

Dora Longo Bahia

Choque

11 janeiro—23 fevereiro, 2019

Pedro Cera is proud to present the second exhibition of Brazilian artist Dora Longo Bahia at the gallery.

Borrowing its title from the riot unit of Brazilian police, also known as the Tropa de Choque - a division trained and equipped to confront crowds and protests, the exhibition takes the notion of the protest as its point of departure, questioning thus institution(s) of power, their enforcement and methods developed to suppress forces of resistance.

Choque police has been a reoccurring subject in the work of Bahia through out the past years. Although anonymous (by means of depiction), identity of these officers can be traced to actual representatives of the police unit. Prompted initially by the 2013 manifestations in Brazil, - protests depicted in the exhibition -, brought together large numbers of demonstrators, from all parts of the Brazilian society. The installation (Choque, 2019) then narrates a struggle against the invisible forces of capital, while questioning the powers of the state, represented here by the police force. Rather than a symbol of protection however, the police transmits a philosophy of fear, distinctive to our present day condition.

Although prompted by a specific historico-political reality of contemporary Brazil, may this be the identity of the police, the actual surface of the painted and cracked glass plates, (reminiscent of broken vitrines and windows of monetary institutions attacked during the 2013 São Paulo protest), or the series of ten museums in Brazil, which have burned down in the last ten years (Fogo, 2019), like much of Bahia's work, also Choque, aims towards a universality of reading, rather than towards an account on national politics or history.

Nationality here functions as a point of departure and as a byproduct generated by the theme of geopolitical displacement and the subject of (in)visibility. Concealed images of five women, mothers with children - actual refugees from Afganistan, Siria, South Sudan, Somalia and Myanmar, have like thousands of others, been stripped of their identity and made invisible (Fugue, 2019). Hidden by gestures of abstract formalism (and revealed by a phone app - <http://doralongobahia.org/fuga/>), these paintings embody real stories of violence, oppression and a hope of a better future.

The subject of (in)visibility shapes a backbone of the exhibition and is closely tied to the practice of the artist. While invisibility, as in the absence of being seen, can be understood as a protective act, invisibility by being made invisible, through forces of abstract or physical power, creates vulnerability and threat that is shaped by the absence of knowledge, solidarity and human ignorance.

Choque is a stage, where reality of the everyday - a reality of fear, violence, inequality and the lack of freedom is activated, in order to unveil that, which has been obscured, while questioning the role of culture in generating such agency and scrutiny.

The work of Dora Longo Bahia has been exhibited widely in Brasil and Internationally. Selected exhibitions include Centre Pompidou (Paris), Bonnier Konsthall (Stockholm), E-Flux (New York), Rijksakademie Van Beeldende (Amsterdam), Trondheim Art Museum (Trondheim, Norway), Pinacoteca do Estado de Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo, Brazil), CCBB-Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Forum D'Art Contemporain (Sierre, Switzerland), Museu de Arte de Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Museu de Arte Moderna de Sao Paulo, (Sao Paulo, Brazil). Her worka are included in the collection of Pinacoteca do Estado de Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Museu de Arte Moderna de Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Itaú Cultural (Sao Paulo, Bazil), Colección FEMSA, (Puebla, Mexico), CIFO-Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (Miami, USA) among other.