

PRESSRELEASE

NOTES ON AN INLAND SHIPWRECK

Thiago Rocha Pitta

6. September - 18. October 2008

OPENING: 5. September 2008 - 18:00

With her anchor at the bow and clothed in canvas to her very trucks, my command seemed to stand as motionless as a model ship set on the gleams and shadows of polished marble. It was impossible to distinguish land from water in the enigmatical tranquility of the immense forces of the world.

(Joseph Conrad, The Shadow Line, 1917)



It is with great pleasure that ANDERSEN'S Contemporary can announce the German solo debut "Notes on an inland shipwreck" of Thiago Rocha Pitta (b. 1980, Tiradentes, MG Brazil). Thiago Rocha Pitta has been heralded for a sublime aesthetic employment of nature and time in his work. While his artistic output is not confined to a specific medium, one cannot nevertheless escape the romantic in his encounters with landscape. German and English Romanticism at the turn of the 18th to 19th centuries lent passion and fear to the concept of nature which science had previously restricted to an object of study. Giving oneself up to the adventure of natural landscape not only means returning to the place of origins, but also to the possibility of recognizing both our significance and our magnificence.

The exhibition "Notes on an inland shipwreck" is based around two of the classical elements, soil and water. Soil is the solid substance from which our planet takes its name and the liquid water moves continually through a cycle of evaporation and transpiration. The elemental processes are fundamental metaphors for working with external, internal, and secret energetic forces. Thiago Rocha Pitta seems to turn elements upside down. In the film "Heritage" (2007), the soil is at sea on a boat. In the film "Inland shipwreck" (2008), the boat is buried in the solid soil. It seems like there are enough mysteries and marvels in the real world to engage with the folly of the supernatural.

The main installation of the exhibition "Project for a stormy weather painting" (2008) forms the synthesis of the two films. A cotton canvas sail is left to alter and erode under the natural condition of fluctuating precipitation. Time as decay or as a cyclical nature, entropy. Analogue to Robert Smithson, one could call it "ruin in reverse". Rather than collapsing in ruin after construction, these elements arise in ruin prior to construction. As everything is geared in the end toward a state of equilibrium, there is a justifiable center without the possibility of hierarchy.

Thiago Rocha Pitta's work is closely connected to the writings of the sailor and poet, Joseph Conrad. Witnessing the forces of the sea, Conrad developed a deterministic view of the world as expressed in a letter from 1897: "What makes mankind tragic is not that they are victims of nature, it is that they are conscious of it. ...There is no morality, no knowledge and no hope; there is only the consciousness of ourselves which drives us about a world that ... is always but a vain and floating appearance."

For further information please contact the gallery.

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