

In the beginning it was never the word

The constant need for a verbal anchoring of things that are non-verbal in themselves is an ancient invention. Its reinvented perpetuation presents itself as a fallacy that constitutes asymmetric and persistent power relations, while remaining an imperious premise that dictates hierarchies between different forms of knowledge.

The biblical narrative itself, pegs on the Word the burden of the world's creation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The binding of the Word with the primordial and the omnipotent, compromised (and still compromises) several epistemic powers that are established within the sensory and affective fields. The obligation to establish referents (albeit arbitrary), without significant flexibility, it is seen as a method for monitoring and controlling the imaginary and the symbolic.

The works of Evy Jokhova and Mané Pacheco resist this cultural sedimentation by the word-authority, recovering a ritualistic imagery that escapes a title or a specific chrono-location. The two artists call for an ancestry of connection to the Earth, designed in the present, questioning places of simultaneous knowledge, recognition and ignorance, which promote a much-needed ecology of knowing and feeling. This inclusive and regenerative ecology is formulated around an ecofeminist care and view that incorporates the invisible work of others, the coexistence (of living beings, species, conditions, stories, etc.) devoid of the extractivist will that, so often, guides the contemporary. The use and recycling of materials and supplies in the art works undermine structural conformity systems: the new, the scale, the narrative.

Nature and the natural, technology and technique come together to deconstruct the normativity of ways of seeing, almost always dependent on academicism and a belief system. In this exhibition, there is no landscape. There is form, shapelessness and deformity: a deconstruction of the artificial and the conditioned way we observe the natural.

The snake, an element which both artists were working on at the time the exhibition was conceived, serves as the agglutinating figure for these issues. These animals, which in most mythologies symbolize the dichotomy of good and evil, were present amongst the oldest known rituals in the history of mankind. However, in the Catholic (ever fictional) tradition, the snake is naturally deceitful, primarily responsible for human corruption and original sin. It is science, namely medicine and pharmacology, that preserves its symbolism in a clear reference to the simultaneous danger and curative capacity of its poisons.

It is in this gap between the disease and the cure, the poison and the antidote, or the poison as an antidote, that the snake's (present) figure places the exhibition in a (desired) place of ambiguity. The visual (and haptic) relations proposed, between the works and between the practices of both artists, do not appear as a linear link or a programmatic prescription for the exhibition. Each creation(-creature) could easily exchange places because more than being in dialogue, the works respond to a logic of mutually constitutive. However, the singularity of each author is clear. If there are obvious affinities between Jokhova and Pacheco, both in the thematic magma explored and in the speculative manual making, their approach, materials and techniques remain completely distinct.

As a matter of fact, the entire exhibition can be seen as a challenge to sameness, and the impossibility of the same, even if among equals. There are revelations in opacity, unspeakable transparencies, mournful silences in the (mute) sudden noises. Therefore, exploring the exhibition and reading this text are non-related exercises. In fact, this text says nothing on what the exhibition is about because, if in the beginning it was never the word, in the end it won't be either.

UMA COBRA NATURALMENTE FALSA

**A NATURALLY FALSE SNAKE*

EVY JOKHONVA & MANÉ PACHECO

Curated by Ana Cristina Cachola

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In collaboration
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