



QUOD  
LIBE

*quem quer que seja, qualquer que seja, qualquer um, qualquer coisa ...*

# QUOJOD LIBERT

**Rui Macedo**

artista . artist

**David Santos**

curador . art curator

*Movimento de Resistência*

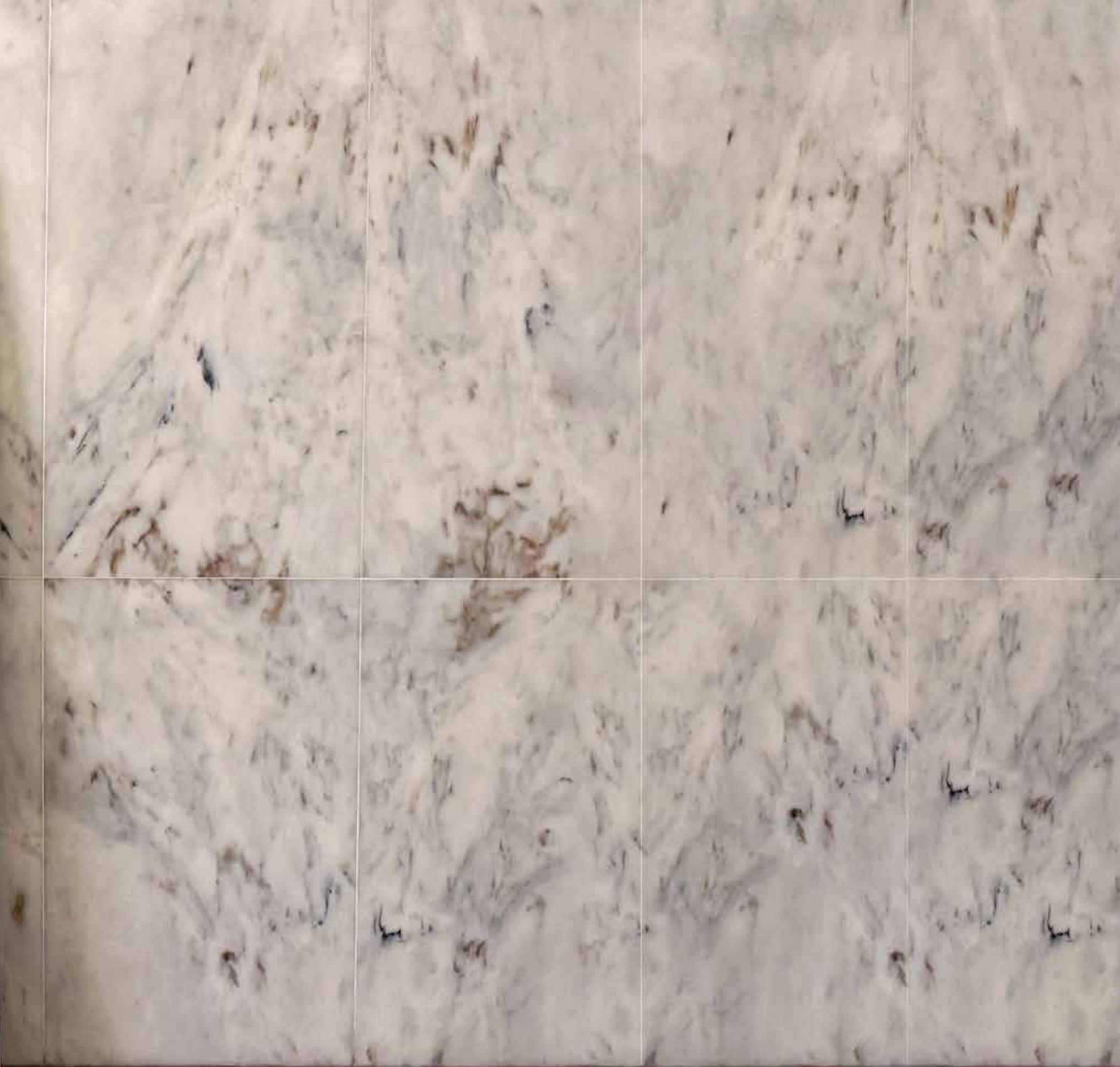
Ciclo de Arte Contemporânea

**Museu do Neo-Realismo**

Vila Franca de Xira . Portugal







# A PINTURA DE RUI MACEDO COMO OBJETO E MIMESIS DO ESPACÇO DE EXPOSIÇÃO

## A PINTURA DE RUI MACEDO COMO OBJETO E MIMESIS DO ESPAÇO DE EXPOSIÇÃO por David Santos

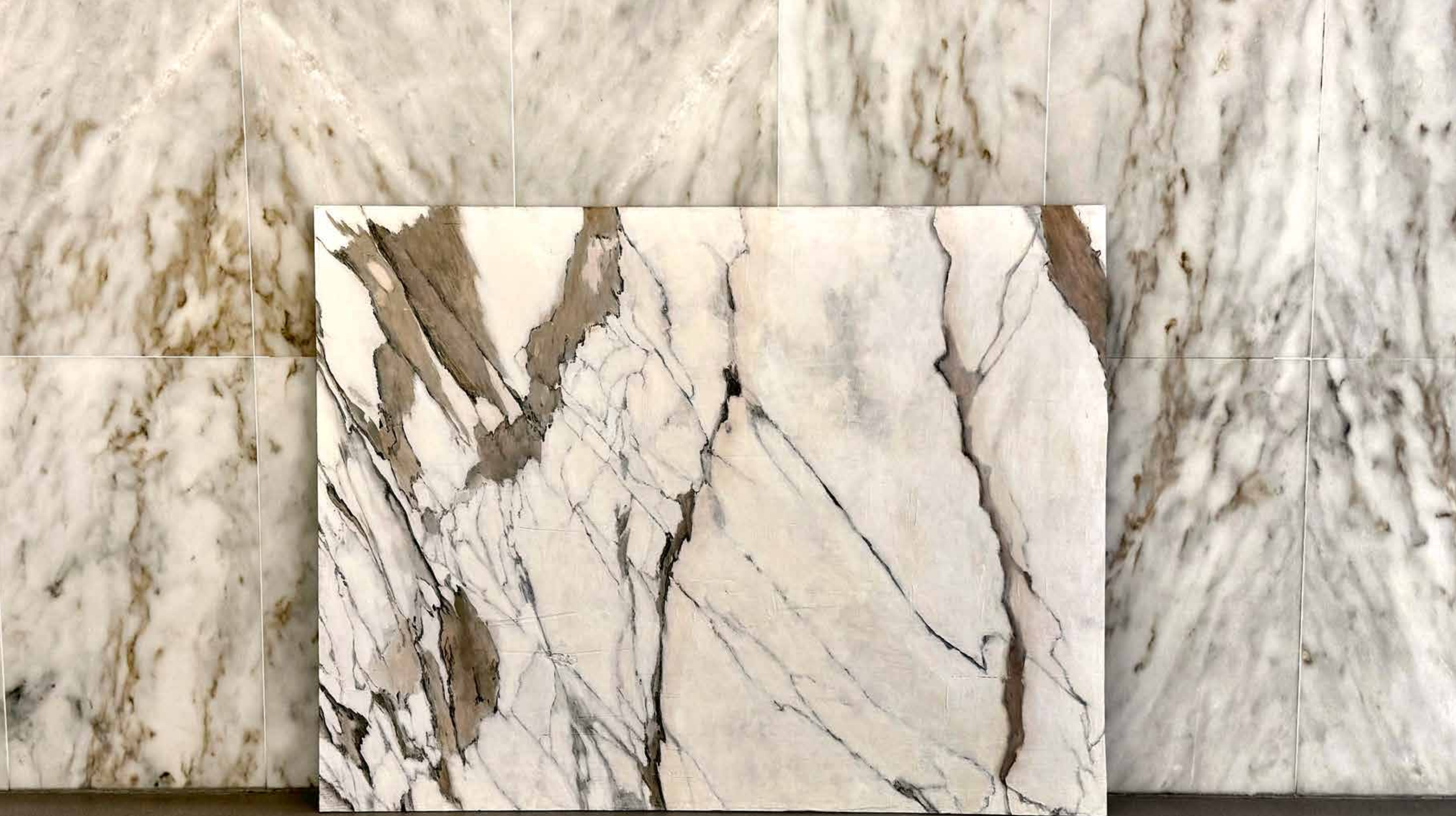
Em duas décadas de apresentação, o trabalho artístico de Rui Macedo parece sublinhar um desafio comum: a objetualização da pintura mimética na aliança concreta com o espaço da arte e os procedimentos da sua legitimação. Na verdade, há uma aptidão para o real inscrita nos seus trabalhos de pintura, que os inscreve, por sua vez, na necessária dependência de um outro real: o da arquitetura. A via dessa inquirição, apesar da densidade assumida com a história da pintura, realiza-se antes de mais através de uma profunda conceptualização sobre as possibilidades contemporâneas do ato pictórico.

Este terá assim de considerar o “aqui e agora” da experiência pós-minimalista, isto é, do objeto de arte (neste caso, a pintura) percecionado no espaço, transformando-o necessariamente numa proposta efémera, porque emerge não apenas do gesto da pintura, como da sua condição de lugar.

