

The Pedro Cera Gallery takes great pleasure in hosting for the first time an individual exhibition by Miguel Branco.

Entitled 'Light', Miguel Branco (Castelo Branco, 1963) presents a new series of sculptures made out of dark stoneware with which the artist has worked for the past three year. The sculptures made firstly in malleable clay, become transformed by fire into petrified black figures through kiln firing and thus looking as if made of black stone. This 'stonelike' quality is also highlighted by the 'Egyptian style' of the more classical figures and by the Expressionist style of others that reinforce the physical presence of the darkened stoneware, dense and deeply textured.



In the gallery, the pieces were placed on display as if part of some ethnographic museum or historical museum collection. They respectively distinguish different points in time and different styles drawn from across the History of Art: the formal synthesis of the Egyptian or Pre-Colombian styles, the realism of Roman portraits, Oriental religious statuary as well as Expressionism whilst all of these distinct historical moments and their characteristics aspects are rendered equivalent.

The term 'Light' commonly gets deployed to designate the creative act in a symbolic fashion: the demiurgic gesture of a creative god, or the platonic clarity of the world of ideas, from which all the material world comes to form. This higher dimension is parodied by Miguel Branco in the way he defines and interrelates his characters: in the whole display, the dwarf appears more

imposing than the monk, the anthropoid in a 'lotus' position suggesting a dysfunctional inversion in the evolution of the human species; the expression of calm and serenity of the banker and the senator, the almost practical inability to differentiate between the sculptures of the beggar and the monk, seem to convey an ironic parable on the contemporary world.

The figures evoke representations of political or religious power but do so in the style of Goya, as dark manifestations of the Enlightenment as some sort of 'black holes' that populate the splinters of the Greek and Roman *polis* on which our culture stands. They are *spectres*, beings absorbing the light of the world and then instead reflect its shadow and its condition of impossibility.

The exhibition runs from March 27<sup>th</sup> to May 23<sup>h</sup>, 2015.

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