

ON THE SKY AND OTHER EARTHLY INSTANCES

Guy Amado . 2010 . *text for the exhibition Contra.Céu at Capela do Morumbi*

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Guy Amado . *Art Critics*

Representations of nature and nature itself have been in the crux of the relationship between men and their surroundings for as far as we can remember. It is an ancient attempt to capture the world, the longing of men to understand their own existence. It is through the visual interpretation that men are able to aspire transcendence. Such impressions have been registered throughout the history and its vicissitudes of human visuality-being here understood by the term "Art". These registers may present themselves in idealized, solemn and reverent formalizations and they can also be associated with a mimetic tradition of world representation. They may also be presented more freely and subjectively, distorted or stylized, evoking metaphorical reading or rather, emptying any other interpretation which is not being shown.

Themes involving nature, or especially the natural landscapes are constantly and recurrently present in the works of Marcelo Moscheta and it is common for us to come across clouds, rocks and cold formations on his production. However, there seems to be an interest, which is not so centered in the idea of representing nature itself. Rather, there seems to be a greater interest in the reflection of possibilities that these manifestations bring out. The faculty of perception, its possibilities and its limitations is an important aspect in Moscheta's poetry. It is impossible to ignore the displacement of meaning in the action of capturing the elements and fixing them in the typical preciousistic and "demoted" characteristics of the artist in order to concentrate on his most well known productions. What could have been a banal operation described like this shows itself to be another of his instigating and elusive works once one can observe that the process is done by means of a delicate and minute process of applying graphite layers over rigid plaques causing potentially furtive results. The enchantment before the virtuosity of the feature as well as the esthetical appeal of these drawings is enriched by the realization evidenced by this relationship (theme-subject/procedure-technique), which are costly to the artist, as are also the interest for temporality, for the transitory and for the ephemeral, which bring out questions about the displacement and the place of things.

Such proceedings and questions are now conjugated more boldly and incisively in the artist's work "Contra.Céu" (Against the Sky) at the Morumbi Chapel. From the physical and symbolic idiosyncrasies of the place as well as from the attempt to respond to these characteristics, Moscheta decided to challenge himself to bring the sky- or at least a considerable fragment of the sky- inside the Chapel. If it is not possible to bring the Heaven promised on the Scriptures, the artist tries to depict our mundane sky at least, the one which colors the ocean, feeds dreams, conforms to our most archetypical idea of landscape and reaffirms our inescapable earthly condition.

The grayish panel positioned in the back of the Chapel, as if it were an altar, occupies barely the whole width of the room confronting the public frontally. It is worth remembering that this altar is the place where rehearsed rites potentialize epiphanies,

which find a direct reverberation on Contra.Céu. We can see in the panel glimpses of stains whose hues and definitions oscillate within the luminosity and the distance of the panel, which is a typical effect of the graphite when applied in great amounts. The stains gain shape of clouds, with nuances that slowly delineate a fragment of the sky- what could have been imagined, but not concluded, before. A sky which was constructed in an illusionist game and which unveils itself before the eyes of those who approach or move away from the structure, a sky-drawing mirrored in the perfect symmetry of the polished steel which returns and sets back to the drawing, as an instantaneous edge for those who see it. The upper level meets the lower level and within this convergence of skies, it is impossible to discern which is the matrix and which is the reflection. The closer the viewer observes, the less certain he is and the more abstract it gets, although the viewer may gain a relative comfort to verify the procedure which generated such effect. By "bringing the sky to the floor", the artist not only inverts the symbolic plan but he also incites a reflection about our certainties and perception of things more widely.

If for Marcelo "the landscape is like a counterpoint to measure itself", "a place where you can measure the world", this maxim gains in this work and in this place a power of synthesis which perhaps he hadn't achieved before with so much clarity. Alexander Cozens, landscape artist and British theorist of the 18th century once postulated that "*we do not look for the universalism of beauty anymore, but the particular of the characteristic; the characteristic cannot be captured by contemplation, but by craftiness and tenacity of the mind, which allows the association or combination of image-ideas, even if they are extremely diverse and distance from one another*".¹ This seems to be exactly what the artist does here. In his infinite complementarities, the image-ideas that he executed by trompe-l'oeil suggest an improbable Rorschach inkblot of the sublime; a strong exercise of manufactured epiphany, conceived by technique and sensitivity, playing with the emotion of the viewer with a cold, abstract and precise appraisal. Moscheta brings the celestial to the earthly and then he removes us from this ground.

¹ According to Giulio C. Argan, in *Modern Art* page 18