Em Rui Macedo não há pintura sem espaço, nem espaço sem pintura. Este não é mais o espaço projetivo, isto é, uma projeção do espaço no campo da imagem pictórica, mas o espaço compreendido enquanto obra *in situ*, ainda que de aparato pictórico. Tal como podemos reclamar a especificidade das “instalações metapictóricas”<sup>1</sup>, pois nessas propostas

não podemos continuar a falar apenas de pintura, mas de pintura no espaço, remetendo desse modo para um efeito conceptual da sua experiência e reflexão, há no trabalho de Rui Macedo uma afirmação similar, cuja tarefa considera a pintura em “campo expandido” (adaptando à pintura o conceito de Rosalind Krauss)<sup>2</sup>, numa linhagem que vai de Daniel Buren a Katharina Grosse, isto é, uma pintura produzida para o espaço da exposição, que abdica de um sentido de independência ou autonomia imagética e objetual, passando a viver na dependência absoluta das circunstâncias desse lugar onde se revela e constitui. A pintura de Rui Macedo é assim determinada, num sentido inequívoco, pelo tempo e o espaço específicos da sua exposição. Ou seja, o contexto é tão decisivo quanto a obra, ou a obra confirma e atua no contexto real da sua afirmação, o espaço. Recorrendo, porém, a uma espécie de hipervisualidade que se imiscui nos códigos do espaço e transforma o domínio do *parergon* (como na tese de Jacques Derrida)<sup>3</sup> – nos elementos de “para-obra”, que delimitam o seu aparecer, do título à moldura, mas também todo o *display* do conjunto – esta pintura converte-se num elemento de reconfiguração que convoca o conceito de “instalação” em arte e, desse modo, a nossa apreciação e compromisso totais, entre a visão e o corpo em ação, equivalente por fim à experiência vivenciada na arquitetura.

Com *Quodlibet*, o projeto pensado para o Museu do Neo-Realismo, o artista assume, uma vez mais, esse jogo deliberado: reverter a *mimesis* da pintura pressupostos ditados pelo *white cube* do espaço a



favor da consciencialização espacial. Assumindo os expositivo, Rui Macedo procura lidar ainda com o desafio adicional imposto por uma outra idiossincrasia da galeria do Museu, o facto de nela “entrar” a pequena Rua Almeida Garrett, que lhe fica adjacente, admitindo assim os condicionalismos das suas “pré-existências” estruturais, cromáticas, formais, de significado e memória, associadas à diversidade de construções desgastadas e envelhecidas dessa artéria da cidade. Essa consideração dos significados espaciais pré-existent manifestam-se desde logo na medida em que o artista não realizou objetos autónomos que produzissem indiferença relativamente ao espaço, antes procurou responder à densidade afirmativa dessa condição com a proposta de um conjunto de pinturas que reinterpretam e certificam ao mesmo tempo uma realidade visual que é, antes de mais, física e presencial, verificável no próprio espaço da apresentação pictórica ou da sua instalação.

**O desafio central de *Quodlibet* consiste, por isso, num “diálogo” ou “jogo” de visualidade produzido, de modo inevitável, entre a pintura, o espaço de exposição e a sua envolvente exterior, a qual, pela sua forte presença proporcionada por uma ampla superfície vidrada, adquire um valor extraordinário na perceção do próprio espaço da arte, com este se confundindo em muitos aspetos, alguns deles insuspeitos, outros inesperados.**

Seduzido pelo envolvimento da tradição técnica da pintura com o sentido contemporâneo da sua manifestação, isto é, das suas hipóteses e condições de reconhecimento artístico nos nossos dias, Rui Macedo trabalha, todavia, um aspeto particular dessa relação.

No caso concreto da sua instalação no Museu do Neo-Realismo, apresenta uma pintura que, sendo mimética, não é narrativa ou evocativa de uma exterioridade distante. O que aí se evoca passa pela exploração das características materiais oferecidas pelo espaço expositivo, e ainda pela sua envolvente, implicando-os assim, de modo direto, no exercício da representação. Em vez de impor uma “ausência”, uma “paisagem” ou uma “história” distantes, esta *mimesis* acentua a representação de uma “presença”, de uma “proximidade”, as “pré-existências” do lugar (da galeria e da rua). O efeito da representação é pleno de contemporaneidade pois realiza um vínculo com o espaço e, por essa via, com o tempo e a especificidade (espácio-temporal) da experiência da arte. Além disso, o seu processo de mimetização passa inclusive pelo suporte, confundindo-se a pintura com o próprio objeto, com a materialidade da sua condição real. Por isso, encontramos pinturas de placas de madeira que, na sua objetualidade pintada – simulando as cores e os veios do mármore, ou o *design* dos azulejos e as suas imperfeições –, sugerem a presença de placas de mármore, as mesmas que cobrem as paredes do espaço do museu, assim como os azulejos que revestem as paredes de algumas casas da rua. Ou seja, o que se pinta aparece-nos não só como simulação pictórica, mas também enquanto simulação objetual, aproximando-se deste modo de uma ilusão que, sendo ótica, é-o também em termos volumétricos e objetuais. Nessa medida, não estamos apenas perante pinturas que iludem a visão pela sua condição mimética de uma exterioridade representada, mas igualmente pela capacidade dessa exterioridade ser alimentada pela ilusão da sua materialidade tridimensional.

Esta é a grande diferença de interpretação *trompe l’oeil* em Rui Macedo, pois a ilusão passa pela objetualidade da pintura se fixar na similitude de outros objetos exteriores nela representados e que obedecem

não apenas aos aspetos visuais como objetuais, isto é, referentes à textura e às três dimensões da sua “presença”. Daí o forte apelo ao tato que esta pintura oferece e ao qual invariavelmente cedem quase todos os que com ela se confrontam. Neste sentido, o artista sugere um “jogo” constante de paradoxos, entre a “ilusão” e o “real”, o “olho” e a “mão”, a “verdade” e a “mentira”, ou, por fim, entre a “pintura” e o “espaço” onde esta se apresenta. Desse “jogo de espelhos” resulta, no essencial, um gosto pelas ilusões, pela exuberância de contrastes na ocupação dos planos pictóricos à escala das paredes, o que promove a perceção de um certo *horror vacui*, espécie de barroquismo assente no engano dos sentidos, ou nessa experiência *mise en abyme* que, entre duplicações formais e cromáticas, assume uma expressão de excesso.

Atuando na plenitude de uma pintura que ocupa literalmente todo o espaço parietal, o artista reforça a ideia de que, apesar das hipóteses em disputa na interpretação da arte e das suas promessas de verosimilhança e (re)apresentação, resta um forte sentimento de comunhão, esse sim genuíno, entre a prática e a receção da obra de arte. Distante de qualquer pretensão sobre a “verdade” da sua correspondência, a arte de Rui Macedo consciencializa o observador sobre a impossibilidade da sua absolutização, identificando encantos e fragilidades que partem tanto do “jogo” inerente à sua proposta, como das consequências de significação que resultam do processo da sua recetividade.

Recordemos, a propósito, que o título escolhido por Rui Macedo para esta exposição, *Quodlibet*, diz respeito a um “jogo” dialético, situado numa longínqua tradição de disputa erudita que, pela elaboração contínua dos seus argumentos, culminava quase sempre na consciência sobre a impossibilidade de objetivar uma “verdade absoluta” em torno do tema escolhido. Com uma intitulação baseada nessa expressão do latim caída em desuso, o artista propõe simultaneamente uma redescoberta do termo linguístico e filosófico do século XIII e uma “discussão” da arte enquanto “abertura” lúdica de interpretações. Estas pressupõem sobretudo a construção de um terreno de possibilidades irreduzíveis, admitindo apenas o “jogo” de sedução de uma *mimesis* que sabe, à partida, das suas limitações, mas também da eficácia deslumbrante das suas potencialidades, apontando ao exercício constante das “várias verdades” que nos habitam quando nos dispomos a receber e experienciar os efeitos infinitos de uma verdadeira obra de arte.

1. Cf. Antonio Bonet Correa, “El Esplendor de los Símbolos”, in catálogo da exposição de Rui Macedo *Un Cuerpo Extraño*, (curadoria: José María Parreño), Madrid, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, 2013.

2. Cf. Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, in *October*, vol. VIII, Massachusetts, MIT Press Primavera de 1979.

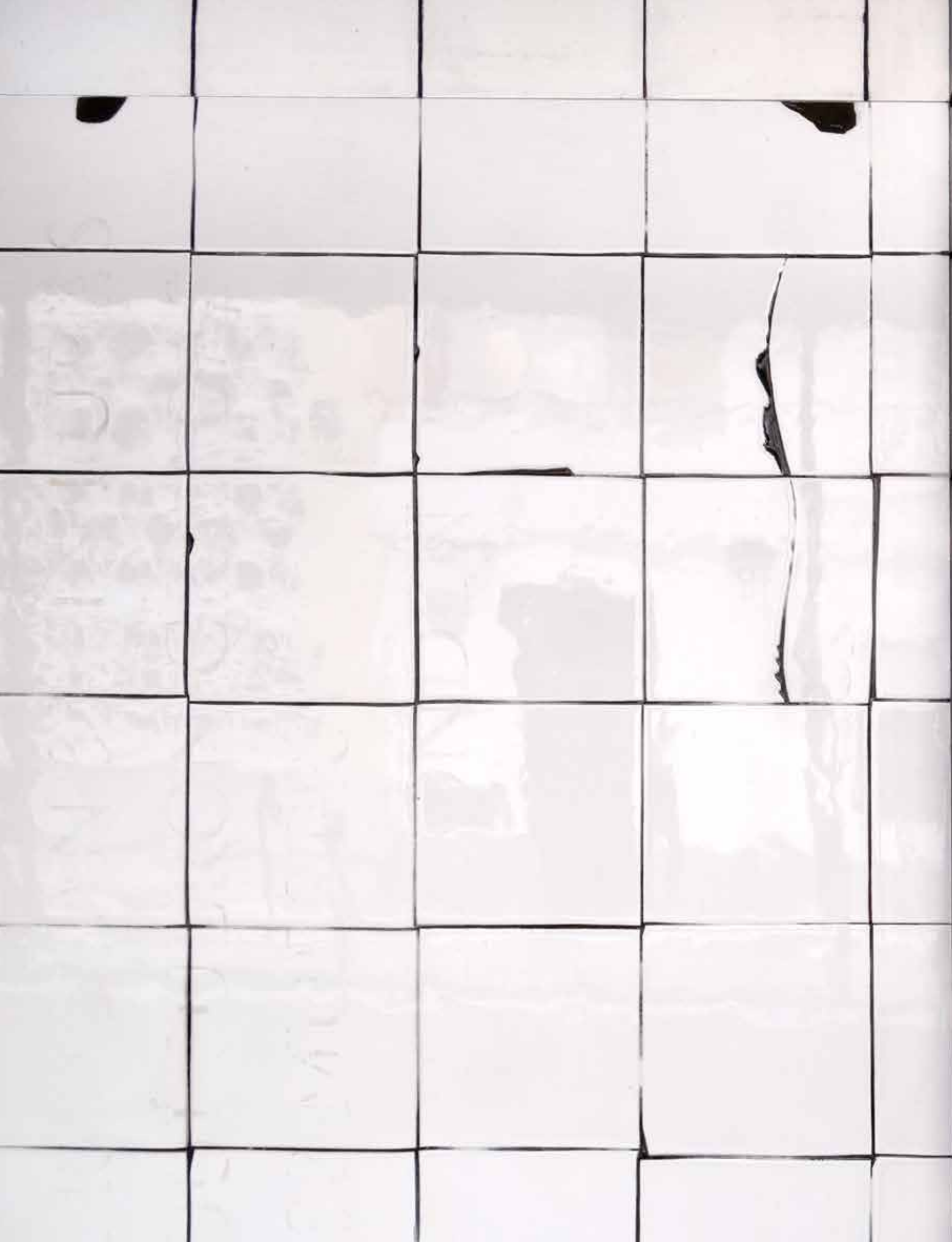
3. Cf. Jacques Derrida, “The Parergon”, in *October* (trad. Craig Owens), Massachusetts, MIT

Press, Verão de 1979, pp. 3-41; Cf. ainda Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture*, Paris, Flammarion, 1978, p. 63.









