**1** A obra de Meredith Monk tem acompanhado o artista Tiago Baptista há vários anos, adoptando o título de uma das músicas daquela para a presente exposição, onde actua, ainda, como uma reverberação criativa, tanto da música em si (dos efeitos que esta liberta no artista), como do próprio método criativo de Monk, que combina diferentes media e acções (nas quais o corpo é um importante instrumento de criação tanto de som, como de movimentos ou gestos dançados) para produzir associações densas (em muitas composições de Monk é exigido ao corpo um movimento para o seu interior) e relações complexas, que parecem resultar em descargas energéticas e libertadoras. No presente texto, vão surgindo excertos da música The Tale em itálico (as vocalizações de Monk são intraduzíveis, optando-se por uma anotação simbólica destas). **2** Orra White Hancock é uma importante referência para o artista Tiago Baptista. **3** Nas palavras de Hermann Broch: "Todo o estilo autêntico significa o acto de fazer ressaltar uma essencialidade do mundo, significa a refundição do caos num sistema de elementos essenciais". Hermann Broch apud Maria Filomena Molder, O Absoluto que Pertence à Terra, de Maria Filomena Molder, uma possível razão para uma permanente perseverança pelo acto pictórico. A palavra será, sempre, insuficiente para falar da pintura, como as coisas, de que a pintura fala, nunca poderão ser ditas por palavras (não há transcrição possível e o artista tem procurado - sendo cada vez mais notório na sua obra - afirmar essa disjunção, mesmo quando, por vezes, a palavra surge nos seus quadros). A pintura ocupa-se das coisas sobre as quais não conseguimos falar, a não ser através da própria pintura: "Um dos sinais originários da nossa confusão é preocuparmo-nos com as palavras, quando subitamente descobrimos que não percebemos do que é que estamos a falar. Esforçamo-nos então por encontrar meios e modos de determinar isso de que estamos a falar sem saber (arte, obra de arte, valor, bem, mal, água, longe), isso de que falamos sem cessar, o que mostra, em primeiro lugar, que podemos falar daquilo que não sabemos e, em segundo lugar, que constantemente falamos daquilo que não sabemos, para acabarmos por, Nietzsche dixit, "não saber o que dizer". Porque não é uma questão de palavras, não é uma questão de palavras, não é uma questão de palavras,

# THE TALE

Tiago Baptista

**Rialto6, Lisboa**
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Curadoria de / Curated by
Susana Ventura

## THE TALE

For Tiago, inspired by Meredith Monk's[1] The Tale.

***Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah***
***Ma bum ba Ma bum ba Ma Ma Ma***
***Ma Ma***
***Ah Oh Oh Oh Ah***
***Ih Ih Ih Ih Ih Oh Oh Oh Oh Oh***

The ti me
The ti me

Does not follow a straight line.
Maybe a spiral.

The spiral was born when thick, interlaced drops dripped from the ceiling of a cave and, while falling, became curved lines kissing gravity. Some of them, sloooooooweeeeeeeeer, wished to linger in the mineral viscosity, remaining suspended.

***Crash! Crash! Crash!***

The sk in
The sk in
The skin

In the time, that only rocks can name, the skin was the skin of the earth – a nervous, sensitive and sentient surface. Wrinkled, splintered and cracked earth. Painting emerged from between the festering cracks embedded in the earth's body, the abyss transformed into colour, Orra White's[2] pinky-ochre-flesh. In the caves or out in the open, trimmed by the silhouettes of mountains, the tender skin of the earth reveals mysterious colours - yellows, blues and pinks. Humankind forgotten. But, beneath the earth and under rock, traces remain, archaic forms that resist the passing of time at its most brutal, and fragments of undefinable bodies - just as the skin was earth, there was no distance between the human being and the animal.

***I still have my hands***
***I still have my mind***

In colour, time becomes variation, remembrance of the primary mineral viscosity and the conservation of light. Stillness, for instants, between hand and mind, of an image suspended in a time without time, like the echo of a howl. Painting has no time, it has desire (that which grants an escape from the chaos and captures the world's essentiality[3]). That which our gaze takes in, as it scrutinises the subtle nuances in the plane surfaces and its colourful shadows, creating a land of its own. The desire, that takes root there, doesn't have words[4] and likewise draws an infinite spiral.

