

Deserto-Modelo “as above, so below”

Rodrigo Andrade
Lucas Arruda
Felipe Cohen
Jac Leirner
Paulo Monteiro
Celso Renato
Erika Verzutti

organized by Lucas Arruda

12th June – 25th July

Using his own practice as a starting point Brazilian artist Lucas Arruda has put together a group show of cross generational Brazilian artists who's practices touch, enlighten or re-contextualise that of his own.

Arruda's paintings exist at the very edge of the abstract and the landscape, they occupy a mind state and extreme studio focus, endlessly shifting whilst forever remaining the same. Imaginary and internal Arruda's paintings reside in a potentially infinite, unfolding seriality, a constant reminder of nature, the vicissitudes of perception and of the act of painting itself.

The exhibition's name Deserto Modelo – the only title he gives to his exhibitions, underscoring the continuity of his practice – borrows the image of model desert from a poem of Brazilian poet Joao Cabral de Melo Neto (1920-1999); an image that inspired Arruda to literally think of the construction of a desert and its associations and properties such as sense of emptiness and horizon, beginning or end.

Duality and opposition are a present throughout the exhibition, sky and earth, inside and out, internal and external all become manifest in the different practices and works of the group of artists. The Golden Sq gallery space is important in this aspect with its large glass windows that allows the space to constantly exist with its exterior. The works in the show contain many joints, many points of fusion and division, these themes pervade almost all of the works in the show from Celso Renato's spiritually infused geometric abstraction on found wood to Erika Verzutti's sculpture that seems to point toward a pre-figuration or a nascent division of parts. Rodrigo Andrade's ongoing series of monochromes made from thick layers of oil paint applied directly to architecture occupy the large glass of the gallery window, they sit both inside and out, their meeting point, the glass, is sandwiched vertically. This ongoing body of work by Andrade is usually situated on a wall, and this is the first time such a work has been exhibited on glass, allowing for the colours of the monochromes to sit with the surrounding park and landscape of Golden Sq. Colour is lost in Jac Leirner's white monochrome Rizla Plus Orange (2015) an expansive grid of smoking papers that recalls more formal arrangements of minimalists but her use of cheap materials suggests her interest lay elsewhere, in the language of the everyday. Dissecting the gallery space is Felipe Cohen's low hanging lightbulb that links floor to ceiling, it is nestled snugly inside a wine glass, the two becoming one, casting a hazy horizon-like halo around themselves. The ambiguous, luminous horizon returns again in Arruda's work As Above, So Below (2015) barely perceptible upon first glance: a very light grey rectangle is painted on the back wall of the gallery, this space is doubled above it with a controlled light projection creating a tonal horizon line that bears out Arruda's research into the utopia of balance and equilibrium. Paulo Monteiro's two objects reflect Arruda's interest in the sculptural, one is a painted line cast in lead on the wall, a representation of the intuitive, speedy strokes that characterize much of Monteiro's work, also exemplified by the bronze cast of a bag of clay that has been cut in two parts, lying on the floor. The show is completed with a group of three new paintings by Arruda, they point to a life outside the gallery as well as to hidden moments, unobtainable within the artists' mind.