# UNAS CONSIDERACIONES SOBRE LA PINTURA INSTALATIVA DE RUI MACEDO

**“No olvidemos que detrás de la simulación de lo real está la realidad de la pintura, que nunca escapa a su sombra”<sup>1</sup>.**

## **UNAS CONSIDERACIONES SOBRE LA PINTURA-INSTALATIVA DE RUI MACEDO por Fernando Castro Flórez**

En el texto que escribí sobre Rui Macedo para su magnífica exposición en Tabacalera (Madrid, 2019) señalé que su estética es, sin ningún género de dudas, una meditación sobre el *bastidor del arte*, trasladando a la pintura ciertas estrategias del “conceptual institucional”<sup>2</sup>. Este creador portugués ha sido calificado como “un fingidor”<sup>3</sup>, ese destino que Fernando Pessoa estableciera para el poeta, un lúdico artista que enmarca y desenmarca las *ilusiones estéticas*, acude a la “cita” y es capaz de ofrecer nuevos sentidos en sus “lecturas de los museos” por medio de *singulares apropiaciones*<sup>4</sup>. La poética museográfica de Rui Macedo sintetiza la seducción del *studiolo* con los “transportes” curatoriales de Broodthaers, rematerializa el conceptual lingüístico, más allá de la ortodoxia de Kosuth, manteniendo siempre un fino sentido del humor<sup>5</sup>.

La “pintura expandida” como *site specific painting* nos “localiza” en el tiempo desquiciado. Aquel regreso a lo real propuesto por las instalaciones<sup>6</sup> es asumido por la pintura, entendida por algunos como un *generic art*<sup>7</sup>; sería importante saber si, en ese lugar reticulado y vorticial, se puede conseguir, a pesar de todo, una distancia y, así, devolverle la fuerza y la mirada y la audacia al deseo a través del sentido de lo real.

Rui Macedo, pintor “heterotópico” (en cierto sentido, borgiano) pinta y “enmarca” cuadros que propiamente exhiben una *transparencia engañosa*<sup>8</sup>; con fino humor desvela las lógicas museales, su estrategia de generar fetiches intemporales, objetos que dejan de serlo para ingresar en la “percepción desinteresada”. Especular sobre los museos, en el caso de este artista portugués<sup>9</sup>, supone también introducir en ellos *anomalías*.

Las instalaciones metapictóricas de Rui Macedo son, en buena medida, fascinantes reelaboraciones de los *cabinets d’amateurs*<sup>10</sup> como sucede en la muestra, titulada *Un Cuerpo extraño* que realizó en el Museo de Artes Decorativas de Madrid. Su obra es un *híbrido*, dispuesta entre pintura e instalación, jugando con *objet trouvé* o planteando “enmarcados” inverosímiles, cambiando la escala de los pedestales. Macedo introduce “anomalías” en los museos, nos invita a mirar desde un punto de vista inhabitual. Comentando la intervención de Rui Macedo en la Fundação Millennium bcp, Barry Schwabsky indica que, en cierta medida, se comporta con el patrimonio portugués de la pintura surrealista como si estuviera retomando la *antropofagia cultural*<sup>11</sup>.

La obra de Rui Macedo plantea, una y otra vez, la *mise en abyme*<sup>12</sup>, insistiendo también en la desfamiliarización de la percepción cotidiana, esto es, cuestionando el modo habitual de aproximarse al arte. Toda su práctica artística es en realidad es una meditación sobre la *circunstancialidad*, un modo de subrayar el “enmarcado artístico”. Ortega y Gasset apuntaba que la obra de arte

es una isla imaginaria que flota rodeada de realidad por todas partes: “Para que se produzca, es, pues, necesario -escribía en su lúcida “Meditación del marco”- que el cuerpo estético quede aislado del contorno vital. De la tierra que pisamos a la tierra pintada no podemos transitar paso a paso. Es más: la indecisión de confines entre lo artístico y lo vital perturba nuestro goce estético. De aquí que el cuadro sin marco, al confundir sus límites con los objetos útiles, extraartísticos que le rodean, pierde garbo y sugestión. Hace falta que la pared real concluya de pronto, radicalmente, y que súbitamente, sin titubeo, nos encontremos en el territorio irreal del cuadro. Hace falta un aislador. Esto es el marco”<sup>13</sup>.

Este lúcido y lúdico artista portugués genera, con enorme desenvoltura, *trampantojos*<sup>14</sup>, simulacros que introducen la incertidumbre en el seno de lo real<sup>15</sup>. Acaso una de las tareas del arte, asumida por Rui Macedo, sea recuperar *la extrañeza*, esto es, volver encontrar lo inesperado en la mirada<sup>16</sup>. Este (meta) pintor portugués, hermeneuta de los límites y los dispositivos de la representación, indica que el arte está siempre *incompleto*<sup>17</sup>.

La instalación pictórica *site-specific*, titulada *Quodlibet*, que Rui Macedo ha realizado en el Museu do Neo-Realismo da cuenta de la impresionante exigencia de este creador. Lejos de todo manierismo o inercialidad plástica, completa un proyecto extremadamente ambicioso y singularmente sutil. En la era de la *ubicuidad conquistada*, por remitir a Paul Valery, Macedo plantea *radicales posicionamientos*, toma en cuenta siempre los lugares en los que *instala* su pintura. Evidentemente sus planteamientos no son naturalistas ni tiene ninguna querencia por la concepción tradicional de la “verdad en pintura”.

Pedro Alberto Cruz ha sabido desentrañar el vínculo del nuevo realismo con una época extremadamente compleja<sup>18</sup>, sin tener una visión de la realidad como aquello que *cualquiera reconoce*<sup>19</sup>, tomando en cuenta que el mundo verdadero fabulizado desde Nietzsche está sometido a la labor incesante de la interpretación o que, en términos psicoanalíticos, lo real es eso que escapa a toda simbolización<sup>20</sup>. Para Gombrich, la *ilusión* es un proceso que opera no sólo en la representación visual, sino en toda percepción sensible como un proceso realmente crucial para las posibilidades de supervivencia de cualquier organismo. El objeto de la visión está construido por una atención deliberada a un conjunto selectivo de indicios que pueden reunirse

en percepciones dotadas de significado. En suma, la similitud de las imágenes (los objetos representados) con los objetos reales, que es el centro de toda teoría del realismo pictórico, es transferida desde la representación al juicio del espectador, un argumento circular que requiere, como ya señalara Joel Snyder de “patrones de verdad” (culturalmente definidos), lo que supondría aceptar una teoría pictórica de la visión, tal y como hiciera Alberti en su clásico tratado

*De pintura*. La idea de *verdad* está inscrita en lo que Gadamer llama la *estructura prejuiciosa de la comprensión*, un juego de interpretaciones en el que se construyen “formas de vida”.

Considero que es importante, para interpretar la pintura de Rui Macedo, reconsiderar el *paradigma simulácrico*, sin que esto suponga, a la manera de las tematizaciones de Baudrillard, un partir del signo como reversión y eliminación de toda referencia, esto es, una llegada a un momento en el cual la imagen ya no tiene nada que ver con ningún tipo de realidad, es ya su propio y puro simulacro<sup>21</sup>. En muchos casos, como demuestra espléndidamente Rui Macedo, el “realismo” recurre al *trompe-l’oeil* no para confundirse con lo real, sino para producir una simulacro con plena conciencia del juego y del artificio: sobrepasar el efecto de lo real para sembrar la duda<sup>22</sup>. El trampantojo nos lleva tanto a los placeres del parecido cuanto a la conciencia de que lo idéntico tiene múltiples *diferencias*, esto es, de que la lógica de la mirada descubre, en el espacio del deseo, lo *disimétrico*: “Desde un principio, en la dialéctica del ojo y de la mirada vemos que no hay

coincidencia alguna, sino un verdadero efecto de señuelo. Cuando en el amor, pido una mirada, es algo intrínsecamente insatisfactorio y que siempre falla porque –*Nunca me miras desde donde yo te veo*. A la inversa, *lo que miro nunca es lo que quiero ver*. Y dígame lo que se diga, la relación entre el pintor y el aficionado [...] es un juego, un juego de *trompe-l’oeil*: un juego para engañar algo”<sup>23</sup>.

Estrategia del engaño o de la seducción, el arte mantiene una distancia con lo “real” (incluso en las *prodigiosas mimetizaciones pictórico-instalativas* de Rui Macedo), es ese cristal, del que hablara Ortega en *la deshumanización del arte* que nos permite activar la *irrealización*. Si, como acabo de señalar, debemos tener presente al simulacro también es decisivo reparar en que el impulso deconstructivo es característico del arte postmoderno en general y debe distinguirse, según advirtiera Craig Owens, de la tendencia autocrítica del modernismo; la teoría modernista presupone que la *mimesis*, la adecuación de una imagen a su referente, puede ponerse entre paréntesis o suspenderse, y que el objeto de arte en sí puede ser sustituido (metafóricamente) por su referente. El postmodernismo ni pone entre paréntesis ni suspende el referente, sino que trabaja para problematizar la actividad de la referencia<sup>24</sup>, para teatralizar la *representación*.

