

## Matter out of place

The most recent works of Pedro Wirz are assembled in his solo show named *Terra quente*. Upon arrival at the shows host (and incubator) one is faced with a looming chimney of one of Zurich's waste treatment facilities, a fitting coincidence for Wirz's reimagination of contamination, disturbance and most simply the dump through a series of sculptural interventions.

In *Terra quente* Wirz draws our attention to the contaminated diversities that proliferate in the dump, where dirt is longer defined as matter out of place.

The locus of a viral city emerges from inside one of the frogs in *Chão seco*. This allusion to the ultimate weedy invader, humans, conjures an enchanting spell. Mysticism and Science are playfully mixed knowledge systems throughout his works and recall Wirz's childhood in the Paraíba valley, Brazil a place with rich mythos that coupled with his scientist parents led to this fruitful syncretism that is palpable throughout his career. Wirz at times carefully treads this line (secularism/enchantment) but ultimately his works demonstrate a unique sensitivity to the presence of enchanted and otherworldly forces.

*The cauldron* viewed from the side is contamination in its most essential representation -for the elixir and its power depends on this very alchemy, to fuse, to cast as one.

The work evokes the time Wirz spent working at one of Brazils largest waste management facilities. The lining of large excavations with a thick sheet of plastic and the dumping of waste to be left behind for millennia to come - the constipation of the earth, undigested to-be-shit is mimicked by the styrofoam lined humus.

The *heaters* frame the exhibition providing the first allusion to the specters of technology. These humus spheres are plugged in, alluding to two forms of energetic harnessing- the more contemporary understanding of energy- electricity, and the original source- the eternal, rich, nourishing, vitality of composting. The ninhosperched on the walls made of mostly synthetic material provide refuge, for Wirz knows congregation and rest are needed for the journey ahead.

*Terra quente* casts the elements as mutating, and purity as a relic of the ancient past, a past done away with when those that lied beneath were rattled. Slumber is interrupted and thus their journey of decomposition halted. The compost becoming in the underground faced our impatience. The acceleration of a becoming, that mutated, with the extraction of its most crucial ingredient, time. In *Terra quente* impurity is the not only the lens but the very experience of existence. There is no return, only further becoming, further absorption, metabolization of the xeno and as the

disintegration of the elements once distinguished as earth, air, water and fire continues.

The question remains, can we sense the vitalism emerged from this contamination?

January 2019, Alice Boudreau

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