

Wall Street International

Valeska Soares. Double Margin

9 April – 24 May 2014 at Max Wigram Gallery, London By Filipa Ramos



Valeska Soares, Not All Who Wander Are Aimless, 2014, Canvas, book pages, rum, nautical glasses, nautical paintings, reclaimed wood table, 11 canvas and book pages, 20.32 x 25.4 cm, 5 nautical paintings, 20.95 x 25.4 cm, 1 table, 415.5 x 110.5 x 30 cm, 34 nautical glasses, courtesy of Max Wigram Gallery and the artist

14 APR 2014

For her first solo show at Max Wigram Gallery, Valeska Soares presents a series of works that revolve around the dual condition of time, considering its nature and the shapes it can assume.

Striking in the exhibition is the way in which the artist transforms the past history and use of objects, dotting them with a whole new life. Soares' work is traversed by the presence of old materials: books and other printed matter; pieces of furniture or of home decor, and diverse utilitarian items (such as glasses and watches in this specific show) which she manipulates, transforms and adapts, extending their use possibilities and embedding them with new symbolic values.

Pursuing her research on the compositional possibilities of book covers, which constitutes the series Bindings, the artist presents Threshold (Blue), a majestic rectangular framework made of linen hardcover books of blue tonalities. The book titles written on the covers create a meta-text where there is neither beginning nor end, generating a continuous sequence of potential meanings and narratives. Arranged as a surrounding structure Threshold simultaneously appropriates the settings that it frames – which become a constitutive element of the piece – and defines a space of possibility, as the empty area that appears in-between the book covers becomes a place where the stories and the histories conveyed by the books are deeply entwined. Leaning onto the gallery wall, it becomes a doorway that gives entry to a poetic, fictional space.

Spiralling (2014) is a sculptural work composed of eight sets of antique library wooden stairs that are arranged as to constitute a continuous, eternal spiral of steps. The piece pushes the notion of enclosed circularity proposed by Threshold towards the constitution of an infinite loop of ups and downs, following the stairs' suggestion of movement. One could almost imagine to climb them, getting lost on an endless mental journey of ascend and descend that recalls M. C. Escher's prints.

The two-part installation Not All Who Wander Are Aimless further explores the concepts of motion and going adrift. The work is constituted through the dialogue between the materials hanged on the wall – a series of vernacular marine vistas of caravels, rhythmically alternated with old book pages whose texts evoke poetic sites, such as Storm House or East of Eden or situations, as The Lights are Dimming – and a very long and narrow display structure – halfway between a cabinet, a table and a plinth – that holds an exhaustive series of small, transparent glasses with boat drawings. Each glass has the right amount of rum as to give the illusion that its vessel is traveling over the liquid, establishing a humorous counterpoint with the caravel paintings, as both suggest idealized, romantic possibilities of drifting as well as very naïve and clumsy visions of seafaring.

Ouroboros presents yet another exploration of the relation between time, space and their possible configuration. The title of the work alludes to the symbolic representation of wholeness and infinity, which generally consists of a snake swallowing its own tail. The artist replaced this mythical figure by a golden pocket watch (also considering that the Portuguese word for gold is ouro) that, suspended from the ceiling of the gallery by a delicate wire, executes an almost imperceptible movement of rotation in space, turning at the speed of one revolution per hour. Deprived of its hour hand, which was removed by the artist, the clock loses its function of offering the reference to a specific moment in the day. Instead, amputated, it attests the inexorable passing of a continuous time.

The way time traverses objects and experiences, how it unites history and present is at stake throughout the show, and every work contributes to generate yet another possible reflection on the zone of incertitude that exists between historical time, mythical time and daily life: a threshold area with unclear limits between physical and inner states, an uncertain Double Margin.

Filipa Ramos London, March 2014

Valeska Soares (born Belo Horizonte, Brazil) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Soares' solo exhibitions in public institutions include Follies, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; Caprichos, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO), Monterrey; Puro Teatro, Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City; Vanishing Point, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; permanent installation at INHOTIM. Recent group exhibitions include, Permission to be Global, CIFO, Miami and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Order, Chaos, and the Space In Between, Phoenix Art Museum; What to Think, What to Desire, What to Do, Fundació LaCaixa, Barcelona; The Storytellers, Stenersen Museum, Oslo; and Unbound: Contemporary Art After Frida Kahlo, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Soares has participated in the Sharjah Biennial, the Sao Paulo Biennial and the Venice Biennale. Her works is part of important museum collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; The Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh; Tate Modern, London.

Max Wigram Gallery

106 New Bond Street

London W1S 1DN United Kingdom

Ph. +44 (0)20 74954960

Opening hours

Tuesday - Friday from 10am to 6pm

Saturday from 12pm to 5pm or by appointment

Related images

1. Valeska Soares, *Ourobouros*, 2014, Golden watch, ceiling track, chain, 228.6 cm diameter, courtesy of Max Wigram Gallery and the artist

2. & 5. Valeska Soares, *Spiralling*, 2014, 8 antique wood and cast plaster library steps, 310 x 167 x 80 cm, courtesy of Max Wigram Gallery and the artist

3. Valeska Soares, *Not All Who Wander Are Aimless*, 2014, Canvas, book pages, rum, nautical glasses, nautical paintings, reclaimed wood table, 11 canvas and book pages, 20.32 x 25.4 cm, 5 nautical paintings, 20.95 x 25.4 cm, 1 table, 415.5 x 110.5 x 30 cm, 34 nautical glasses, courtesy of Max Wigram Gallery and the artist

4. & 6. *Threshold (Blue)*, 2014, Antique book hardcovers mounted on wood, 246.4 x 181.6 cm, courtesy of Max Wigram Gallery and the artist