“Hoy día los códigos de representación estallan a favor de un espacio múltiple cuyo modelo ya no puede ser la pintura (el “cuadro”) sino que sería más bien el teatro (la escena), como lo había anunciado, o al menos deseado, Mallarmé”.<sup>25</sup> Por ejemplo, en la práctica de

1 Jean Baudrillard: “La realidad supera el hiperrealismo” en *Revue d’Esthétique. La práctica de la pintura*, Ed. Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1978, p. 79.  
2 “En 1972, con motivo de su participación en la Documenta 5, escribe Daniel Buren: “Es cada vez más habitual que el objeto de la exposición no sea la exhibición de obras de arte, sino la exhibición de la exposición como obra de arte” (José María Parreño: “Un cuerpo extraño” en *Rui Macedo. Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 11). Reformulo en este texto algunas cuestiones que traté en mi ensayo Fernando Castro Flórez: “Pintura circunstancial y arte hermenéutico. [Pretextos sobre las trampas visuales de Rui Macedo]” en *Rui Macedo. Sfumato*, Tabacalera, Madrid, 2019, pp. 6-12.  
3 “Todas estas situações, coleção, pintores, pinturas, são, é claro, o resultado do trabalho autoral de Rui Macedo. Como un

fingidor de outrora, por exemplo, um “Pintor que imagina madeira, mármore, etc” (“Fingidor”), são utilizados, como indícios explícitos, os recursos da ilusão e da representação em todas as pinturas apresentadas, convocando a dúvida perceptiva sobre o que é que é pintado e o que é sugerido, o que é forma e que é substância” (João Paulo Queriroz: “Rui Macedo: o pintor, o fingidor, a coleção e o ladrão dela” en *Rui Macedo. A New Perspective on Alexander M. Collection. Against the Grain*, Galeria Municipal Vieiara da Silva, Nacional Museum Machado de Castro, Loures/Coimbra, 2018/2016, p. 30).  
4 “Na preparação para esta exposição, as visitas ao museu e as conversas que delas nasceram foram constantes. Inquirido sobre as razões da sua busca, a resposta explicitou “citações, apropriações, transposições, hibridismos, ampliação da pintura para além do quadro (pintura/janela), dos seus

limites físicos, o parergon, o fora de campo” (Rui Macedo)” (Emília Ferreira: “A Pintura. Objecto vivo e irrequieto” en *Rui Macedo. (In) dispensável. A pintura que inquieta a Coleção do Museu*, Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisboa, 2019, p. 13).  
5 “Aprecio especialmente o modo como tem vindo a definir uma espécie de poética museográfica, inventada, com humor distanciado, sobre questões do trabalho corrente nos museus: transportar, emoldurar, pendurar, dispor, legendar, iluminar” (Raquel Henriques da Silva: “A poética museográfica de Rui Macedo” en *Rui Macedo. (Land)s Caping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 16).  
6 “La instalación [...] constituye la operación última mediante la que el arte escapa a las evidencias desprovistas de realidad de lo cotidiano (evidencia de las palabras, evidencia de la arquitectura, evidencia de las

imágenes...) para convertirlas en su materia prima. Dicho de otra manera, se sitúa en el lugar opuesto no sólo a cualquier operación de ficción, sino también a cualquier operación de desciframiento, de elucidación del misterio: es más bien una especie de regreso a lo real (penoso y difícil regreso si nos fijamos en los artificios y en las complejidades de nuestro entorno actual, esta mezcla de ciberespacio y de estereotipos, de palabras obligadas y de fórmulas convenidas)” (Marc Augé: “Del espacio a la mirada: ¿qué es un objeto de arte?” en *Ficciones de fin de siglo*, Ed. Gedisa, Barcelona, 2001, p. 126).  
7 Cfr. Barry Schwabsky: “Painting in the Interrogative Mode” en AA.VV.: *New Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, Nueva York, 2003, p. 5.  
8 Raquel Henriques da Silva se refiere a la heterotopía foucaultiana y a la biblioteca ficcional de Borges en el texto “O



la *apropiación* (característica del arte norteamericano de finales de los años ochenta) se asumen, consciente o inconscientemente, posiciones cercanas a lo escenográfico, pero también frente a las descripciones formales-topográficas del arte moderno, surge un interés por lo estratigráfico: “Esos procedimientos de cita, extracto, encuadre y escenificación [...] exigen el descubrimiento de estratos de representación.

No hace falta decir que no buscamos fuentes u orígenes, sino estructuras de significación: debajo de cada imagen hay siempre otra imagen”<sup>26</sup>. Más allá de los discursos funerarios (valdría decir mejor notariales) o literalmente reaccionarios (anclados en una “originariedad” de una cierta práctica artística), es oportuno recordar la idea de John Berger de que la pintura es una afirmación de lo visible que nos rodea y que está continuamente apareciendo y desapareciendo: “posiblemente, sin la desaparición no existiría el impulso de pintar; pues entonces lo visible poseería la seguridad, la permanencia que la pintura lucha por encontrar. La pintura es, más directamente que cualquier otro arte, una afirmación de lo existente, del mundo físico al que ha sido lanzada la humanidad”<sup>27</sup>.

**La corporeidad de la pintura tiene un potencial expresivo difícilmente parangonable, de la misma forma que la red de representaciones mantiene la capacidad de persuasión**<sup>28</sup>, **en un mundo narcotizado, lamentablemente, por la literalidad del *reality show***

Gabinete de Curiosidades de Rui Macedo. Para o estado da questão em 2016” en *Rui Macedo. Cabinet of curiosities/ Timeplay/ In situ: letter of intent*, Centro de Artes e Cultura (Ponte de Sor, 2016)/ Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporânea Niterói (Niterói, 2014), p. 7.

9 “Las salas de exposiciones y, en algún caso, de museos, se han convertido para él en un objeto de especulación estética” (Javier Barón Thaidigsmann: “Tiempo para el juego, de Rui Macedo” en *Rui Macedo. Cabinet of curiosities/ Timeplay/ In situ: letter of intent*, Centro de Artes e Cultura (Ponte de Sor, 2016)/ Museo Barjola (Gijón, 2014)/ Museo de Arte Contemporânea Niterói (Niterói, 2014), p. 11).

10 Cfr. Antonio Bonet Correa: “El esplendor de los símbolos” en *Rui Macedo. Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 21).

11 Cfr. Barry Schwabsky: “Painting Beyond Painting” en *Rui Macedo. (Land)s Caping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 33.

12 “Exposição dentro de uma exposição, mise en abyme ela mesma, para usar o conceito cunhado por André Gide, tão presente na obra de Rui Macedo,

e que se refere a incrição de uma narrativa dentro de outra pré-existente, a intervenção do pintor na actual exposição da coleção do museu, Razões e Emoções, cria um discurso da inquietação” (Emília Ferreira: “A Pintura. Objecto vivo e irrequieto” en *Rui Macedo. (In) dispensável. A pintura que inquieta a Coleccão do Museu*, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisboa, 2019, pp. 6-7).

13 José Ortega y Gasset: “Meditación del marco”, en *Espectador III*, 1921, reimpresso en el dossier dedicado a “Los marco del arte fuera de sí” de Revista de Occidente, nº 441, Febrero del 2018, p. 10.

14 “Rui Macedo is an artist that approaches this complexity through an installation of *trompe-l’oeil* paintings. *Trompe-l’oeil* is that mischievous painting technique where the “eye is deceived” through perspectival illusionism, so that surfaces, objects and recesses seem from specific vantage points to be real, solid, and no painted at all. But it is a deceit as Jacques Lacan pointed out. In Lacan’s his much discussed 1964 seminar

he touches on the great Classical story, handed down to us by Pliny the Elder, or the contest between the Greek painters Zeuxis and Parrhasius. For Lacan *trompe-*

l’oeil is fascinating because it is both a confusion or a masquerade and a mimicry. And importantly it is one that declares the fact it is doing so. It is double edged: a deceit and a proclamation of that deceit” (Daniel Sturgis: “A simplicity set to question” en *Rui Macedo. A New Perspective on Alexander M. Collection. Against the Grain*, Galeria Municipal Vieiara da Silva, Nacional Museum Machado de Castro, Loures/Coimbra, 2018/2016, pp. 61-65).

15 “El gozo del trompe-l’oeil radica en una sensación intensa de déjà vu, y de siempre-olvidado, de una vida anterior al modo de producción del mundo real. El trompe-l’oeil nunca pretende confundirse con lo real, sino que produce un simulacro, siendo plenamente consciente del juego y del artificio: mimando la tercera dimensión arroja una sombra de duda sobre la realidad de esa tercera dimensión, mimando y sobrepasando el efecto de realidad, arroja una duda radical sobre el principio de realidad” (Jean Baudrillard: *El trompe-l’oeil*, Ed. Casimiro, Madrid, 2014, p. 32).

16 José María Parreño señala que la exposición de Rui Macedo en el Museo de Artes Decorativas de Madrid “resulta rara” porque, en buena medida, pone en cuestión “la mirada heredada”: “A poder

ver con la extrañeza de la primera vez lo que hemos visto tantas veces y también a abrir la jaula del significado en que hemos encerrado los objetos y dejarles, al menos durante una temporada, vivir a su aire” (José María Parreño: “Un cuerpo extraño” en *Rui Macedo. Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 12).

17 “Macedo once told an interviewer, “I believe that, if art has any aim, it is to be incomplete”, and this latest work of his illuminates the significance of this observation: The work exists, not to fill space, but to open space, including space for other art, which can thereby be renewed” (Barry Schwabsky: “Painting Beyond Painting” en *Rui Macedo. (Land)s Caping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 39).

