



Untitled, 2013. Oil on canvas, 210 x 150 cm © Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art

JOSÉ LOUREIRO

OURIÇOS

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“Today, I limited myself to a single, wide and long red brushstroke. A workload only akin to the twelve Labors of Hercules. These brushstrokes bring to mind big ships with excess weight at the bow, risking sinking as soon as they set sail but finally managing to go their way.” I wrote these lines in a recent (and lengthier) email to a friend of mine, telling him about what I was doing. If I start by quoting my own words it is because they accurately describe the way I’m now working.

Each one of these brushstrokes arises from a particular place, different from all others, and the dimension they acquire essentially depends on the ballast of pigment and oil they carry within. Black is important because it behaves as a catalyst; for example, as it tangentially approaches a red, it intensifies it, rendering it redder. This red – I could have used any other color in this example – is more intense at its center and diffuse at its margins, almost forming a halo. Apparently immobile, these colors fluctuate and never really touch each other, even when they overlap.

Color and brushstroke are a single entity, inextricable. As such, there is time and duration, beginning and end. It is between these two points, and in a scale ranging from disaster to epiphany, that everything is played out.

Colors are served in tubes we can buy at the store. We open one of these tubes and become ecstatic with what we see. Only later we understand that colors are like sharp ramparts, so closed in upon themselves that they can only be taken by storm, and with immense effort. We don’t even have exact names for them; despite the fact that they’re always so impeccably labeled. Having one color, we just need to change its place so that it’s no longer the same. Colors communicate between them in an indecipherable code, impervious to the most powerful algorithm. They are as slippery as eels, and sting like urchins. We’ll never discover the Rosetta Stone of colors.

José Loureiro

JOSÉ LOUREIRO was born in Mangualde in 1961.
Lives and works in Lisbon.

He identifies two pieces of reading as representing formative moments in his artistic development: the poem *Deslumbramentos* (Fascinations) from *O Livro de Cesário Verde*, by Cesário Verde; and the chapter from *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy, in which the battle of Borodino is narrated. At the moment, all his life revolves around three words: *príolo*, filament and rim.

The artist is represented in several public and private collections as Fundação de Serralves, Oporto, Portugal; Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão – Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal; Colecção Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Lisbon, Portugal; Colecção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal; Colecção António Cachola, Elvas, Portugal; Museu de Arte Contemporânea do Funchal, Madeira, Portugal; Fundação Leal Rios, Lisbon, Portugal; Centre Pompidou - Museu Nacional de Arte Moderna, France; Fundação de Arte Contemporânea Daniel & Florence Guerlain, Les Mesnuls, France; European Investment Bank, Luxembourg; European Patent Office, Munich, Germany; European Central Bank, Frankfurt, Germany; Hiscox, London, UK.

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