

Gil Heitor Cortesão

Locus

September 10—October 30, 2021

Pedro Cera is pleased to present Locus, the tenth exhibition of Gil Heitor Cortesão, at the gallery.

Locus brings together a group of seven new works, paintings of landscapes, defined by their exteriority and a heightened sense of ambiguity. Despite being rooted firmly in reality, the nature of these places remains concealed through their fragmentation, time, and digital manipulation. Captured and isolated by the eye of a camera, some images directly relate to the actual place of depiction. In contrast, the relation of others remains looser, portraying fragments of a previously captured reality, multiplying thus the void between the real place and that that is portrayed. Their point of departure can be found in the artist's vast archive of images, from where they have been appropriated. This would be the case of Locus (2021), a fragmented image of an unknown landscape, which has through time lost any relation to its initial location. By means of digital postproduction, followed by a painterly process of applying oil paint on the reverse side of a plexiglass sheet, many of the attributes of the so-called original images have vanished, shaping a semi-fictional environment the relation to the reality of which can be found through the gesture of resemblance.

Characteristic for their estrangement, these enclosed worlds allow for the birth of a universe of its own, the nature of which questions traditional modes of painterly depiction, and the permeance of an image in an increasingly digital world. Cortesão appropriates principles of cinema and photography, namely that of illusion, creating a sense of temporality and continuation between works. Drifting (2021), three paintings installed side by side, depict an anonymous cityscape, which through the movement of a swimmer's body across an empty pool, the only trace of a figure in the exhibition, resembles a sequence of cinematic frames. Painted with a pointillistic manner, which disrupts the sleekness of a contemporary urban context, the works create a sense of discontinuity between their subjects and the manner of their depiction. A sense of discontinuity can also be felt in regards to scale, where the proportion between objects becomes blurred (Rift, 2021), and the overall geometry of the works in the exhibition, where a verticality of their elements contradicts their horizontal layout, generates a heightened sense of uncertainty between what the eye sees and what is being depicted.

Despite referring with its title, to the concept of place (Locus), a specific location determined by geographical indicators, familiar to one's memory, Cortesão's exhibition suggests instead of memories absence - total amnesia, where the feeling of familiarity provokes a desire of remembering, followed however by repeated failure. As we try to trace the trail between images, we are trapped by illusions and the changing relation between places, between works. The idea of representation as static entity is put under scrutiny and instead portrayed as a liquid entity where the formation of subjects is subject to continuous change.

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The work of Gil Heitor Cortesão (1966) is included in the collection of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Fundación Helga de Alvear, Cáceres, Spain, Fundación ARCO, Madrid, Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, La Coruña, Spain, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Mudam, Luxembourg, Salsali Private Museum, Dubai, Museu de Arte Contemporânea Armando Martins, Lisbon, Coleção Fundação de Serralves, Oporto, Portugal, Coleção António Cachola, Elvas, Portugal, Coleção Associação Industrial Portuguesa, Lisbon, EDP- Electricidade de Portugal, Lisbon, Coleção Arquipélago, Azores, Portugal, among other.