18 Cfr. Pedro Alberto Cruz: *Realismo en tiempo de irrealidad*, Ed. Caja Murcia, 2002.

19 “Pero incluso durante el Renacimiento, y mientras el arte occidental se esforzó en perfeccionar su técnica, las victorias en este campo sólo podían señalizarse mediante el éxito en la imitación de la realidad, pues no existía a mano otro criterio objetivo. Con ello, las masas podían encontrar todavía en el arte de sus

**y entregado a las estrategias “estéticas” de la parodia y el *pastiche* que configuran una empantanada cultura de la réplica**<sup>24</sup>.

La impresionante *instalación pictórica* de Rui Macedo en el Museu do Neo-Realismo se mimetiza con el espacio<sup>30</sup>: cuadros simulando mármol en salas revestidas de mármol, muros “simulados” de ladrillos o baldosas, espacios *forrados o alicatados* en lo que el propio artista describe como “num jogo metafórico de trazer ao presente um exercício de pintura Neo-Realista”. La cuestión inquietante y siniestra (en el sentido freudiano, algo familiar que se ha tornado extraño por causa de una represión) es a qué llamamos *realidad* cuando “todo lo que es sólido se ha disuelto en el aire”<sup>31</sup>.

maestros un motivo de admiración y pasmo. Se aplaudía hasta el pájaro que picoteaba la fruta en la pintura de Zeuxis. Aunque parezca una perogrullada, recordemos que el arte se convierte en algo demasiado bueno para que lo aprecie cualquiera, en cuanto la realidad que imita deja de corresponder, ni siquiera aproximadamente, a la realidad que cualquiera puede reconocer” (Clement Greenberg: “Vanguardia y Kitsch” en *Arte y Cultura*, Ed. Paidós, Barcelona, 2002, p. 29).

20 “Dado que, dicho, en términos psicoanalíticos, lo real escapa a toda simbolización, lo que se llama naturalismo oculta lo real en lo conocido, ofreciendo el efecto de una evidencia de realidad. Cada forma de realismo consiste en un tipo de correspondencia entre cierta representación (perteneciente a cierto sistema de signos) y cierto público (determinado por cierto sistema de hábitos de lenguaje, de correspondencias semánticas y pragmáticas, etc.). Mediante esos hábitos de representación, un sujeto o un grupo pueden llevar a cabo su actividad cotidiana eficazmente si se comportan como si los objetos que corresponden a sus conceptos existieran en el mundo real. El atractivo primario

del realismo ingenuo proviene de esa especie de promesa de felicidad (definición de belleza, según Stendhal), o por decirlo más exactamente, una promesa de inteligibilidad y de convivencia. En efecto, la estética naturalista consiste en una estrategia epistemológica y política para la recuperación de “la verdad”: una fábrica de efectos de realidad: una estrategia de ocultamiento de la artificiosidad del criterio de verdad y su conflictividad histórica” (Juan Luis Moraza: “Indifférance” en *En tempo real. A arte mentres ten lugar*, Ed. Fundación Luis Seoane, Coruña, 2001, p. 149).

21 Jean Baudrillard: “La precesión de los simulacros” en *Cultura y simulacro*, Ed. Kairós, Barcelona, 1984, p. 18.

22 “El trompe-l’oeil no forma parte exactamente del arte ni de la historia del arte: su dimensión es metafísica” (Jean Baudrillard: *De la seducción*, Ed. Cátedra, Madrid, 1987, p. 64).

23 Jacques Lacan: “La línea y la luz” en *El Seminario 11. Los Cuatro Conceptos Fundamentales del Psicoanálisis*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1995, p. 109.

24 Cfr. Craig Owens: “The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism” en *Beyond Recognition*.

*Representation, Power, and Culture*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1992, pp. 52-87. “Si el arte postmoderno es referencial, lo cierto es que sólo hace referencia “a la problematización de la actividad de la referencia”. Por ejemplo, puede “robar” tipos e imágenes para desarrollar una “apropiación” de cariz crítico –tanto respecto a una cultura en la que las imágenes son mercancías, como a una práctica estética que permanece (nostálgicamente) apegada a un arte de la originalidad” (Hal Foster: “Asunto: Post” en *Arte después de la modernidad. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 197).

25 Roland Barthes: *S/Z*, Ed. Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1980, pp. 45-46.

26 Douglas Crimp: “Imágenes” en *Arte después de la modernidad. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 186.

27 John Berger: *Algunos pasos hacia una teoría de lo visible*, Ed. Ardora, Madrid, 1997, p. 39.

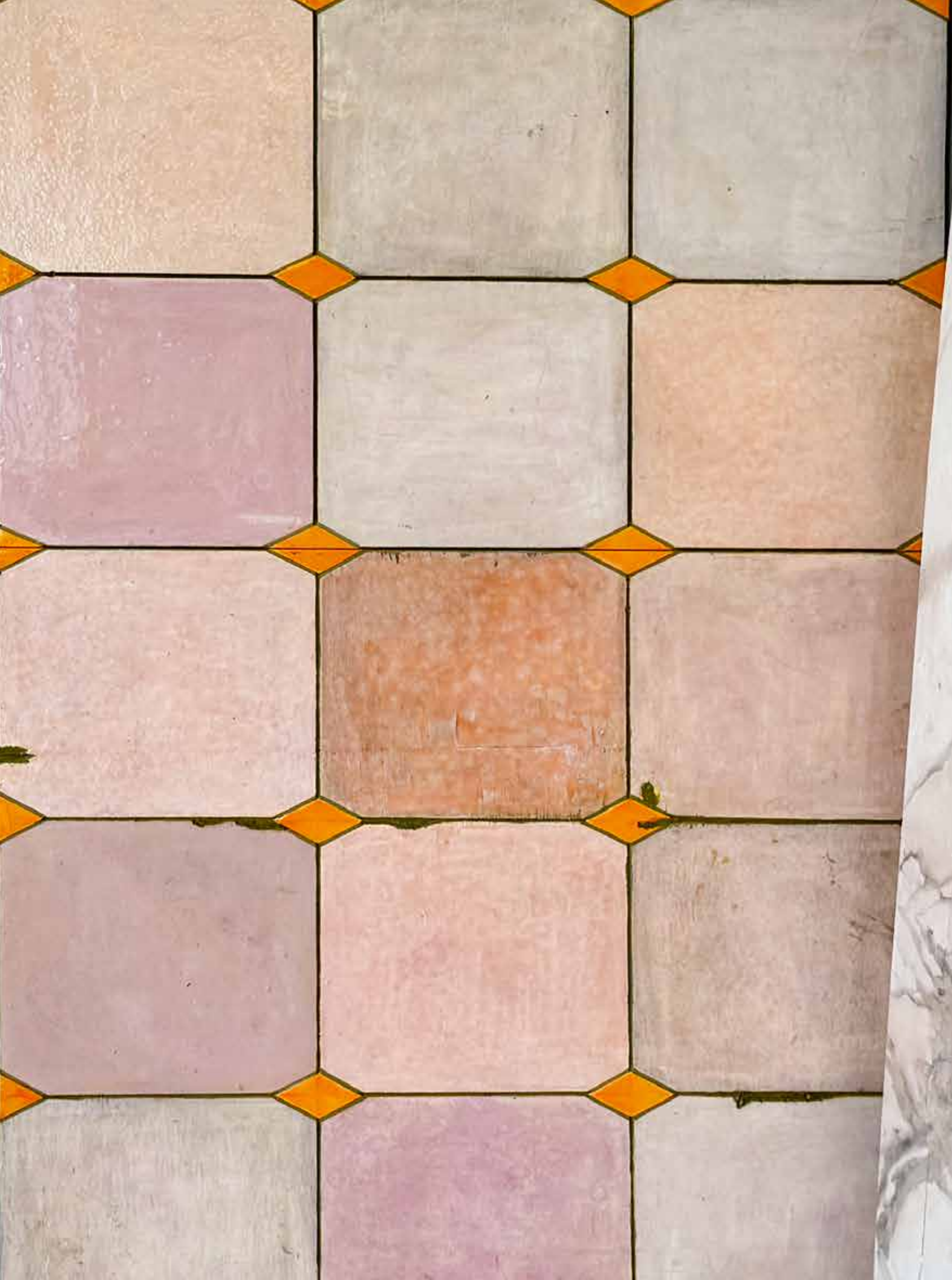
28 “Los últimos artistas radicales se enfrentan ahora a una elección –desesperar o recurrir a la última salida: la pintura. La naturaleza discursiva de la pintura es útil desde el punto de vista de la

persuasión debido a que constituye una red de representaciones nunca conclusa” (Thomas Lawson: “Última salida: la pintura” en *Arte después de la modernidad. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 164).

29 “Una cultura de la réplica a la que Umberto Eco se refiere en su libro *Las estrategias de la ilusión* como “Lo Falso Absoluto” inaugurada por Disney para sus parques temáticos y que cada vez está más cerca de las vacaciones sin salir de casa de Arnold Schwarzeneger en el *Total Recall* de Verhoeven & Dick. Llegará y ya llega un tiempo en que las etiquetas de verdadero y falso habrán perdido toda importancia porque para qué pensar algo nuevo cuando se puede refilmar *Psycho* fotograma a fotograma y en colores brillantes como hizo Gus Van Sant” (Rodrigo Fresan: “Apuntes para una teoría del espejo negro” en *Plagiarismo*, La Casa Encendica, Madrid, 2005, p. 17).

30 Cfr. la importante meditación sobre el camuflaje en el capítulo “Mimetic” de Hal Foster: *Bad New Days. Art, Criticism, Emergency*, Ed. Verso, Londres, 2015, pp. 63-96.

