



Paloma Bosquê

Campo

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In the last five years, a significant portion of Paloma Bosquê's production has featured a combination of solid and malleable materials, resulting in compositions that, although heavily anchored on the grid, incorporate soft, translucent or imperfect surfaces and textures that eschew a desire for geometric purity. Even in the works where the Constructivist aspect is foregrounded, there is always an element which compromises absolute rigour. For instance, in the series of wall reliefs titled *Ritmo para 2* [Rhythm for 2] (2013), pairs of different-sized frames are overlapped and intertwined with golden metallic wire that simultaneously tie the two objects together and create tridimensional planes that traverse the background and the surface, intersecting in some places. These are clever, meticulously executed arrangements, which nonetheless imply a state of impermanence, as the only thing securing the wooden pieces together is the tension between the lines. In other instances, this detour results from the combination of markedly geometric forms and intrinsically formless materials, such as beeswax (*Língua* [Tongue], 2014), wax paste (*Repetições - Os 12 Defeitos* [Repetitions – The 12 Defects], 2013) or hand-woven thread (*Trapinhos* [Little Rags], 2015-16).

In *Campo* [Field], her second solo show at Mendes Wood DM, Paloma Bosquê furthers her research on the physical qualities of matter and the structural possibilities of objects. In this process, as well as expanding her repertoire of materials, Bosquê produces, for the first time, pieces that completely dispense with wall or ceiling supports. More than representing a transition to what can be understood more traditionally as the domain of sculpture, these works stem from the artist's tireless search to establish complex but potentially unstable relationships between different materials. *Standing upright* – a fundamental prerequisite of sculpture in its classical sense –, in line with the logic permeating her previous constructions, cannot be attained by subterfuge. Bosquê is interested in what she can manipulate with her own hands, within the limitations imposed by her own body. Therefore, the subtle balance of the structures that make up these self-sustaining pieces is achieved through the relationship between the base of the brass rods and the weight of the lead strips that surround them. The frames are connected by fittings and fastenings that don't require any welding or screws. Thus, there is a latent fragility in these constructions inasmuch as the arrangements that support them can seemingly be undone at any given time without having to resort to force or external instruments.

According to Bosquê, the first of these to be erected was *Jirau* (2016), whose form evokes the homonymous structures composed of a simple platform mounted on a stick frame, mainly used in Northern Brazil for various purposes, such as storing pots and pans, smoking meat or drying fruit. *Jirau* (from the Tupi language) also refers to the platform on which houses are built in flood-prone areas, as well as any wooden structure in the shape of a platform or podium. Bosquê's *Jirau* with brass rods is traversed horizontally by a piece of wool felt in a light, almost translucent colour that draws a large curve between its two ends, contrasting diametrically in terms of density, temperature and texture with the orthogonal metal frame. On the topside, on a thin golden mesh, we see two small elongated bronze-cast pieces. When we look at the piece from a distance, what stands out is the geometric pattern formed by the rods' straight lines and the curvature of the wool. However, upon moving closer, what becomes visible is the juxtaposition of the bronze pieces and the wire mesh, with the wool's pale colour and texture as a background. Undoubtedly this last point should not be underestimated, as by venturing into the field of sculpture, where the position of the viewer's body looking at the object becomes even more crucial, Bosquê further complexifies the relationships of negotiation between the different materials, which is one of the most fundamental operations in her work.

As well as the self-standing floor structures, that allow a freer occupation of the exhibition space, the show also includes wall pieces and smaller-scale sculptures that are displayed on bases. The recurrence of beige or light grey felt, animal casing and pale pink banana leaf paper, often in contrast with the golden

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colour of metal, shows her preference for a pallet of skin tones – an association that is reinforced by the organic nature of her materials. In *Campo*, Bosquê proposes an occupation of the space that attempts to recreate, to a certain extent, the way in which her works occupy her studio, where the pieces spend time in a state of closeness and mutual interference. The artist tells us that during her research prior to the exhibition, she became interested in the idea of *Ma*, a Japanese word with different meanings depending on context, but which can be approximately translated as the experience of space that includes temporal and subjective elements. The definitions of the concept, albeit numerous and often conflicting, make it clear that *Ma* doesn't refer to the space created by compositional elements, but to what takes place in the imagination of those who relate to these elements. Therefore, *Ma* can be defined as a space of experience where the emphasis is on the interval. However, more than the artist's loyalty to the original concept, what matters here is that by setting up an installation closer to her own experience of the works in the studio, Bosquê is seeking to break from the idea of isolating individual works or series and of a defined space that separates the public and the artwork that characterises more traditional displays. By doing so, she expands the field of action of her works by enabling a closer dialogue among them at the same time as establishing a closer relationship between the viewer's body and the pieces.

Paloma Bosquê's work is often understood through the prism of her affiliation with Neoconcretism, a movement that challenged the industrial paradigms of São Paulo's Concretism in favour of an approximation between art and life. Even though the comparison is not inaccurate given the *geometric-sensitivity* of a great part of her production so far, it risks underestimating other elements that have perhaps had a more significant impact on her oeuvre. The artist constantly reasserts the importance of her daily practice in the studio, which allows her to intensely experience her materials, as well as a *work ethic* based on manual labour and restricted by the limitations imposed by her own body. This is the source of her interest in vernacular techniques, as these denote a type of knowledge acquired from the direct experience with materials, either in embroidery, braids or the creation of structures inspired by popular construction techniques. Ultimately I believe Bosquê would agree with Eva Hesse who commenting about her own work said: *don't ask what it means or what it refers to. Don't ask what the work is. Rather, see what the work does.*

Paloma Bosquê (Garça, 1982) lives and works in São Paulo. Solo shows include: *O Incômodo*, Pivô, São Paulo (2015); *Um Ponto Antes*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2014). Group shows: *Kiti Ka'Aeté*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2015); United States of Latin America, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit (2015); *Building Imaginary Bridges Over Hard Ground*, Pan-Latin America, Dubai (2015); *Ultrapassado*, Broadway 1602, New York (2014); *My Third Land*, Frankendael Foundation, Amsterdam (2013).

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