

GALERIA MPA

GALERIA MOISES PEREZ DE ALBENIZ

Rui Toscano // Dos Colossos

17.11.2018 - 26.01.2019

Colossal Imagination

The works that are part of *Dos Colossos* provide continuity to a series of projects that Rui Toscano began almost 10 years ago and which became more popular thanks to the exposition entitled “Civilização de Tipo I, II e III” (Type I, II, III Civilisation) at the National Contemporary Art Museum in Chiado, Lisbon in 2016. They are works in which the artist pursues research motivated by issues associated to the perception of time and space and correlating links with the experience of the **imagination**, taking themes regarding space exploration as a starting point, often in dialogue with images of figures and architectures of ancient civilisations. In this way, the artist calls on the ways and visions that man was constructing in relation to the cosmos, and simultaneously explores formal, metaphysical and symbolical links between references of a distant and buried past and the preview of the future represented by space discovery.

All this fits together like the elements of a constellation made up of an abundance of materials, types of images, techniques, historical and cultural references, like a space likely to mobilise an **imagination** without pre-established horizons and within which, all the intersections and interactions are potentially fruitful. Likewise, the coexistence of representations from ancient times can be seen with intrinsic images of a visual culture redesigned by technological devices and strongly organised around the powers of the **imagination**, intersecting scientific knowledge and forms of fiction, namely from cinema and literature. See, for instance, *The Great Pyramid II* (2015) instalment, in which two videos are projected onto a model of a Khufu's great pyramid. The images reproduce a short sequence taken from the film *Blade Runner* (1982) by Ridley Scott, in which a spinner (flying vehicle) crosses the skies of Los Angeles towards the headquarters of the Tyrell Corporation - a building in the shape of an Aztec pyramid. In one of the videos, the sequence is shown backwards. In this way, on one side it projects the vehicle flying towards the pyramid, emerging later from it on the other side in the other projection. The background sound upon which the sound of the spinner's flight is superimposed is an extended loop from the start of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by Richard Strauss, taken from the 2001 film, *A Space Odyssey* (1969) by Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick's film also inspires *Bowman* (2015), made up of a portable radio-recorder which amplifies the breathing sounds made by the astronaut Dave Bowman within his spacesuit.

We know that the human fascination with the discovery of space and the vastness of the universe is proportionate to its mystery and a lack of knowledge and understanding about it. Between the cosmologies of ancient times and space exploration, between the domains of mythology and archaeology, between scientific knowledge and creative narratives, we find an enormous, relevant field of beliefs and visions, where fiction and reality overlap. In space we assume that the rules of life and physics are more different and complex to those that we know about. It is therefore a perfect place to seek declinations of the unimaginable and the figurable.

Actually, Rui Toscano's artistic form appreciates the capacity to intensify and shift imaginations, which often involves the intermediary game, the creation of representations that infer crossovers and porosity between mediums: designs from photographic detail, designs that look like photographs, audio sculptures, videos in which movement is almost indiscernible, projections onto objects. This is what we see in the set of designs that make up the Journey Beyond The Stars and Pequeñas Nebulosas (Little Nebulas) series: designs in which the ink dots or stains become light impressions or star-like objects spread across a blueprint of the universe. They are designs that play with dimensions, between what is small (the dot of ink) and what is immeasurable (infinity) of outer space. The negativity of the design brings it closer to the appearance of a photograph, with the trend for us to want to distinguish representations in all the images, matching our unavoidable image impulse, whether they are more figurative or abstract.

All this set of works sets the tone for a field of aesthetic and conceptual possibilities where the expansion of the perceptive limits is intensified and challenged. We inhabit the conditions of our perception. We know that the images are products of a medium, with their ontological features and cultural connotations. But we also know that the experience of each image is also a product of ourselves, of our bodies as a living medium of images. In effect, the quintessential place for the images and the imagination is the body. It is precisely from this sense of physicality of the images that Rui Toscano urges us to understand that space exploration begins with our own eyes, inside our bodies and within the imagination that also represents them.

Sergio Mah, 2018