31 Marshall Berman, “All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity”, Verso, London, 1983.









# RUI MACEDO'S PAINTING AS AN OBJECT AND MIMESIS OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE

## **RUI MACEDO'S PAINTING AS AN OBJECT AND MIMESIS OF THE EXHIBITION SPACE** by David Santos

Across two decades of public presentations, Rui Macedo's artistic work seems to underline a common challenge: the objectification of mimetic painting in the conjunction between spaces of art and the procedures of its legitimation. In fact, there is an aptitude for the real inscribed in his paintings, which reveals the necessary dependence on another real: that of architecture. The path of this research, despite its assumed equivalence with the history of painting, takes place first and foremost through a profound conceptualisation of the contemporary possibilities of the pictorial act. It will therefore have to take into account the *here and now* of the post-minimalist experience, that is, the art object (in this case, painting) perceived in space, necessarily transforming it into an ephemeral proposal, because it arises not only from the gesture of painting, but also from its condition within space.

For Rui Macedo, there is no painting without space, nor space without painting. This is no longer projective space, i.e. a projection of space in the field of the pictorial image, but space understood as a work in situ, albeit with a pictorial apparatus. As such, we can consider them "metapictorial installations"<sup>1</sup>, because in these artworks we can no longer speak only of painting, but of painting in space, thus referring to a

conceptual effect of experience and reflection. There is a similar approach in Rui Macedo's work, which considers painting in an "expanded field" (adapting Rosalind Krauss's concept to painting)<sup>2</sup> – in a lineage that goes from Daniel Buren to Katharina Grosse – that is, a painting produced for the exhibition space, which renounces a sense of imagistic and objectual independence or autonomy, becoming absolutely dependent on the circumstances of the place in which it is revealed and constituted. Rui Macedo's painting is thus determined, in an unequivocal sense, by the specific time and space of his exhibition.

In other words, the context is as decisive as the work, or the work confirms and acts in the real context of its affirmation, the space. However, by resorting to a kind of hyper-visibility that meddles in the codes of space and transforms the domain of the *parergon* (as in Jacques Derrida's thesis)<sup>3</sup> – in the "para-work" elements that delimit its appearance, from the title to the frame, but also the entire display of the whole – this painting becomes an element of reconfiguration that summons up the concept of installation in art and, in this way, our total appreciation and commitment, between vision and the body in action, ultimately equivalent to the experience of architecture.

With *Quodlibet*, the project designed for the Museum of Neo-Realism, Vila Franca de Xira, the artist once again takes on this deliberate game: reconverting the mimesis of painting in favour of spatial awareness.

**Taking on the presuppositions dictated by the white cube of the exhibition space, Rui Macedo also tries to deal with the additional challenge imposed by another idiosyncrasy of the Museum's gallery, the fact that it opens onto the small Almeida Garrett Street, which is adjacent to it, thus admitting the constraints of its "pre-existences" – structural, chromatic and formal, as well as of meaning and memory – associated with the diversity of worn and aged buildings on this artery of the city.**

This consideration of pre-existing spatial meanings can be seen from the outset in the fact that the artist has not made autonomous objects that produce indifference in relation to space, but rather has sought to respond to the affirmative density of this condition by proposing a set of paintings that reinterpret and certify at the same time a visual reality that is first and foremost physical and presential, verifiable in the very space of the pictorial presentation or its installation.

The central challenge of *Quodlibet* therefore consists of a dialogue or game of visibility inevitably produced between the painting, the exhibition space and its external surroundings, which, due to their strong presence provided by a large glazed surface, acquire an extraordinary value in the perception of the art space itself, confusing it with many aspects, some of them unsuspected, others unexpected. Seduced by the involvement of the technical tradition of painting with the contemporary meaning of its manifestation, that is, its chances and conditions of artistic recognition today, Rui Macedo nevertheless works on a particular

aspect of this relationship. In the specific case of his installation at the Museum of Neo-Realism, he presents a painting that, while mimetic, is not narrative or evocative of a distant exteriority.

What is evoked there involves exploring the material characteristics offered by the exhibition space and its surroundings, thus directly involving them in the exercise of representation. Instead of imposing a distant absence, landscape or history, this *mimesis* emphasises the representation of a "presence", a "proximity", the "pre-existences" of the place (the gallery and the street). The effect of the representation is full of contemporaneity because it establishes a link with space and, in this way, with time and the specificity (spatial-temporal) of the art experience. What's more, their process of mimicry also involves the support, with the painting becoming confused with the object itself, with the materiality of its real condition. That's why we find paintings on wooden slabs that, in their painted objectuality – simulating the colours and veins of marble, or the design of tiles and their imperfections – suggest the presence of marble slabs, the same ones that cover the walls of the museum space, as well as the tiles that line the walls of some houses in the street. In other words, what is painted appears to us not only as a pictorial simulation, but also as an objectual simulation, thus approaching an illusion that, while optical, is also volumetric and objectual. To this extent, we are not only dealing with paintings that deceive the eye through their mimetic condition of a represented exteriority, but also through the ability of this exteriority to be fuelled by the illusion of its three-dimensional materiality.

This is the big difference in Rui Macedo's *trompe l'oeil* interpretation, because the illusion is that the painting's objectuality is based on the similarity of other external objects represented in it, which obey not only the visual but also the objectual aspects, i.e. the texture and the three dimensions of their presence. Hence the strong appeal to touch that this painting offers and to which almost everyone who encounters it invariably yields. In this sense, the artist suggests a constant game of paradoxes, between the illusion and the real, the eye and the hand, the truth and the lie, or, finally, between

the painting and the space in which it is presented. This game of mirrors essentially results in a taste for illusions, for the exuberance of contrasts in the occupation of pictorial planes on the scale of the walls, which promotes the perception of a certain *horror vacui*, a kind of baroque based on the deception of the senses, or on this *mise en abyme* experience which, between formal and chromatic duplications, takes on an expression of excess. Acting in the fullness of a painting that literally occupies the entire parietal space, the artist reinforces the idea that, despite the disputed hypotheses in the interpretation of art and its promises of verisimilitude and (re)presentation, there remains a strong feeling of communion, which is genuine, between the practice and the reception of the work of art. Far from any pretension about the "truth" of his correspondence, Rui Macedo's art makes the observer aware of the impossibility of absolutising it, identifying charms and weaknesses that stem from both the game inherent in his proposal and the consequences of meaning that result from the process of its reception.

Let's remember, by the way, that the title chosen by Rui Macedo for this exhibition, *Quodlibet*, refers to a dialectical game, located in a distant tradition of erudite dispute which, through the continuous elaboration of its arguments, almost always culminated in the awareness of the impossibility of objectifying an absolute truth around the chosen theme. With a title based on this disused Latin expression, the artist proposes both a rediscovery

of the 13th-century linguistic and philosophical term and a discussion of art as a playful opening of interpretations. These presuppose, above all, the construction of a terrain of irreducible possibilities, admitting only the seductive game of a *mimesis* that is aware, from the outset, of its limitations, but also of the dazzling effectiveness of its potential, pointing to the constant exercise of the various truths that inhabit us when we are willing to receive and experience the infinite effects of a true work of art.

1 Cf. Antonio Bonet Correa, "El Esplendor de los Símbolos", in catalogue of Rui Macedo's exhibition *Un Cuerpo Extraño*, (curated by José María Parreño), Madrid, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, 2013.  
2 Cf. Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", in *October*, vol. VIII, Massachusetts, MIT Press, Spring 1979.  
3 Cf. Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon", in *October* (transl. Craig Owens), Massachusetts, MIT Press, Summer 1979, pp. 3-41; Cf. also Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture*, Paris, Flammarion, 1978, p. 63.







# SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE INSTALLATION- PAINTING OF RUI MACEDO

**“Let us not forget that behind the simulation of the real is the reality of the painting, which never escapes its shadow”<sup>1</sup>.**

## **SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE INSTALLATION-PAINTING OF RUI MACEDO by Fernando Castro Flórez**

In the text I wrote about Rui Macedo for his magnificent exhibition at Tabacalera (Madrid, 2019) I pointed out that his aesthetic is, without any doubt, a meditation on the frame of art, transferring certain strategies of the “institutional conceptual”<sup>2</sup> to painting.

This Portuguese artist has been described as “a pretender”<sup>3</sup>, a playful artist who frames and unframes aesthetic illusions, goes to the *rendezvous* and is capable of offering new meanings in his “readings of museums” by means of singular appropriations<sup>4</sup>. Rui Macedo’s museographic poetics synthesises the seduction of the *studiolo* with the curatorial “transports” of Broodthaers, rematerialises the linguistic conceptual, beyond the orthodoxy of Kosuth, always maintaining a fine sense of humour<sup>5</sup>.

Expanded painting as site-specific painting “locates” us in unhinged time. The return to the real proposed by the installations<sup>6</sup> is taken up by painting, understood by some as generic art<sup>7</sup>; it would be important to know whether, in this reticulated and vortical place, it is possible to achieve, despite everything, a distance and, thus, to give back the strength and the gaze and the audacity to desire through the sense of the real. Rui Macedo, a “heterotopic” (in a certain Borgesian sense) painter, paints and “frames”

pictures that exhibit a deceptive transparency<sup>8</sup>, with fine humour he unveils the logic of museums, their strategy of generating timeless fetishes, objects that cease to be so in order to enter into “disinterested perception”. Speculating on museums, in the case of this Portuguese artist<sup>9</sup>, also involves introducing anomalies into them.

Rui Macedo’s metapictorial installations are, to a large extent, fascinating reworkings of the *cabinets d’amateurs*<sup>10</sup>, as in the exhibition entitled “Un Cuerpo Extraño”, which he produced at the Museo de Artes Decorativas in Madrid. His work is a hybrid: arranged between painting and installation, it plays with *objet trouvé*, proposes unlikely framings, or changes the scale of the pedestals. Macedo introduces “anomalies” into museums, inviting us to look from an unusual point of view. Commenting on Rui Macedo’s intervention at the Fundação Millennium BCP, Barry Schwabsky points out that, to a certain extent, he behaves with the Portuguese heritage of surrealist painting as if he were revisiting cultural anthropophagy<sup>11</sup>. Macedo’s work time and again poses the *mise en abyme*<sup>12</sup>, insisting also on the defamiliarisation of everyday perception, that is, questioning the usual way of approaching art.

