

Anthony Miler: "Looking Into Stone"

The first recorded representations of human figures date back 15,000 years. Since those first cave paintings, art history shows a great evolution on a technical, conceptual and experiential level.

Although Anthony Miler (b. 1982, Toledo, USA) is part of a much modern generation and culture, his work remains strongly connected to the know-how of those early Paleolithic clans that began to leave their mark on cave walls. Much of Miler's work maintains the primeval painting technique - charcoal - and his canvases exude a primitivism that comforts us.

"Looking Into Stone" is the title of the artist's first exhibition at the L21 gallery. The first element we discover when we enter the room is an anonymous deep black charcoal portrait with penetrating eyes that seem to observe us throughout our journey around the space. An atmosphere of primitive shamanic ritual fills the air, the eyes are repeated and appear on all the canvases. The sensation of having awakened something or someone is palpable. Alien gazes surround us and seem to analyse our every move, just in case at some point it is necessary to defend ourselves from the indiscreet observer who breaks in without permission.

Three paintings in the exhibition stand out for their vibrant colours. They present the same eyes that are already familiar to us and seem to transform into delicate birds about to take flight. Technically more complex than the charcoal works, the background that embraces the aviform figures is composed by superimposing more than fifty layers of paint, granting an almost stony solidity to the work.

Both lines of work coexist in harmony in the same space, just as the remains of different cultures share physical space at different times, unveiling the influence that past generations have always had on future ones.

In an age full of rules, protocols, design, advertising, offices, alarm clocks, salaries and taxes, Miler's canvases bridge the gap of thousands of years between cave painting and contemporary art, reconnecting us with the past and taking us for a moment out of our "civilised" world.

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