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RUI SOARES COSTA

Rui Soares Costa crosses in his academic and professional track, art and science, as he has had formal training as both a visual artist and scientist. He studied Painting at Ar.Co, in Lisbon, while he was doing a degree in Social Psychology. Later, he did his doctorate and post-doctorate between Portugal and the U.S.A. He has been working exclusively as a visual artist since 2013. He lives and works in Lisbon.

Rui Soares Costa's artistic work comes out of his training as a researcher in his field of expertise and his life-long interest in cognitive processes such as human perception and memory, as well as in the cognitive neurosciences. Rui Soares Costa brings into his artistic practice a set of concepts, tools, methods and devices from other areas and fields of knowledge, and recombines them with influences from Literature, Film, and contemporary Music. Represented by Galeria das Salgadeiras, Lisboa, and Sala 117 in Porto.

Solo exhibitions

2018. "Honey series". Museu Geológico. Lisboa.

2017. "Lifeline series". Galeria das Salgadeiras. Lisboa.

2017. "Winter series", curated by Ana Matos. Palácio da Quinta da Piedade. Póvoa de Santa Iria.

2016. "Sweet series". Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência. Lisboa.

www.ruisoarescosta.com

RUI SOARES COSTA

Walking the wind

4 of **MAY** to 6 of **JUL**
TUE — **SAT 15h / 20h**

Sal
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ras
GALERIA

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“The geometric line is an invisible thing. It is created by movement.”
Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, 1926

Rui Soares Costa keeps record of time in drawings.

On paper, on wood.

Using paint, using fire.

He keeps record of time in a line, because the line, Kandinsky assures us, “is an invisible thing. It is the track made by the moving point.” Here, this track, a bit slower or more fleeting, more thorough or more casual, more subtle or more stressed, draws the shorter line between two points. “This is the straight line”, Kandinsky explains, “whose tension represents the most concise form of the endless possibilities of movement”.¹

Tension, conciseness, endless possibilities. Fundamental motives in Rui Soares Costa’s practice, tuning in his artistic and scientific background. With degrees in Painting and Cognitive Sciences, his artistic practice follows a distillation that comes close to the abstraction in scientific investigation. Karl Popper tells us that one can describe science “as the art of systematic over-simplification. The art of discerning what we may with advantage omit.”² Rui Soares Costa’s artistic research shares this methodology, stripping each exercise to the bare essential, free of accessory or superfluous elements. The outcome of this conceptual rigor is a work committed to a fixed set of parameters and a short number of variables. The same format, the same proportion, the same formal element - the line. One or another support, one or another tool, the same agent.

On paper he draws as many parallel lines in the smallest area possible, the extremely thin lines drawn extremely close together, yet never touching. Within these constraints there is an infinite number of possibilities to be explored. The title of each work tells us the number of lines drawn and the number of pens used, like a bureaucratic account of the use of time and matter. Yet, opposed to this conceptual, formal and material economy there is a drive to discover, to search further into the subtlety of drawing. This exhaustive process of (re)cognition can be passed along to the viewer, who gazes and discovers, as on the horizon, something infinitely new.

The artist is interested in the vibratory nature of texture, the life potential left by the pen on the paper with each drawn line, and the tension that results from compacting these lines. We see some of this in Kandinsky, for whom “to find life” and “to make its pulsion visible” are the primary goals of theoretical research.

The months taken into each drawing linger in the vibration of the lines. The longer the artist devotes to this exercise, the greater the number of lines he is able to draw closer together. In the background, the accumulated time of all his finished drawings is reflected in between the lines of every new piece.

Whereas paper can store for months-worth of work, wood captures but mere seconds of it. Support, tools and technique may differ, but it is still time we are discussing. Fire can scorch wood in brief moments, leaving behind traces of its fleetingness. The remaining matter is nothing but support, wood on wood. The flame has been extinguished a long time ago, its mark is made of absence.

The time underlying each work is also the time of our gaze, revealing a mere variation or tone or decoding a rhythmic sequence of subtle oscillations and intervals. The verticality and scale of the pieces bring out the physicality of time, choreographing, in the gallery space, a back-and-forth of approach and retreat, from assimilating the blot to reading what is said in between the lines.

Rui Soares Costa records time in his drawings, whereas time is, as he says, “the only thing we cannot add to existence”. Walking the wind accounts for the lightness of time’s invisible tracks, and the reconstructing temporality of its memory.

Joana Valsassina

April 2019

¹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Ponto, Linha, Plano* (Lisboa: Edições 70, 2006): 61.

² Karl Popper, *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism* (Londres: Routledge, 1992): 44
Translation: Cláudia Pinto

Original Soundtrack: André Gonçalves, with the collaboration of Casper Clausen.