A spiral A spiral A ss piraaaaaaaaaallllllllll

***Ma bum ba Ma bum ba Ma Ma Ma***
***Ma Ma***
***Ih Ih Ih Ih Ih Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah***

***I still have my money***
***I still have my telephone***
***Hello? Hello? Hellooooo?***

It is necessary to resist time's voracious appetite, and avoid forgetting. The torso imitates the slow gesture of the primary spiral, teetering between balance and fall. The movement is done in reverse, embracing the primeval time inscribed in the spiral of a snail shell or ammonite fossil-type. Two bodies invent yet another time, tiny variations in speed that resist and perplex the hands of the clock – tick tock tick tock – and the arms unfurl like wings and whirl.

Whiiiiiiiiiiiiiirrrrlllllllllllllllllllllllllllll
Whiiiiiiii iiiiiirrr rlllllllllllllllllllllllllll

The wings are sheets of paper, wavering as the feet execute a spiral at a steep angle. Unpredictable, and yet, amaaaaaaaa-zing.

Hypnotic and intoxicating movement discovered in the image-movement and in its potential spectrum of slowness. A new scale emerges in deceleration. Snails, after all, move fast, if we consider the enchanting motion of their tentacles and eyes. On coloured planes, their bodies reveal
a translucency till
now imperceptible and they seem to resist
the passing of time in their rolling motion. With snails, one is with and in time.

CAR ÊTRE AVEC ET DAND
LE TEMPS, EST ÊTRE DANS LE MONDE, VOIRE MÊME DANS LES CHOSES.[5]

The tentacles squirm. Expand, retract. Expand again. Torsos twist. Arms, suspended in mid-air, spin. And let themselves fall to the torso, when the feet lose their balance and the spiral unravels.
Eyes draw slow circles in space, curling around the shell. Space is no longer of the human order. It is of the order of birds, wind, earth and time. Although the torsos insist on movement, slooooooooowwwwwlllyyyyyyy…

Slooooooooooooooooowwwwwwwwlllllllllyyyyyyy…

Slooooooooooooooooowwwwwwwwlllllllllyyyyyyy…

Will they reach the minimum speed of a becoming?
Do snails go up? Or go down? A distant memory.
Maybe from childhood.[6] How long are memories?
How much of a memory is made up of time? Memory is updated in the present in a downward spiral.[7]

***I still have my memory***
***I still have my gold ring***
***Beautiful, I love it, I love it***

***Ah Ah!***

A bright yellow field floods the imagination (or the memory, which lingers not far). A plain where mushrooms sprout. Or is it a golden cornfield? A thousand pinpricks of light, like those summer nights back in the day?
The fireflies are disappearing. Soon they will belong to the category of mythical creatures. Painting, too, becomes (that is why from darkness it created and preserved light and from the light, colour). The painting-metamorphosis of the unspeakable is an expression of faith.[8] It belongs to the order of the visible, but seeks to take root in the interstices of the different orders the visible contains. Fairy tales, ghosts, ogres were human attempts to deal with this co-existence [of different orders].[9]
Becoming is certainly one of these, an order that occurs where different velocities meet. Between that of the human being and that of the snail. Firefly or bird. Man becomes aware of himself by looking back [at the animal].[10]
The becoming, however, is not the result of an inward gaze, being the rare event of an encounter in which the human being and the animal become one and the distance between them (this abyss that is the inexistence of a common language) is erased. The Other, in becoming, does not exist. What always exists is the one that is two, two connected by a cosmic energy. From becoming, a transformation always takes place.
The painting-metamorphosis lays down in colour and form the brief moments of such encounters, freeze-framing the interstices between planes: between nature and culture, human being and animal, memory and imagination, the visible and invisible… Through painting, one becomes the Other and it's no longer same as it ever was.

***I still have my allergies***
***I still have my philosophyyyyyyy***

DOOOOOO YOUUU?!