His entire artistic practice is in fact a meditation on circumstantiality, a way of underlining “artistic framing”. Ortega y Gasset pointed out that the work of art is an imaginary island that floats surrounded by reality on all sides: “In order for it to be produced, it is therefore necessary,” he wrote in his lucid “Meditation on the

Frame”, “that the aesthetic body be isolated from the vital contour. From the ground we walk on to the painted ground we cannot move step by step. What is more: the undecided borderline between the artistic and the vital disturbs our aesthetic enjoyment. Hence the painting without a frame, by confusing its limits with the useful, extra-artistic objects that surround it, loses its grace and suggestion. The real wall must suddenly and radically end, and suddenly, without hesitation, we find ourselves in the unreal territory of the painting. An insulator is needed. This is the frame.”<sup>13</sup>

**This lucid and playful Portuguese artist generates, with enormous ease, trompe l’oeil<sup>14</sup>, simulacra that introduces uncertainty into the heart of reality<sup>15</sup>. Perhaps one of the tasks of art, taken on by Rui Macedo, is to recover strangeness, that is, to rediscover the unexpected in the gaze<sup>16</sup>. This Portuguese (meta) painter, a hermeneut of the limits and devices of representation, indicates that art is always incomplete<sup>17</sup>.**

The site-specific pictorial installation, entitled *Quodlibet*, which Rui Macedo created at the Museu do Neo-realismo (Museum of Neo-Realism), shows the impressive demands of this artist. Far from all mannerisms or plastic inertia, it completes an extremely ambitious and singularly subtle project. In the era of conquered ubiquity, to refer to Paul Valery, Rui Macedo proposes radical positions, always taking into account the places in which he installs his painting. Evidently, his approaches are not naturalistic, nor does he have any fondness for the traditional conception of “truth in painting”.

Pedro Alberto Cruz has been able to unravel the link of the new realism with an extremely complex epoch<sup>18</sup>, without having a vision of reality as that which anyone recognises<sup>19</sup>, taking into account that the real world fabulised since Nietzsche is subject to the incessant work of interpretation or that, in psychoanalytical terms, the real is that which escapes all symbolisation<sup>20</sup>. For Gombrich, illusion is a process that operates not only in visual representation, but in all sensible perception as a process that is actually crucial for the survival possibilities of any organism. The object of vision is constructed by deliberate attention to a selective set of cues that can be assembled into meaningful perceptions. In short, the similarity of images (the objects depicted) to real objects, which is at the heart of any theory of pictorial realism, is transferred from representation to

the judgement of the viewer, a circular argument that requires, as Joel Snyder has already pointed out, (culturally defined) “patterns of truth”, which would mean accepting a pictorial theory of vision, as Alberti did in his classic treatise “De pictura” (“On painting”). The idea of truth is embedded in what Gadamer calls the prejudicial structure of understanding, a play of interpretations in which “forms of life” are constructed.

I think it is important, in order to interpret Rui Macedo’s painting, to reconsider the simulacral paradigm, without this implying, in the manner of Baudrillard’s thematisations, a departure from the sign as a reversal and elimination of all reference, that is, an arrival at a moment in which the image no longer has anything to do with any kind of reality, it is already its own pure simulacrum<sup>21</sup>. In many cases, as Rui Macedo splendidly demonstrates, “realism” resorts to *trompe-l’oeil* not to confuse itself with the real, but to produce a simulacrum with full awareness of the game and the artifice: to surpass the effect of the real in order to sow doubt<sup>22</sup>. The *trompe l’oeil* leads us both to the pleasures of resemblance and to the awareness that the identical has multiple differences, that is, that the logic of the gaze discovers, in the space of desire, the dissymmetrical: “From the beginning, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, we see that there is no coincidence, but a real decoy effect. When, in love, I ask for a look, it is intrinsically unsatisfactory and

always fails because — You never look at me from where I see you. Conversely, what I look at is never what I want to see. And whatever may be said, the relationship between the painter and the amateur [...] is a game, a game of *trompe-l’oeil*: a game to cheat something”<sup>23</sup>.

A strategy of deception or seduction, art maintains a distance from the “real” (even in the prodigious pictorial-installational mimetisations of Rui Macedo), it is that crystal, of which Ortega spoke in the dehumanisation of art, that allows us to activate unrealisation. If, as I have just pointed out, we must bear in mind the simulacrum, it is also decisive to note that the deconstructive impulse is characteristic of postmodern art in general and must be distinguished, as Craig Owens warned, from the self-critical tendency of modernism; modernist theory presupposes that mimesis, the adequacy of an image to its referent, can be bracketed or suspended, and that the art object itself can be substituted (metaphorically) for its referent. Postmodernism neither brackets nor suspends the referent, but works to problematise the activity of reference, to theatricalise representation. “Today the codes of representation explode in favour of a multiple space whose model can no longer be painting (the “painting”) but rather the theatre (the scene), as Mallarmé had announced, or at least desired”<sup>25</sup>. For example, in the practice of appropriation (characteristic of American art in the

1 Jean Baudrillard: “Reality surpasses hyperrealism” in *Revue d’Esthétique. La pratique de la peinture*, Ed. Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1978, p. 79.  
2 In 1972, on the occasion of his participation in Documenta 5, Daniel Buren wrote: “It is increasingly common that the object of the exhibition is not the exhibition of works of art, but the exhibition of the exhibition as a work of art” (José María Parreño: “Un cuerpo extraño” in *Rui Macedo. Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 11). In this text I reformulate some of the questions I addressed in my essay Fernando Castro Flórez: “Pintura circunstancial y arte hermenéutico. [Pretexos on the visual traps of Rui Macedo] in *Rui Macedo. Sfumato*, Tabacalera, Madrid, 2019, pp. 6-12.  
3 “All these situations, collections, painters, paintings, are, of course, the result of Rui Macedo’s authorial work. Like a pretender of

yesteryear, for example, a “Painter who imagines wood, marble, etc.” (“Fingidor”), the resources of illusion and representation are used as explicit clues in all the paintings presented, summoning perceptive doubt about what is painted and what is suggested, what is form and what is substance” (João Paulo Queriroz: “Rui Macedo: the painter, the pretender, the collection and the side of it” in *Rui Macedo. A New Perspective on Alexander M. Collection. Against the Grain*, Galeria Municipal Vieiara da Silva, Nacional Museum Machado de Castro, Loures/Coimbra, 2018/2016, p. 30).  
4 “In preparation for this exhibition, visits to the museum and the conversations that arose from them were constant. When asked about the reasons for his search, the answer was paintings, appropriations, transpositions, hybridisms, the expansion of painting beyond

the frame (painting/window), its physical limits, the parergon, the out-of-field” (Rui Macedo) (Emília Ferreira: “A Pintura. Object alive and restless” in *Rui Macedo. (In) dispensável. A pintura que inquieta a Coleção do Museu*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Lisbon, 2019, p. 13).  
5 “I especially appreciate the way he has been defining a kind of museographic poetics, invented, with detached humour, on issues of everyday work in museums: transporting, framing, hanging, arranging, captioning, illuminating” (Raquel Henriques da Silva: “A poética museográfica de Rui Macedo” in *Rui Macedo. (Land)scaping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 16).  
6 “The installation [...] constitutes the ultimate operation by which art escapes the evidence devoid of reality of the everyday (evidence of words, evidence of architecture, evidence of images...) to turn

them into its raw material. In other words, it places itself in the opposite place not only to any operation of fiction, but also to any operation of deciphering, of elucidating the mystery: it is rather a kind of return to the real (a painful and difficult return if we look at the artifices and complexities of our current environment, this mixture of cyberspace and stereotypes, of obligatory words and agreed formulas)” (Marc Augé: “From space to the gaze: what is an art object?” in *Ficciones de fin de siglo*, Ed. Gedisa, Barcelona, 2001, p. 126).  
7 Cf. Barry Schwabsky: “Painting in the Interrogative Mode” in *AA.VV.: New Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, New York, 2003, p. 5.  
8 Raquel Henriques da Silva refers to Foucauldian heterotopia and Borges’ fictional library in the text “O Gabinete de Curiosidades de Rui Macedo. Para o estado da questão em 2016” in *Rui Macedo. Cabinet of curiosities/ Playtime/ In situ: letter of intent*, Centro de Artes e Cultura, Ponte de Sor, 2016 / Museo Barjola, Gijón, 2014 / Museu de Arte Contemporânea Niterói, Niterói, 2014, p. 7.  
9 “The exhibition rooms and, in some cases, museum rooms, have become for him an object of aesthetic speculation” (Javier Barón Thaidigsmann: “Time for play, by Rui Macedo” in *Rui Macedo. Cabinet of curiosities/ Playtime/ In situ: letter of intent*, Centro de Artes e Cultura, Ponte de Sor, 2016 / Museo Barjola, Gijón, 2014 / Museu de Arte Contemporânea Niterói, Niterói, 2014, p. 11).  
10 Cf. Antonio Bonet Correa: “El esplendor de los símbolos” in *Rui Macedo. Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 21.  
11 Cf. Barry Schwabsky: “Painting Beyond Painting” in *Rui Macedo. (Land)scaping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 33.  
12 “Exhibition within an exhibition,

