

## Considerations

One of the exciting etymologies is the one of *consideration*. Its origin is the Latin *sidera*, meaning stars or constellations. Stargazing had a central place before modernity. The activity was about spotting patterns, which would help predict our fate.

Contemporary artists have been involved in *consideration* of the cosmos, mostly mediated through photography. Wolfgang Tilmans seems to share an almost childlike bewilderment about the expanse and complexity of the cosmos with his viewers. Cerith Wyn Evans delights in telling us how specs of dust on the astronomers' photographic film made it onto lists of major stars. Vija Celmins – enamoured with her source photographs of star fields – obsessively freed the white of the paper from the pitch-black graphite ground, which is her Space.

Inescapably, Inês Rebelo uses photographic sources in her process, she also shares the fascination of these artists with Space images, but she re-enacts them in her work often with comic intent. In the “Apophis Found” piece, the absurdity stems from the contrast between the little spec and the information provided in the accompanying text where we learn about a potential collision of the minute blip with Earth. We don't really know whether the possibility of an apocalypse is true or not, although it comes from a scientific magazine.

*Consideration* always folds back on the viewers and their equipment. Inês Rebelo invites the viewer with her portable planetariums, the hole-punched tent and umbrellas, the telescopes through which two casual visitors can observe each other's retinas, and the astronomical playing cards to reflect on our cozy models of the stars and our physical and mental apparatus. She also invites us to play, as she does as for example in the painted re-enactments of star trail photography. These meticulously re-created star trail images absurdly pretend that the painter has a super slow retina which retains passing light for hours. These pseudo-astronomical paintings reminiscent of op art are pleasurable play, which remind us of relative time and humorously hint that we sit on a toy lathe onto which light engraves its traces. The absurdity of painting a black hole, which leave the viewer with the realisation that what we end up doing, is to project our patterns on to the star images. Looking at the holes and nebulae we see eyes, teapots, animals and monsters. As with Inês Rebelo's umbrellas and tents, we apply our cosy maps.

The paintings with their captions are absurd signposts to space. Their

materials and dimensions are reminiscent of museum displays. I sometimes wish that the displays were blown up to billboard size and that instead of a gallery they would be placed into the street or roadside. This would be consistent with using industrial paint and materials. It is in everyday settings that we should be reminded of our desperate inability of considering our place in Space. For example “Sem Fuga” based on an image from National Geographic of a black hole engulfing all stars around like a magnetic field, the death of stars with the caption *without escape* (quite tragic and spooky, really) should live as Space Signage at the entrance of a commuter station more than in the gallery and serve as a gentle reminder of the absurdity of our attempts to map our place.

Like her literary hero Lewis Carroll Inês Rebelo ends up illustrating the absurdity of the voyage and attempts of mapping. Her signage pieces mirror the initial comfort the crew in *The Hunting of the Snark* experiences when the captain produces a map to guide them through the terrifying vastness of the sea, only to realise that the map is blank and mislabeled, which leads to desperate and contradictory navigation.

*He had bought a large map representing the sea,  
Without the least vestige of land:  
And the crew were much pleased when they found it to be  
A map they could all understand.*

Charbel Ackermann, 2009