There is no such thing as a point of equilibrium in a spiral. Neither is it creating an antagonistic movement that ignores the present, but rather an enactment of postures and gestures, voices, echoes and flights, which allow the human being to get out of itself, from its oblivion, and become earth, animal, a plane of utter freedom.

WAIT!

The spiral has no direction, it confuses time. There is still a ground, but it seems to belong to some book where there is no present. From a graphic novel? Back to the beginning. Time is not the time that passes, nor is it the time of memory. Time is future. The future of time. Where the stony landscapes speak of desolation, and the animals of pain and solitude… The inhuman hand remains. Long, long ago, what visions[11] these are, that the artist has!

***Ma bum ba Ma bum ba Ma Ma***
***Ma Ma Ma MA!***

Susana Ventura
August, 2022

**1** Tiago Baptista admires Meredith Monk's music for some years now, and has named the current exhibition after one of her songs, in a creative allusion to both the music itself (and the effect it has upon the artist) and Monk's own creative method, which is expressed through different mediums and actions (where the actual body is as much an important instrument in the creative act as sound, movement or choreographed gesture) to produce dense associations (many of Monk's compositions require an inward-focus on the body) and complex dynamics that seem to resist a sense of liberating, energic release. This text incorporates excerpts from The Tale in italics (Monk's vocal sounds are untranslatable, and have been figuratively annotated). **2** Orra White Hitchcock is an important reference in the work of Tiago Baptista. **3** In the words of Herman Bonsiepe (paraphrased): "All authentic style signifies the act of highlighting an essentiality of the world, the recasting of chaos as a system of essential elements." Hermann Brock apud Maria Filomena Molder, O Absoluto que Perteence à Terra. **4** The artist Tiago Baptista finds, in the following excerpt from O Absoluto que Perteence à Terra, by Maria Filomena Molder, a possible justification for the act of painting as a vehicle for lasting scrutiny. Words will never suffice to describe painting, while the things that painting speaks of, can never be said in words (no such transduction is possible and the artist has sought – with increasing prominence in his work, to point out this inconsistency, even when, on occasion, words appear in his paintings). Painting basies itself with the things which we are unable to articulate, other than through painting itself: "One of the original signs of our condition is our obsession with words, when we suddenly find out we don't understand what we are talking about. We therefore try to find a way and means to figure out what we are talking about without knowing (art, artwork, value, good, evil, water, far), which we talk about ceaselessly, which shows, first of all, that we are able to speak about what we don't know, and second, that we are constantly speaking about what we don't know, so as to end up realising that it is all we talk about, or that this is implied in the act of speaking, because each word is always shared, received, or inherited, with a history of its use. However we go about it." **5** Christine Buci-Glucksmann, L'esthétique du Temps au Japon: Du Zen au Kitsuré. **6** The artist Tiago Baptista makes more or less unconscious reference (since the recognition of this fact occurs a posteriori) to memories from childhood in a somewhat rural setting, revealing itself in his unique perception of time, and proximity to animals. **7** Henri Bergson depicts time as an inverted cone, where the circular base of the cone is submerged in the past (necessarily virtual and consisting of pure memories – those which were never actually updated, such as for example, in this text and exhibition, memories of the geology of the earth's surface sensitivity) and the apex representing the present, which moves through a plane (which in turn corresponds to the actual representation of each being in the becoming of the universe). in the apex is concentrated the image of the body, this privileged image among all images that make up the material world, which is receptacle and conveyor for all the actions that emanate thereof, as much of the images that make up the fluid plane of experience (where the apex flows), like those which emerge from the horizontal sections of the memory cone, from past to present, virtual to actual. Following Bergson's scheme, we can assume that the actualisation of a virtual memory in the present takes the form of a spiral in various layers or horizontal sections – a path building itself upon successive images from the past. **8** John Berger, "Steps Towards a Small Theory of the Visible". **9** John Berger, "Opening a gateway", Why Look at Animals? **10** John Berger, "Why look at animals", Why Look at Animals? **11** The word "Visions" is used here in the Bergerian sense of the word.