

In between clear black and whites, greens, grays and blues.

The drawings of Bettina Vaz Guimaraes seem to belong at first glance to the tradition of still lives, in which the objects of the world are represented in resting and offered, in slow scrutiny of the eye, that identifies and compares them to the repertoire of images kept by memory. However, they bring inbuilt mechanisms that loosen this supposed belonging or that make them less peaceful. The first one of these comes from the fast movement of the brushes over the chosen support, which makes the paper absorb the paint in an unequal manner forming dense fields of black ink in some areas and in others simple stains or thin lines. This fast gesture, imprinted in the created forms, eventually provokes regret and a desire to go back to the past. Nevertheless, erasing the marks and dashes inscribed in the support is not possible, affirmation of a time that flows in only one direction. Corrections can only be made by over layering more stains and lines or by alternative constructions over the same worked surface. In this way in an intrinsic manner the technique used, an idea of movement that subverts the apparent immobility of drawn objects even if their identity is always respected is imposed. The second mechanism that distances the drawings from a still life tradition is the inexistence of a context that situates the reproduced painted objects as part of an ordinary day to day. Isolated from all the references that their neighbors (a tea pot, a pencil sharpener or a flask) are subjected to from the world where they are copied, these images have no way to become still lives, becoming mere concepts of such objects. They are the running paint and the droplets over the paper, also a result of the fast speed at which the artists hand works, that gives them back the weight that the empty white from the support subtracts. Finally there is the enlargement of the forms in relationship to their usual scale, which corrodes the notion of proximity that the drawn objects could evoke to those who observe them closely. The joining of sheets of paper that allows such expansion of forms is what also makes them possess an evident center where everything that is out and distant converges virtually. Located in between continuity and distance of inhabited space, the images created by Bettina Vaz Guimaraes reclaim in this manner a place in the tradition of representing the world that can only shelter them when it is enlarged. Lastly, they evoke, in the realm of symbolic and sensitive, the ambiguous mode with which appreciation, towards anything or anybody, expresses itself in common life, where even between clear blacks and whites exists greens, grays and blues.

Moacir dos Anjos