

SEBASTIÁN BAUDRAND

21.07.2022 | 27.08.2022

FOREST BELIEF

A network of aesthetic resistance is created in the territory - a great filter - a human support that evolves parallel to the consumer society. Abstractions of memory in transformation shake the everyday or the censored through the aesthetic use. The collected, ordinary, industrial and commonly used materials give coordinates to the site. New "constructive habitats" in a spatial silence and orality.

Sebastián Baudrand lives in a process, opening new spaces where to ponder the paradigms of nowadays society and its need to point the territory, the landscape and nature, questioning its structures through site-specific installations that seek, with subtle intervention, to recognise the root in uprooted lands.

During the months of May and June, he did an artist residency at ArtWorks. As usual in his practice, the artist raised several investigative layers that fed the process of abstraction and conceptualization of the works. A historical layer that manifests itself linguistically and orally through myths; a geographical layer where aspects of archaeology, ethnography and memory are syncretized; and a present layer, where the works intertwine the ordinary and the extraordinary.

The field explorations around Porto, Póvoa de Varzim, Navais, Rates, Amorim and the daily trips by bicycle between the residence and the studio bring variable coordinates to the research, field notes - videos, photographs and audios -, symbolic relations that can be grouped in pairs of opposites: global-local, rural-urban, public-private, sterile-fertile, order-chaos, liquid-solid, death-life.

Water, a primordial element for survival, guided the ways of conceiving and representing the world, the ability to transform into myths and rituals, powerful elements capable of transmitting the acquired knowledge that sustains life in community, the most effective means of cohesion and human organisation. The "*Fonte da Moura Encantada [Enchanted Moura Fountain]*" is what remains of these myths, the primordial cults, the clearest sign of the essential concerns of the Homo sapiens sapiens' first phase of life, the Upper Palaeolithic, that emerges through archaeological research: the fertility cult, the cult of the dead, the ancestor cult and totemism, visible in *dolmens and menhirs*.

Forest Belief underlies all these cults where we find the belief in Mother Earth, mistress of Death and Life and in the three Levels or Realms; Heaven, Earth and the Underworld. The Chilean artist's first exhibition in Portugal proposes a contemporary rite, taking

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advantage of the L+S Projects' space and its location below street level to point out the underground and its symbolic connotations. From there, the works conceived specifically for the gallery's basement break down the architecture of the place, generating reminiscences of the local landscape and its first occupations.

Eight pieces of cast iron, a material that evokes the Iron Age and makes reference to the *Castros*, articulate the intervention, carrying us to the imaginary of the burial and its social act, the offering, the cemetery. The manhole covers - apparent mortuary tombstones - represent other passages into this duality of the work; common channels between the sacred and the profane. Semi-open hatches reveal a watery interior in the old Bonfim district, where several springs were captured by the *Arca de Água de Mijavelhas* - a 14th century founded architectural stratification, unearthed during the construction process of the 24 de Agosto metro station - a hydric set that distributed water among the various fountains of the city of Porto, common spaces for its supply.

Today, under the city, the Metro passengers take a symbolic daily journey. A memorial transit of waters or rehearsals for a route to other worlds?

Carlos Sierra Soto