and diverse utilitarian items (such as glasses and watches in this specific show) which she manipulates, transforms and adapts, extending their use possibilities and embedding them with new symbolic values.

Pursuing her research on the compositional possibilities of book covers, which constitutes the series *Bindings*, the artist presents *Threshold (Blue)*, a majestic rectangular framework made of linen hardcover books of blue tonalities. The book titles written on the covers create a meta-text where there is neither beginning nor end, generating a continuous sequence of potential meanings and narratives. Arranged as a surrounding structure *Threshold* simultaneously appropriates the settings that it frames – which become a constitutive element of the piece – and defines a space of possibility, as the empty area that appears in-between the book covers becomes a place where the stories and the histories conveyed by the books are deeply entwined. Leaning onto the gallery wall, it becomes a doorway that gives entry to a poetic, fictional space.

*Spiralling* (2014) is a sculptural work composed of eight sets of antique library wooden stairs that are arranged as to constitute a continuous, eternal spiral of steps. The piece pushes the notion of enclosed circularity proposed by *Threshold* towards the constitution of an infinite loop of ups and downs, following the stairs' suggestion of movement. One could almost imagine to climb them, getting lost on an endless mental journey of ascend and descend that recalls M. C. Escher's prints.

The two-part installation *Not All Who Wander Are Aimless* further explores the concepts of motion and going adrift. The work is constituted through the dialogue between the materials hung on the wall – a series of vernacular marine vistas of caravels, rhythmically alternated with old book pages whose texts evoke poetic sites, such as *Storm House* or *East of Eden* or situations, as *The Lights are Dimming* – and a very long and narrow display structure – halfway between a cabinet, a table and a plinth – that holds an exhaustive series of small, transparent glasses with boat drawings. Each glass has the right amount of rum as to give the illusion that its vessel is traveling over the liquid, establishing a humorous counterpoint with the caravel paintings, as both suggest idealized, romantic possibilities of drifting as well as very naive and clumsy visions of seafaring.

*Ouroboros* presents yet another exploration of the relation between time, space and their possible configuration. The title of the work alludes to the symbolic representation of wholeness and infinity, which generally consists of a snake swallowing its own tail. The artist replaced this mythical figure by a golden pocket watch (also considering that the Portuguese word for gold is *ouro*) that, suspended from the ceiling of the gallery by a delicate wire, executes an almost imperceptible movement of rotation in space, turning at the speed of one revolution per hour. Deprived of its hour hand, which was removed by the artist, the clock loses its function of offering the reference to a specific moment in the day. Instead, amputated, it attests the inexorable passing of a continuous time.

The way time traverses objects and experiences, how it unites history and present is at stake throughout the show, and every work contributes to generate yet another possible reflection on the zone of uncertainty that exists between historical time, mythical time and daily life: a threshold area with unclear limits between physical and inner states, an uncertain *Double Margin*.

Filipa Ramos  
London, March 2014

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## MAX WIGRAM GALLERY

**Valeska Soares** (born Belo Horizonte, Brazil) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Soares' solo exhibitions in public institutions include *Follies*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; *Caprichos*, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Monterrey; *Puro Teatro*, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City; *Vanishing Point*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; permanent installation at INHOTIM. Recent group exhibitions include, *Permission to be Global*, CIFO, Miami and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Order, Chaos, and the Space In Between*, Phoenix Art Museum; *What to Think, What to Desire, What to Do*, Fundació LaCaixa, Barcelona; *The Storytellers*, Stenersen Museum, Oslo; and *Unbound: Contemporary Art After Frida Kahlo*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Soares has participated in the Sharjah Biennial, the Sao Paulo Biennial and the Venice Biennale. Her works is part of important museum collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; The Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh; Tate Modern, London.