

GALERIE FONSWELTERS

Adriano Amaral – *Prole*

28 Oct – 23 Dec

In *Prole*, his first major solo exhibition since joining the gallery, Adriano Amaral shows new work in a room filling installation. Amaral's work involves an examination of the nature of things in the world; the materiality and substance of what is around us as well as its value and transforming power over time. His practice starts from an intuitive and plural approach, and results in complex immersive installations that are always sensitive to the context in which they are inserted.

Amaral's exhibitions often have an overall spatial concept. The floor, an integral part of this approach, is covered with coal, solar panels or with white carpet as is the case of his show at Galerie Fons Welters. At the gallery the visitor enters the space through PVC strip curtains. Both the curtains, creating a barrier between two different environments, and the carpet, bring alertness to those that enter the room. One instantly becomes more aware and present in that moment since one's body is dealing with new physical qualities (a soft ground in this case) that were not expected. In his installations Amaral reacts to certain qualities and the uniqueness of a place and at the same time transforms it into a total new environment. The materials for those transformations come with their own context and add layers of meanings to the show. The carpet for example is more associated with domestic locations and brings a cozy feeling. Adding soil, associated with nature and agriculture, creates a tension and disrupts that sensation, creating new meanings.

In the exhibition at Galerie Fons Welters 32 crosses made out of compressed soil are presented on the floor. Laid in a pattern they are slightly lifted from the ground on aluminum bases. The crosses have a strong symbolic meaning but Amaral is also concerned with their formal qualities; the pieces will slowly disintegrate while the earth is drying, shrinking and cracking, losing its original geometry and revealing a sense of time and entropy. The soil intervention also refers to computer-generated landscapes. The half crosses and small parts that are touching the walls suggest a digital mesh that continues beyond, despite the physical limitations of the gallery space. This feeling is accentuated by the contrast of the dark earth against the white carpet that reinforces the perspective in the room.

In Amaral's series *Pinturas Protéticas (Prosthetic Paintings)* figurative elements appear through synthetic materials and processes used to metabolize images. The artist uses photographs taken with his phone as a starting point to make elaborate silicone reliefs in bright citric colors that are both deeply personal and obscure. As the title of the show suggests, *Prole (Off-Spring)* depicts the artist's family as well as other personal elements surrounded by the nature from the farm where Amaral lives.

Hung from the structure of the ceiling, four wasp nest sculptures glow a subtle green light. Casted from original wasp nests found by the artist, they appear in a more random manner, breaking the balance of the space and inhabiting the room as an intruder that doesn't ask permission to settle in.