

## Later Is Now

October 27, 2017

*A report of the group exhibition Later is Now at WORKPLACE Gallery in London, curated by Portuguese-born artist Hugo Canoilas.*



Installation view, Sónia Almeida 'KWY' (2017)

Later Is Now currently showing at Workplace London. The exhibition is curated by gallery artist Hugo Canoilas and is a vibrant exploration of five artists that undermine, subvert or challenge the anthropocentric implications of language.

The title, borrowed from Bernard Aspe's *text1* which itself is a quote from Cormack McCarthy's *The Road*, hovers like a dark cloud over the exhibition. In *The Road*, a post-apocalyptic story where life is reduced to extremes, there is no time for superfluous activities. In his essay, Aspe uses *The Road* as antithesis to illustrate our 'liquid' society which is impeded by our anxieties that result from our negative projections into the future, stopping us from living fully in the present. Without being answerable to a text, or to questions of art and life, the work of Sónia Almeida, Eduardo Batarda, Kris Lemsalu, Musa paradisiaca and Jannis Varelas, are manifestations that help to deal with some of the aspects of Aspe's text, through the possibilities of art to codify and inscribe complex ideas into a concrete reality, compounded by context, interpretation, and associative interrelations between things.



Installation view, Jannis Verlas 'Untitled' (2016), 'Untitled' (2016)

Upon entering the space you encounter the large canvases by Jannis Varelas the seemingly abstract paintings use childlike, pre-verbal, elements alongside violent or playful gestures that fill zones of the canvas. Without hierarchy, geometric volumes, and primitive and vernacular figurations come together with stereotypical symbols from the pre emoji period of language. These elements function as lures that immerse the viewer in the pictorial scene, but also contaminate the potential meaning of the juxtaposed elements. Varelas' paintings function as walls where everything is on the same surface, with the same value. The paintings become enclosures for difference, resulting from the receptivity of the artist to a breadth of input: from classical philosophy to contemporary culture, from the academic to the vernacular.



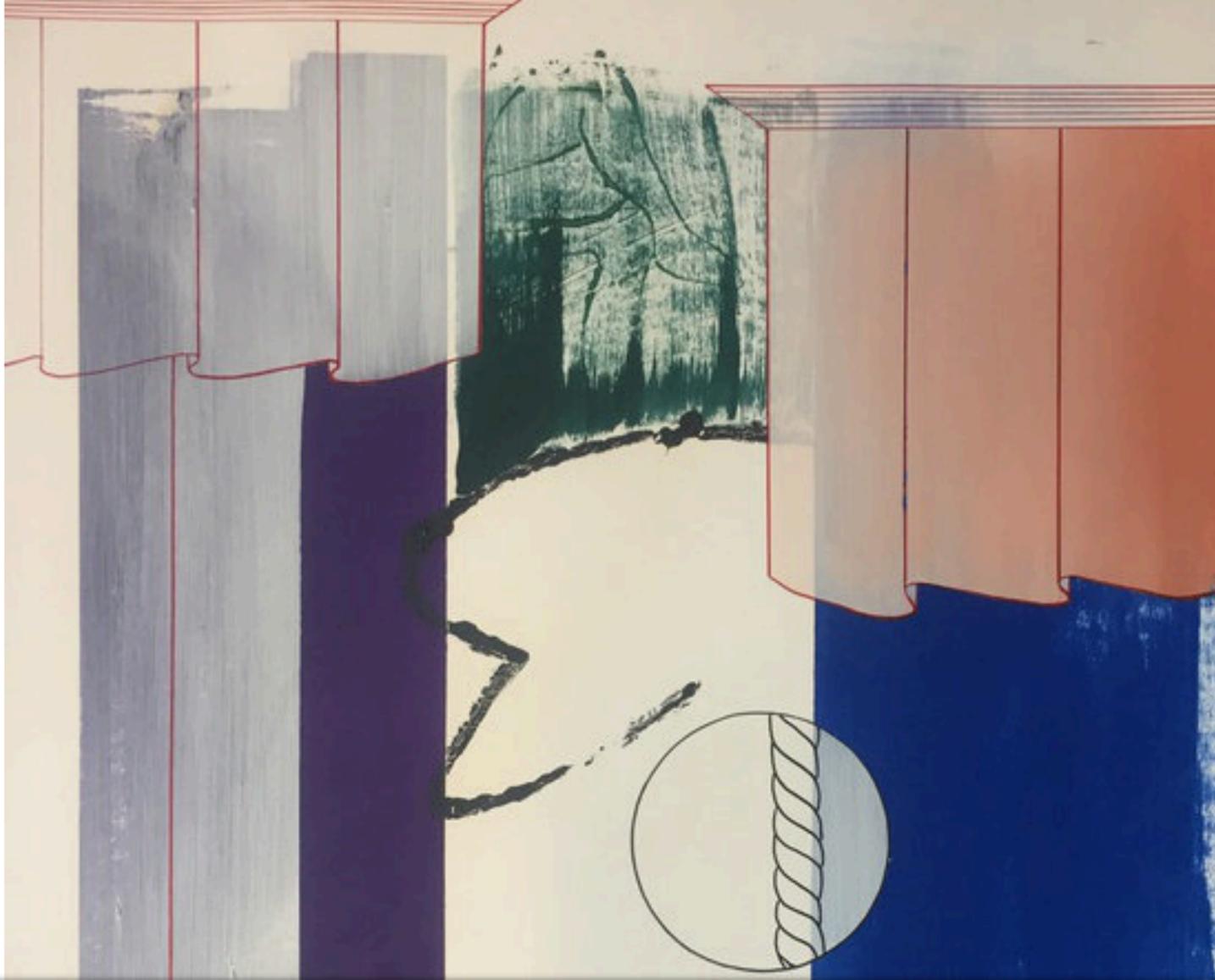
Installation view, Musa paradisiaca 'How do you catch a fugitive?' (2013)

