

BREA THLE SS

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At first sight, the drawings and sculptures that Claudio Cretti shows in this exhibition have very few similarities. The two-dimensional pieces are graphic looking. On them, pigment is opaque and brittle; it looks like a drawing made with the soot stuck to the building fronts and gables of large cities.

The other pieces look like objects. Even though we can see some tridimensional works, looking more anonymous—wooden masts standing on thin wedges called *poles*—limp and small sculptures made with pipes, straws, whistler, funnels and cigarette holders at the tip dominate the gallery. Structures that try to assign a role to objects that no longer are what they used to be. In the pieces of this series, Drag (*Trago*), the artist connects, using hollow rubber tubes, obsolete artifacts, related to the act of inhaling or blowing air.

Most of these objects, which act as a support for the soft lines that shape the sculptures, are artisanal, made by a traditional material culture, associated not with the technologic industry, but with millenary manufactures. These are collector's pieces, objects that Claudio Cretti has been gathering for over twenty years.

They look like things from the past, which have lost their purpose and their *raison d'être* due to the programmed obsolescence of capitalism. These are objects that time has put aside and now must search for some new activity. They resent not being remembered anymore, but they can become something else they never thought of before.

Thus, both the drawings and the sculptures associate with an idea of leftover. Of something that was left behind and is looking for something to do from that point forward. This appearance of a part separated from the whole has been present in most of Claudio Cretti's work. There were several occasions when his production resembled some leftover, a piece cut off from a body, an object separated from another object violently.

In their best reliefs of the early 1990, the cuts of glass fiber were colorful surfaces— torn, filled with holes, irregular. These pieces only acquired their autonomy and individuality at the expense of leaving behind any

homogenous, rectangular and pacified autonomy. The effort of setting themselves apart from the other things in the world, of becoming an art piece, was violent. It left permanent wounds on their skin that would never heal.

Most of the sculptures in stone by Cretti also seem to deal with this effort made by the shape, to disentangle itself from the more righteous matter. Not by accident, often, as in the Fallen Sky (*Céu tombado*) series (2003), the artist has opposed more polished volumes with the rough rocks they had supposedly been carved from.

In addition to being an erotic game of fitting convex and concave objects, the composition seems to struggle to show more singular objects that break loose from this more shapeless and irregular matter. This guise of fragment makes us see the sculpture as some leftover, some debris.

It seems as if the volume tries to rid itself from a nature which makes it less than nothing. But the effort is not simple. Therefore, it is only noticeable when placed side by side with what it once was. The shape we manage to identify is what got rid of the more brutal appearance as a whole and, more painfully, gained some individuality.

Well, these are works from over ten years ago. A lot has happened since then. As a matter of fact, the production of Cláudio Cretti so far has started to use these somewhat loose fragments to compose a great variety of shapes.

Often, his work evokes the conventions of tradition. Although they are always abstract, we can think of the horizontality of some drawings, such as those presented here, as vestige of the more traditional ways to create a landscape or seascape. The small sculptures of the exhibition, as exotic as they may look, remind us of the shapes and poses of the traditional statuary or the animals of the best sculpture made in Brazil.

I even believe that the poses of the Drag series repeat questions asked by the sculptures made with marble and granite cylinders of 2011. At the time, the artist took advantage of some fragments to create final and vertical pieces. He put these cylinders together through plumbing connections that attributed to each of those sticks the appearance of a body part. Standing or lying down, those pieces took stiff, upright positions, much as the heroes who win or are defeated in the Hellenistic statues.

In them, the meaningless fragments seem to enact some deed, as pathetic as it may be. The parts tried to take position.

Nowadays, they seem to lose face. The rubber sculptures are abstract. Still, they look like bodies that touch each other, bend their backs, as if

moving out of the position that gave them sense and tried to relax. Incidentally, the first doubt I had upon seeing these works was how to keep them on the stand.

It is curious that the support is provided by an object that has lost their purpose. Pieces that look like the subjects who can't accept losing their job and wander the streets pretending to do something. The shape also had something that has lost its role. It seems to live the tragedy of a society that is not assimilated by the demands of capital, of discipline. Not by chance the pieces, whether they are drawings or tridimensional, are associated with breath, with the air that burns and creates soot, with the air that exits a body and leaves it breathless. These are frail, tired and weakened bodies. At times, they are funny, as if happiness, even if fleeting, showed up in these moments when one must invent something to do.

Just like Macunaíma, the Brazilian character, these sculptures are lucky and unlucky enough to have refused our time. People who do not fit the violent schemes of capitalist assimilation.

However, when I look at these pieces, I do not think of the catchphrase said by the hero without a character, created by Mário de Andrade: "Can't be bothered". His tone is more of ennui, of someone who will try anything but life will deny him all the resources. Those objects stop being pipes only to fail again as feet, support, heads and everything else. The following day they will wake up early, check the newspaper ads, go out, have fun, despair, but they are aware that things haven't been easy for anyone.