

PEDRO CABRITA REIS

19th November 2011 – 21st January 2012

The Galerie Nelson-Freeman is proud to present its third solo exhibition of the work of Pedro Cabrita Reis, who was born in Lisbon and is considered to be one of the most influential Portuguese artists of his generation.

His work explores the different possibilities of sculpture as well as painting, drawing and photography.

In his work, Pedro Cabrita Reis uses building materials (brick, fluorescent tube, electric cable, double glazing...) as well as "found" items (doors, windows, benches, ladders...), that he brings together and assembles into sculptures. The essence of Pedro Cabrita Reis's work is to be found in the very act of construction. Although he always initiates a dialogue with the spaces he inhabits, his goal is not to suggest new architectural forms. His sculptures act as vectors for emotions: they create imaginary territories, evoking familiar architectural landscapes, of which only traces seem to remain. Faced with his work, the spectator experiences feelings of absence and silence, characteristics which run through the whole of the artist's oeuvre.

While Pedro Cabrita Reis is perhaps best known for his sculpture, the artist has defined himself through painting: "I see myself as a painter, in the classic sense of the word....It is as a painter that I relate to the world....All that I have ever done are paintings; some of them lighter, hung on walls, then heavier ones, set on the ground, and even some that encompass whole spaces." At the beginning of the 80s, Pedro Cabrita Reis's painting was both figurative and expressive and by the end of the decade, he was painting on wood or on wooden objects such as doors. During the 90s, he replaced the paint with other materials such as glass, wood or plaster, until finally his "Painted Panels" use no paint whatsoever, though they have all the qualities of paintings. By the end of the 90s his sculptural work no longer involved the use of paint. Since then, many of his paintings use parts of windows or doors as support, playing with glass as pictorial surface and with aluminum as both sculptural element and a frame. He covers the surface or back of the panes of glass with solid blocks of acrylic paint, or sometimes leaves the panes bare.

Recently the artist has again used canvas, notably in the series *Grid Paintings* (2006-2010), which echoes the sculptural series *Compounds* begun in 2005, structured piles of metal or marble that evoke the forms of modernist towers.

Pedro Cabrita Reis's current exhibition at the gallery is centered on painting and brings together a group of works executed in 2011. The artist exhibits two acrylic on canvas monochromes with aluminum frames: *Les bleus #1* and *Les verts #1*. Next to them we find *The Metal Landscape*, which is made up of four panels of metal shelving; the dents and marks outline an abstract landscape. Another mural sculpture, *The Aluminum Monochrome #18* is constructed using the same principle as the *Compounds* series. It is made up of aluminum elements piled on top of each other and the face is covered with a thick coat of black acrylic paint. The monumental sculpture *A Lifetime #2* brings to mind a deconstructed version of the *Compounds* series in that it involves the piling up of identical structural modules. The aluminum modules however are not piled up in a regular manner to form a compact mass but seem to have been added at random in an anarchic manner. The effect is of a play on dynamic energies of the empty spaces and solid areas. This is underlined by the addition of orange paint emphasizing certain lines of the sculpture. Echoing *The Metal Landscape* yet returning towards a more traditional idea of landscape painting, the artist also exhibits three acrylics on canvas: *The Untitled Landscapes #26*, *#34* and *#44*.

Pedro Cabrita Reis was born in 1956 in Lisbon. He has participated in numerous international exhibitions such as Documenta IX in Kassel in 1992, the 22nd and 24th Sao Paulo Biennales in 1994 and 1998 and the Venice Biennale in 1997. In 2003, he represented Portugal at the Venice Biennale. In 2009, his work was exhibited in a travelling retrospective at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Carré d'Art in Nîmes (2010), the M-Museum Leuven (2011) and the Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon (2011).