The carved objects carefully arranged to your left as you enter the first room is the work *How do you catch a fugitive?* by Musa Paradisiaca, a dialogue-based project by Eduardo Guerra and Miguel Ferrão. Their first sculptural objects appeared with their first experience of work in São Tomé (the small island off the Atlantic coast of Central Africa). Objects then would be named, however these names would carry other values that cannot be translated, instead expressed by a system of knowledge that is outside of Europe. The work departs from a collaboration with Tomé Coelho, an artist from São Tomé who "translates" specific words given to him by the artist duo into carved objects. The presentation of this series of objects implies their conception. The objects are reactivated by words that function as a rite de passage for the viewer dissolving the invisible relation between the word and the object, the magic and the artistic.



Installation view, Kris Lemsalu, 'The Camp of Phantom Stuff' (2013)

When considering Kris Lemsalu's (Tallinn, 1985) body of work one has the strange feeling of a figure in the future that lives in the past. Lemsalu firmly rejects the rational, with works formed by personal narratives. *The Camp of Phantom Stuff* consists of porcelain sculptures of dogs heads with human hands protruding from sleeping-bags arranged around the space. Alluding to the migrant crisis and London's homeless situation, in the bunker-like space of Workplace Gallery they take on an extra sense of refuge as if the apocalypse has come and this is the state of living. Lemsalu's work has the archetypal presence of the half-human, half-animal harbinger of ancient myths and sci-fi movies. These uncanny and grotesque sculptures offer us cause to experience the sublime, enabling us to project their hopes and fears.



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Installation view Sónia Almeida, 'Words without letters' (2017)

In the second room of the exhibition Sónia Almeida's (Lisbon, 1978) most recent work is encountered. The work on paper mounted directly on the wall reveals the body in the abstract surface of her painting. The delicate, abstracted elements are punctuated with poised symbols that are drawn from progressive educational sciences such as Raven's *Progressive Matrices*. Shown directly alongside this work is *KWY* a handpainted artist book by Almeida that is the origin of her recent body of new works recently exhibited at the ICA, Boston as part of the 2017 James and Audrey Foster Prize. Almeida's paintings delve into forms of precognitive apprehension that are triggered by new technologies and are shaping our subjectivity.

The exhibition ends in the two canvases by the renowned Portuguese artist Eduardo Batarda (Coimbra, 1943). The fragmented texts found on Batarda's paintings are sourced found excerpts that have been taken out of context and reworked over a period of time before being made manifest on the canvas and merged with abstracted imagery. Batarda's work is encrypted painting, which needs to be decoded, and for this, the receiver's attitude is fundamental. It is uncomfortable painting, sometimes impossible, requiring time for interpretation and, in a way, an eye that is capable of exploring the complexities of the history of painting, but also the possibilities of writing.

*Later Is Now, 3rd October – 18th November, Workplace London (61 Conduit Street Mayfair London W1S 2GB)*

Curated by Hugo Canoilas

Sónia Almeida  
 Eduardo Batarda  
 Kris Lemsalu  
 Musa Paradisiaca

