

Ana Manso

Eye Massage

November 9—December 22, 2018

Pedro Cera is proud to present the fourth exhibition of artist Ana Manso (Lisbon, 1984) at the gallery.

Best known for her vivid, abstract canvases and for employing time as a crucial element in her painterly process of repeated layering, the paintings of Manso are a succession of defused time-frames, diminishing surfaces and transparencies, allowing for the surfacing of seemingly unexpected encounters of colour, form and displaced content(s). Similarly, to the first painting of the present exhibition (*Agar, 2018*), which conceals the written title of the exhibition, behind semi-transparent layers of paint and organic forms, reminiscent of Japanese drawing, most of the works in the exhibition, embrace a hidden world of small failures, accidents and changes of mind-set.

While time, as a method of painting, occupies a central position in the practice of the artist, surface is an equally important and complementary element, when it comes to the work of Ana Manso. Even during her short-lived adventures and passing escapes from the medium of painting, (usually never lasting longer than a winter afternoon), the urge to explore the limitless, yet simultaneously limiting possibilities of a (blank) surface, have been a constant urge and a long-lived temptation for the artist. Surface for Manso, is a place where abstraction meets daily life. It is a place of possibility and of encounter, a place where the unpredictability of chance is orchestrated by the conscious selection of the right ingredients.

Her process of painting is then a mix of conscious and unconscious decisions. While the choice of surface, as in the placement of a given painting, has been a spoken preoccupation for the artist for some time, (her many murals can serve us here as only one of many examples), surface, as in texture, is a new element in her practice. Testing the limits of abstraction through the imitation of flattened materials (surfaces), appropriated from daily life, in this case a series of yellow paintings of wooden planks, with glued images of cooking ingredients (*Daily, 2018*), inspired by an act of “creative disobedience” - a personalised intervention, by an anonymous visitor, in the display of a New York noodle restaurant, the artist touches not only up on the thin and gradually diminishing line between the abstract and the representational, between the artificial and the real, but also, up on the freedom and the manifold nature of artistic expression. Making sure they are physically kept apart, Manso uses these imitated/appropriated motive(s) as an architectural element, an architectural backdrop and a way to create rhythm for the viewing of the paintings in the exhibition. The introduction of representational ingredients, then highlights the animism, characteristic for the microcosms of forms and shapes, distinctive for the recent, nature inspired, series of works.

Far from any form of rational classification, the microcosmic and organic driven nature of Manso's paintings, reminds us of an eye rub. Flashes of colour and shapes are projected on the inner side of our eye-lids, some reminiscent of known objects, while others purely abstract. The tension between both, creates a need to explore the depth of these paintings. A depth that is no longer achieved through multiplying transparent layers of paint, but by a dense colour pallet and impenetrability of a worked surface, drawing the eye deep in. The seductive possibility of interpretation inherent to these, nature inspired paintings, generates however another type of reading. A reading that is directed rather than towards the conclusive and a purely rational based, towards freedom of association, which brings us closer to life

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Ana Manso has studied painting at the Art Academy in Lisbon. Her work has been exhibited at Museu Serralves (Oporto), Matadero Madrid (Madrid), FUTURA Centre for Contemporary Art (Prague), Spike Island (Bristol), Chiado 8 – Arte Contemporânea (Lisbon), Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte (Naples), Fondazione Rivolidue (Milan) or Museu da Electricidade (Lisbon) among others. Her works are part of the collection of Museu Serralves (Oporto), Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Elvas (Elvas, Portugal) or the Câmara Municipal de Lisboa (Lisbon) among others.