

## Drawings of Air

By Cauê Alves [Translated from the Portuguese by Stephen Berg], 2010

The raw materials of Maria Laet's drawings are interval and air. The displacement of ink is generated by the breeze produced as a consequence of body movement or breath. There is a considerable distance between gesture and paper in the two series on exhibition. The distance of the artist's body from the support considerably reduces her control over results. The origin of expressiveness in these drawings lies in chance and indeterminacy of process.

A physical effort is required for the drawing of each line. In one of the series, a helium balloon keeps aloft tinted cotton that flies according to the direction of the breeze. Hence the difficulty of a precise correspondence between the body's movement and the line. There is a discontinuity between gesture and drawing.

The other series makes use of China ink and a stack of paper. The ink is blown in opposite directions, as in some sort of silent dialogue. The China ink soaks through layers of paper until it has been totally absorbed. The balloon tends to an ascending movement, whereas in this series the force of gravity inverts the direction. Displayed in horizontal sequences, the drawings present traces of breath and its process of disappearance. What was once a three-dimensional stack of paper exhibits an emphasis on planarity. The seeping of the ink through the support and the relationship between each one of the drawings are mentally refashioned by the public. It all happens as if we were looking at individual frames separately rather than watching one second of film.

These works call our attention to the hiatus between each one of the drawings and the empty space between the body's gesture and the marks upon the paper. What is this interval? Rather than the distanced mode according to which the contemporary subject relates to objects, it is man's very connection with the world that presupposes voids pregnant with meanings.