*Cabinet of curiosities/ Playtime/ In situ: letter of intent*, Centro de Artes e Cultura, Ponte de Sor, 2016 / Museo Barjola, Gijón, 2014 / Museu de Arte Contemporânea Niterói, Niterói, 2014, p. 7.  
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11 Cf. Barry Schwabsky: “Painting Beyond Painting” in *Rui Macedo. (Land)scaping Normative Thinking*, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 33.  
12 “Exhibition within an exhibition,

mise en abyme properly speaking, to use the concept coined by André Gide, so present in Rui Macedo’s work, which refers to the creation of a narrative within a pre-existing one, the painter’s intervention in the current exhibition of the museum’s collection, ‘Razões e Emoções’, creates a discourse of restlessness” (Emília Ferreira: “A Pintura. A living and restless object” in *Rui Macedo. (In)dispensável. A pintura que inquieta a Coleção do Museu*, Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporâneo, Lisbon, 2019, pp. 6-7).  
13 José Ortega y Gasset: “Meditación del marco”, in *Espectador III*, 1921, reprinted in the dossier dedicated to “Los marco del arte fuera de sí” of *Revista de Occidente*, nº 441, February 2018, p. 10.  
14 “Rui Macedo is an artist that approaches this complexity through an installation of trompe-l’oeil paintings. Trompe-l’oeil is that mischievous painting

technique where the “eye is deceived” through perspectival illusionism, so that surfaces, objects and recesses seem from specific vantage points to be real, solid, and not painted at all. But it is a deceit as Jacques Lacan pointed out. In Lacan’s much discussed 1964 seminar he touches on the great Classical story, handed down to us by Pliny the Elder, or the contest between the Greek painters Zeuxis and Parrhasius. For Lacan *trompe-l’oeil* is fascinating because it is both a confusion or a masquerade and a mimicry. And importantly it is one that declares the fact it is doing so. It is double edged: a deceit and a proclamation of that deceit” (Daniel Sturgis: “A simplicity set to question” in *Rui Macedo. A New Perspective on Alexander M. Collection. Against the Grain*, Galeria Municipal Vieiara da Silva, Nacional Museum Machado de Castro, Loures/Coimbra, 2018/2016, pp. 61-65).  
15 “The joy of *trompe-l’oeil* lies

in an intense sense of déjà vu, and of always-forgetting, of a life before the mode of production of the real world. The *trompe-l’oeil* never pretends to be confused with the real, but rather produces a simulacrum, being fully aware of the game and the artifice: by miming the third dimension it casts a shadow of doubt on the reality of that third dimension, by miming and surpassing the effect of reality, it casts a radical doubt on the principle of reality” (Jean Baudrillard: *El trompe-l’oeil*, Ed. Casimiro, Madrid, 2014, p. 32).  
16 José María Parreño points out that Rui Macedo’s exhibition at the Museo de Artes Decorativas in Madrid is “strange” because, to a large extent, it questions “the inherited gaze”: “To be able to see with the strangeness of the first time what we have seen so many times and also to open the cage of meaning in which we have enclosed objects and let them, at least for a while, live on their own”

late 1980s), positions close to the scenographic are assumed, consciously or unconsciously, but also in the face of the formal-topographical descriptions of modern art, and an interest in the stratigraphic emerges: "These procedures of quotation, extraction, framing and staging [...] demand the discovery of layers of representation. It goes without saying that we are not looking for sources or origins, but for structures of meaning: under each image there is always another image"<sup>26</sup>.

Beyond the funerary (it would be better to say notarial) or literally reactionary discourses (anchored in the "origins" of a certain artistic practice), it is appropriate to recall John Berger's idea that painting is an affirmation of the visible that surrounds us and that is continually appearing and disappearing: "possibly, without disappearance, the impulse to paint would not exist; for then the visible would possess the security, the permanence that painting struggles to find. Painting is, more directly than any other art, an affirmation of the existing, of the physical world into which humanity has been thrown"<sup>27</sup>.

The corporeality of painting has an expressive potential that is difficult to match, in the same way that the network of representations maintains the capacity for persuasion<sup>28</sup>, in a world narcotised, unfortunately, by the literalness of reality shows and given over to the "aesthetic" strategies of parody and pastiche that make up a bogged-down culture of replication<sup>29</sup>.

Rui Macedo's impressive pictorial installation at the Museu do Neo-Realismo mimics the space<sup>30</sup>: paintings simulating marble in rooms clad in marble, walls "simulated" with bricks or tiles, lined or tiled spaces in what the artist himself describes as "a metaphorical game of bringing to the present an exercise in Neo-Realist painting". The disturbing and sinister question (in the Freudian sense: something familiar that has become strange because of repression) is what we call reality when "all that is solid has dissolved into thin air"<sup>31</sup>.

(José María Parreño: "Un cuerpo extraño" in Rui Macedo. *Un cuerpo extraño*, Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid, 2013, p. 12).  
17 "Macedo once told an interviewer, "I believe that, if art has any aim, it is to be incomplete", and this latest work of his illuminates the significance of this observation: the work exists, not to fill space, but to open space, including space for other art, which can thereby be renewed" (Barry Schwabsky: "Painting Beyond Painting" in Rui Macedo. (Land) scaping Normative Thinking, Fundação Millennium BCP, 2017, p. 39).  
18 Cfr. Pedro Alberto Cruz: *Realismo en tiempo de irrealidad*, Ed. Caja Murcia, 2002.  
19 "But even during the Renaissance, and as long as Western art strove to perfect its technique, victories in this field could only be signalled by success in imitating reality, for there was no other objective criterion at hand. This meant that the masses could still find in the art of their masters a source of admiration and awe. Even the bird pecking at the fruit in Zeuxis' painting was applauded. Although it may seem a truism, let us remember that art becomes too good for anyone to appreciate as soon as the reality it imitates ceases to correspond, even approximately, to the reality that anyone can recognise" (Clement Greenberg: "Vanguardia y Kitsch" in *Arte y Cultura*, Ed. Paidós, Barcelona, 2002, p. 29).  
20 "Since, in psychoanalytic terms, the real escapes all symbolisation, what is called naturalism conceals the real in the known, offering the effect of an evidence of reality. Each form of realism consists of a kind of correspondence between a certain representation (belonging to a certain system of signs) and a certain audience (determined by a certain system of language habits, semantic and pragmatic correspondences, etc.). By means of these habits of representation, a subject or a group can carry out their everyday activity effectively if they behave as if the objects corresponding to their concepts existed in the real world. The primary attraction of naive realism comes from this kind of promise of happiness (definition of beauty, according to Stendhal), or to put it more precisely, a promise of intelligibility and conviviality. In effect, naturalist aesthetics consists of an epistemological and political strategy for the recovery of 'the truth': a factory of reality effects: a strategy of concealment of the artificiality of the criterion of truth and its historical conflict" (Juan Luis Moraza: "Indifference" in *En tempo real. A arte mentres ten lugar*, Ed. Fundación Luis Seoane, Coruña, 2001, p. 149).  
21 Jean Baudrillard, "La precesión de los simulacros" in *Cultura y simulacro*, Ed. Kairós, Barcelona, 1984, p. 18.  
22 "The trompe-l'oeil is not

exactly part of art or art history: its dimension is metaphysical" (Jean Baudrillard: *De la seduction*, Ed. Cátedra, Madrid, 1987, p. 64).  
23 Jacques Lacan: "The line and the light" in *The Seminar 11. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1995, p. 109.  
24 Cf. Craig Owens: "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism" in *Beyond Recognition. Representation, Power, and Culture*, California University Press, Berkeley, 1992, pp. 52-87. "If postmodern art is referential, the fact is that it only refers "to the problematisation of the activity of reference". For example, it can 'steal' types and images in order to develop a critical 'appropriation' – both of a culture in which images are commodities, and of an aesthetic practice that remains (nostalgically) attached to an art of originality" (Hal Foster: "Subject: Post" in *Art after Modernity. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 197).  
25 Roland Barthes S/Z, Ed. Siglo XXI, Madrid, 1980, pp. 45-46.  
26 Douglas Crimp: "Imágenes" in *Arte después de la modernidad. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 186.  
27 John Berger: *Algunos pasos hacia una teoría de lo visible*, Ed. Ardora, Madrid, 1997, p. 39.  
28 "The last radical artists are now faced with a choice – to despair

or to resort to the last way out: painting. The discursive nature of painting is useful from the point of view of persuasion because it constitutes a never-complete network of representations" (Thomas Lawson: "Last Way Out: Painting" in *Art after Modernity. Nuevos planteamientos en torno a la representación*, Ed. Akal, Madrid, 2001, p. 164).  
29 "A culture of replication that Umberto Eco refers to in his book "The Strategies of Illusion" as "The Absolute False" inaugurated by Disney for its theme parks and which is getting closer and closer to Arnold Schwarzenegger's holiday without leaving the house in Verhoeven & Dick's "Total Recall". A time will come and is coming when the labels of true and false will have lost all importance because why think of something new when you can refilm Psycho frame by frame and in bright colours as Gus Van Sant did" (Rodrigo Fresan: "Apuntes para una teoría del espejo negro" in *Plagiarismo*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, 2005, p. 17).  
30 Cf. the important meditation on camouflage in the chapter "Mimetic" in Hal Foster: *Bad New Days. Art, Criticism, Emergency*, Ed. Verso, London, 2015, pp. 63-96.  
31 Marshall Berman, "All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity", Verso, London, 1983.









## Quodlibet

2024  
instalação pictórica  
pictorial installation  
óleo, acrílico, spray e  
resina s/ contraplacado  
oil, acrylic, spray and  
resin on plywood  
dimensão dimension  
300 x 25000 cm



**Quodlibet**, exposição individual de Rui Macedo, com curadoria de David Santos, integra o Ciclo de Arte Contemporânea *Movimento de Resistência* no Museu do Neo-Realismo.

**Quodlibet**, a solo exhibition by Rui Macedo, curated by David Santos, part of the Contemporary Art Cycle *Resistance Movement* at the Museum of Neo-Realism, Vila Franca de Xira in Portugal.

**23.03 – 09.06.2024**

data . date

**Rui Macedo**

artista . artist

**David Santos**

curador . art curator

**27.04.2024** Rui Macedo

**18.05.2024** Rui Macedo, João Sousa Cardoso, David Santos

**24.05.2024** David Santos

programa público (conversas) . public programme (talks)

**Museu do Neo-Realismo**

montagem e produção . installation and production

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**Quodlibet**

livro . book

**Rui Macedo**

artista . artist

**David Santos**

**Fernando Castro Flórez**

ensaios . essays

**Elisabeth Hudson**

tradução & revisão inglês

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**Inês Valle**

design . graphic design

**Rui Macedo**

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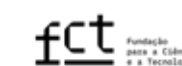
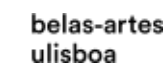
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*whoever it may be, whatever it may be, anyone, anything ...*



# MUSEU DE NEO- REALISMO

Atenção  
Abrir somente em caso de emergência  
Porta ligada a central de intrusão.  
Apoiar sobre a  
terra para abrir.