



Luiz Roque
X
11/03 – 08/04 2023

Mendes Wood DM is proud to present *X*, Luiz Roque's second solo show in Brussels. Comprised of new works in ceramics and a screening of the 2020 short film *República*, this exhibition expands on Roque's exploration into the fragmented universe of sexuality and the power dynamics of representation.

Shedding new light on to the development of the artist's own sculptural practice, *X* presents Roque's largest group of ceramics to date, including compositions in various dimensions and colors. Roque, currently an artist-in-residence at the European Ceramic Workshop Center (EKWC) in Oisterwijk, The Netherlands, has spent the past three months exploring the technical and artistic possibilities of the medium.

Often carrying out a non-linear production, the artist has been developing separate pieces of ceramics, collecting them as a crucial part of the creative process and arranging the different elements together at the end in a form of collage, or styling – to borrow from the practice of combining distinct style compositions. Not surprisingly, Roque's sculptures often double as items of desire themselves, such as *Bag* (2022), *begging to be flaunted*, or *Pedra com Leite* (2023), oozing explicit sexual innuendo. In Roque's signature disruptive social commentary, lust or desire becomes an important element for understanding the nature of human behavior.

Fashion's continuous allure is also present in the account of Marcinha do Corinho, a legendary Brazilian performer who immigrated to Europe in the early 1980s in the pursuit of better opportunities. Interviewed for the film *República*, which was partially titled after the homonymous public square in São Paulo, Marcinha remembers finding solace in «jewelry and gifts» as a young showgirl. Purchase power, as it is, repeatedly forges the path to social emancipation within the often-marginalized transgender community of Brazil. At a later moment, Marcinha details her hormonal suppression routine with the intention to eliminate any form of sexual desire – challenging social perceptions of gender identity. Captured on video and Super-8 film, *República* doubles as an installation, taking up an entire room of the gallery and creating an immersive visual experience. *X* offers visitors the first opportunity to watch *República* in Belgium. Commissioned by the São Paulo independent art-space Pivô, in partnership with CAC Passerelle in Brest, France, the film travelled in 2021 to the Visual Arts Center (VAC), of The University of Texas at Austin, USA.

Finally, a prevalent voyeuristic standpoint is manifested elsewhere throughout the show. Roque's ceramics are intentionally arranged together, in an urban-like presentation synonymous with environments of consumption. This diverse selection of sculptures, many of which are adorned in colorful and latex-like varnish reminiscent of fetish culture, reveals the extension of our own excessive behaviors.

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Luiz Roque (b. 1979, Cachoeira do Sul, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo.

He has had solo exhibitions at PROA21, Buenos Aires (2022); VAC, Austin (2021); Pivô, São Paulo (2020); CAC Passerelle, Brest (2020); New Museum, New York (2019); MAC Niterói, Rio de Janeiro (2018); Tramway, Glasgow (2017); amongst others. His work has been included in group exhibitions at Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Gothenburg (2023); 59th International Biennale di Venezia, Venice (2022); Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo (2019); Centro de Arte Contemporáneo, Quito (2018); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2018); 1st Riga Biennial, MASP, São Paulo (2017); the 32nd São Paulo Biennial (2016); MoMA PS1, New York (2016); DRAF, London (2015); Kunsthalle, Vienna (2014); 9th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre (2013); and Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2013); amongst others.

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