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MORGADO  
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# EIGHT ARTISTS

## Ater

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11 JUL to 12 SEP 2019

TUE – SAT 3pm / 8pm

AUGUSTO BRÁZIO  
CLÁUDIO GARRUDO  
DANIELA KRTSCH  
JOÃO DIAS  
JORDI BURCH  
MARIA CAPELO  
RUI HORTA PEREIRA  
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In her novel *The Abyss*, published in France among a full-blown May of '68, Marguerite Yourcenar created Zeno, the protagonist, who at some point in the story states "There is someone waiting for me. I'm going to meet him." When asked "Who?", Zeno replies "Hic Zeno, myself."<sup>(OT)</sup> From this book, I have kept, above all, the drive for change and the desire to achieve freedom. Set in the 16th century, the importance given to alchemy and its transformation processes is grounded on, and should be understood today figuratively, as a metaphor. This "Oevre au Noir" (in the original French) is drawn from these alchemy treatises, where "blackness" (*opus nigrum*) corresponds to the turning to ashes of the magnum opus' chemical eruptions. On this, Yourcenar herself has said: "It's about the troubled, but also insightful life of a man who completely and willingly erases the preconceived ideas of his time to see where his own thoughts, now free, could take him."<sup>(OT)</sup>

Written at the wake of a revolution that would shake the western world, it stresses the visionary and avant garde spirit that moves artistic practice. Artists, more than being able to render the experience of the world more beautiful, can also make it more aware, more to the point, triggering one's sensitivity and knowledge. It is thus this ethnographic perspective, as referred by Hal Foster, and the importance of those who know they can do something, so well said by Jean-Luc Godard, and the scream that reaches us from Moore's isle of Utopia, what makes Art, I'd risk saying, imperative in our lives. It keeps us awake, aware, available to one another, even if we are eventually always waiting for ourselves. Only then, in respecting both the individual and the collective, we can reach the liberty and justice we claim for.

Today, we are also undergoing a revolution; a quieter one, perhaps, as they are making it seem detached and distant in time and space. In her unique voice, Elis Regina sang: "Alô, alô, marciano / Aqui quem fala é da Terra / Pra variar estamos em guerra" (Hello, hello Martian man, this is Earth calling, and for a change we are at war); the war we are experiencing today can be seen in the migration crisis, in the climate changes, and in the deep social, economic, and cultural, inequalities. Indeed, not that distant, if we just think as far back as the wildfires of June 2017 in Pedrógã Grande, or the nearly thousand dead in migratory routes in the summer of 2018<sup>1</sup>.

1. Data referring to June -August 2018, according to "Missing Migrants — Tracking deaths along migratory routes" (<https://missingmigrants.iom.int>)

«Ater», black matte in latin, standing for rebellion, is a commitment that brings the fierce idea of the artist as an ethnographer, an avant-garde of thinking, contemporary in its form and content, the return of the real by Hal Foster. Daniela Krtsch invites us to a house where a narrative is suspended between reality and fiction, somewhere between the present and a certain formal classicism. Maria Capelo's drawing brings us a black hole from where it is impossible to escape. Setting foot in a floor covered in shredded tyre there are glimpses of one's existence in the work of Rui Horta Pereira, where a black veil melts into the abstraction of the concrete. In the burnt landscape of Rui Soares Costa one can stare at death in the subtle line between destruction and the creation of an aesthetic object. Augusto Brázio's work confronts us with an underlying wound that relates to the ancestral memory Jordi Burch' cromlech, in this well like environment induced by the darkened walls of the gallery. Cláudio Garrudo brings us death as the ultimate fatal imposition, with a photo from the bedroom where Fernando Pessoa died, together with João Dias game of light and darkness, in a sculpture that becomes drawing. As Fernando Pessoa said, "I don't want to go where there is no light", let us go back to Daniela Krtsch's house, a metaphor to mankind, that is never left alone. We carry it with us, because being Human depends on that hope for comfort. And light.

Let us finish by the beginning, where in the Bible was the word, where it was dark, as described by Michel Pastoureau in "Black: The History of a Color":

"In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. The earth was a shapeless, orderless chaos. It was a deep sea covered in darkness, yet on its waters hovered the Spirit of God. And God said: "Let there be light!" And light came to be. God thought light was a good thing and separated it from darkness."<sup>(OT)</sup>

May this exhibition not just carry forth the myths and symbology of darkness; may it carry Yourcenar's black spirit instead. I am, after all, over there, waiting for myself.

**Ana Matos**

July 2019

OT= Our translation from the Portuguese.. Translation: Cláudia Pinto