

Forget the crisis, Go To Work!

23 Apr – 25 May 2019 at the Galeria Vermelho in São Paulo, Brazil

16 MAY 2019



Forget the crisis, Go To Work! Courtesy of Galeria Vermelho

Vermelho presents, from April 23 to May 25, *Forget the crisis, go to work!*, Guilherme Peters' third solo show in the gallery. Peters shows watercolors and installations, and presents a new performance on the opening night of the exhibition.

The Sala Antonio Projection Room screens *Le Retour des Sans-Culottes*, a film Peters started shooting in 2013 and made continuous updates until 2016. The film is based on political episodes in Brazil and the world during this period. The first cut of the film premiered in 2014, at the Kunsthaus in Wiesbaden, Germany, during the exhibition 'The part that does not belong to you, Wiesbaden', curated by Paulo Miyada. This is the first screening of *Le Retour des Sans-Culottes* in Brazil.

In his third solo exhibition in Vermelho, Guilherme Peters works around political episodes that have taken place in Brazil from 2013 and onwards until the arrival of presidents Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro to power. Peters presents 21 new watercolors that combine events from the two administrations with icons and events present in the historical paintings by Jean Baptiste Debret, Théodore Géricault, Jacques-Louis David and Joseph Albers. The watercolors also reference the first representations of Brazilian fauna and flora made by Dutch painters during the colonization of the territory. Episodes that fueled the political polarization faced by Brazilian society are combined with historical iconography in a dialogue echoing Karl Marx's phrase "history repeats itself, the first time as a tragedy and the second as a farce."

Referenced in the works are the historical relations with the most recent Brazilian governments and their connections with the two dictatorships that ruled Brazil in last century: the Vargas Era from 1930 to 1945; and, the Military Dictatorship from 1964-1985. Also, the works touch on slavery implemented with the colonizers from 1500 through 1815 and then the Imperial period from 1822-1889. The Vargas Era is pointed out by the presence of the character José Carioca, created by the Disney Studios in 1942, when it appeared in the animated film 'Saludos Amigos'. The anthropomorphic parrot would represent the "typical Brazilian" from the American perspective: witty, friendly, receptive and slightly mischievous. The character, in the context of World War II, was instrumental in the policy of "good neighbors" between the governments of Getúlio Vargas and Franklin Roosevelt. From these periods come the depictions of torture procedures and physical punishment.

The interpretation of a cyclical history echoes a statement by the current Brazilian president who has proclaimed his sympathy for torture practices. Some practices of obtaining confessions by means of physical or psychological pain employed during the Military Dictatorship of Brazil and during the enslavement appear next to historical icons from art and politics or representations of a Brazil of exuberant nature. Some watercolors bring QR Codes, leading to additional online content. The internet, and especially the smart phone applications, were vehicles for the narratives that permeated the last presidential elections in Brazil and are, for Peters, the terrain where the works are completed.

In addition to the historical connections present in the watercolors, Guilherme Peters reflects on the current friction between the executive, legislative and judiciary powers in two installations. On the façade of Vermelho, the artist presents 'Three Powers' (2019), a drawing made with barbed wire that overlays three empty cubes. In Room 1 of the gallery, 'Penalty' (2019) proposes a possible football game, with a goal painted on each of the walls in the room. The available ball, however, is made of solid cement.

The work 'Negative of the act' (2019) is divided between rooms 1 and 2 of the gallery. The title of the exhibition was engraved on an iron plate, using oxidation from acid baths. The plate was then used as a matrix to print, also with iron oxidation, a canvas with the "mirrored" phrase. "Forget the crises, go to work" was a phrase used by President Michel Temer when he assumed the presidency after the process of impeachment that removed Dilma Rousseff from the executive's command in the middle of her second term. Temer said he got the phrase from a billboard at a gas station and used it as an informal slogan for his government hoping the mantra would help reverse the country's "climate of crisis". A Brazilian journalist located the author of the billboard and owner of the gas station in the town of Guareí, in the state of São Paulo where he had been arrested and jailed for a murder conviction after killing a man. João Mauro de Toledo Piza was also accused of selling adulterated fuel at the gas station that inspired the president.

'Portrait of the president' is organized as an exercise in live model drawing: one person poses, another one draws. The person who poses, holds a police bat, wears a suit, the Brazilian presidential sash and a leather mask restricting his vision. The one who draws is seated in front of him at a table with his hand tied to a rope that passes through a pulley. He holds the weight of a military helmet filled with cement and wears a leather mask with a built-in microphone which captures and distorts the sound of his breath. The two masks are attached by a rope that passes through a system of pulleys that connects one person to another, causing the movement of one to influence the movement of the other. Throughout the action the person who is drawn beats with the bat on the table, being able to strike the hand of the one who draws, who continues drawing the one who hits him. Thus, the drawings are deformed in the course of the action by the rope system and also by the blows suffered on the hand that draws.

The film 'Le Retour des Sans-Culottes' (2013-2016) sets out to investigate popular movements that emerged from the political context of Brazil and the world around 2013. The film appropriates representations of the first urban guerrilla group in history, the sans-culotte, who had great political influence during the French Revolution and who succumbed at the hands of the very people they supported. 'Le Retour des Sans-Culottes' reflects on the re-signification and appropriation of movements, symbols and slogans, reproducing the process of de-structuring the narratives inherent in democracy itself.

With: Alexandre Correa Kissajikian, Eduardo Nince, Eduardo Correa Kissajikian, Felipe Galli, Guilherme Peters, Iason Pachos, Luisa Doria Kiddo, Matheus Wiggers, Pedro Catellani, Roberto Winter, Rodrigo Thenopholo, Ricardo Tuti // Camera operators: Eduardo Correa Kissajikian, Iason Pachos, Cae Oliveira, Alexandre Correa Kissajikian // Translation: Gabriela Felice Godói, Vinícius Girnys // Still photography: Cae Oliveira // Color correction: Bruno Shintate // Drawings: Guilherme Peters // Costumes: Veridiana Piovezan, Ana Olyveira, Eduardo Rodrigues // Cinematography: Eduardo Correa Kissajikian // Written, Edited and Directed by: Guilherme Peters – 2013-2016.

Guilherme Peters was born in São Paulo in 1987. He lives and works in São Paulo. Peters had his work exhibited at international institutions and exhibitions such as the Institute of Contemporary Art of Singapore (Singapore, 2019), Iberê Camargo Foundation (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2018), Tomie Ohtake Institute (São Paulo, Brazil, 2018-2017), Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo [MAM SP] (São Paulo, Brazil, 2018), Do Disturb - Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France, 2018), XXXV International Festival of Uruguay - Cinemateca Uruguaya (Montevideo, Uruguay, 2017) Zacheta National Gallery (Warsaw, Poland, 2013), Wiesbaden Kunsthäus (Wiesbaden, Germany, 2014), Oi Futuro (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2014), Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil, 2012), 17th International Festival of Contemporary Art Videobrasil (São Paulo, Brazil, 2011) and 8th Mercosur Biennial (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

Peters received the Jury's Special Awards, the Edt Award for montage and invention and the ABD Award of best feature film for the film Proxy Reverso (shared with Roberto Winter), at the VII Semana dos Realizadores (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2015). His work is present in the Figueiredo Ferraz Collection (Ribeirão Preto, Brazil) and the Konex Collection (Buenos Aires, Argentina).

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