

TERRA INCOGNITA

Julia Trolp . 2009 . *text for the exhibition Terra Incognita at Galleria Riccardo Crespi in 2009*

Terra Incognita

Julia Trolp . *Art Critics and Curator*

Terra incognita is an inscription frequently found on old maps, where it was used to designate places that had not yet been explored. The expression conjured up inhospitable, backward territories, remote from any kind of civilization, where human beings were often still to set foot. The words were therefore synonymous with the untamed nature that could strike fear into their reader. Hic sunt leones, "here there are lions," was sometimes written in the margins of the maps to underline the threat posed by these places.

After the numerous campaigns of exploration carried out over the course of 19th century, the inscription began to disappear from the vocabulary of cartographers. The impulse to discover new lands, a natural human instinct, has meant in fact that almost every corner of the world has been visited, explored and mapped, losing its aura of a wild place. This tendency has continued in the contemporary world, and is reflected for example in the Google Earth search program available on the internet: today we can "fly" with a click of the mouse, seated comfortably at our desks, from one continent to another. We cannot tell where, thanks to research and technology, the modern versions of the idea of exploration are going to take us in the future.

Marcelo Moscheta in turn is making a journey of discovery all his own. Never having been to Italy, the Brazilian artist, who was born in 1976, sees the experience of his first solo exhibition at the Galleria Riccardo Crespi in Milan as an opportunity to get to know the country and find out about his own origins, through an artistic process. In fact the artist's grandfather came from Treviso. For the occasion Moscheta has created a series of new works starting out from existing places that manages to turn, by ignoring the usual and familiar routes, into completely new geographies.

The title of the exhibition, Terra Incognita, is the concept that unites the works on display, created by the artist with great mastery in a variety of media, from collage to drawing, from photography to the installation. The theme that all the works have in common is the transformation of something unknown and alien into something personal, new and individual. In this act of appropriation the artistic process and the material, artisan realization of the works play a decisive part for the artist. Drawing – a technique of which Moscheta has a virtuoso command – allows the artist to trace existing surfaces and structures and to reproduce them in a traditional manner with charcoal on white paper or, more experimentally, with graphite on black PVC, going on to intertwine them with personal narratives. With these "stories" the artist does not aim to give us either an objective representation of the existing world or an impartial image of reality. Moscheta wants to take us through his art into a universe of his own, to show us hidden geographies and lands we have never seen before.

He uses collage to create imaginary landscapes based on old picture postcards. With the installation he projects an alternative geography of the city of Milan, made up of

filigree drawings of trees and their geographical coordinates. As spectators we share in his process of approach, exploration and sometimes even invention. Through Marcelo Moscheta's works we are given a chance to go back to familiar places and see them with different eyes, and to discover something new through his artistic sensibility. So what the exhibition shows us is an individual geography, a new terra incognita: the personal world of Marcelo Moscheta.