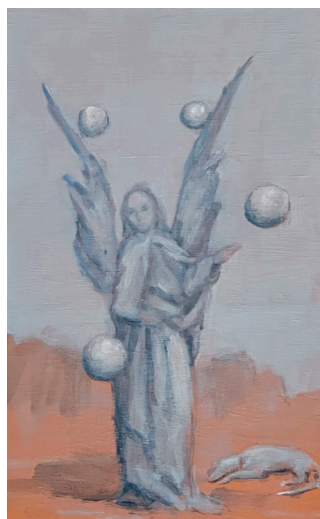


## MIGUEL BRANCO

1963



- 1) Miguel Branco, *Untitled (Monk)*, 2014, cedar wood, 92,5 x 34,5 x 28 cm
- 2) *Untitled*, 2024, oil on canvas, 19,2 x 12 cm
- 3) *Landscape with submarine (After Joachim Patinir)*, 2024, huile sur bois, 14,5 x 31 cm

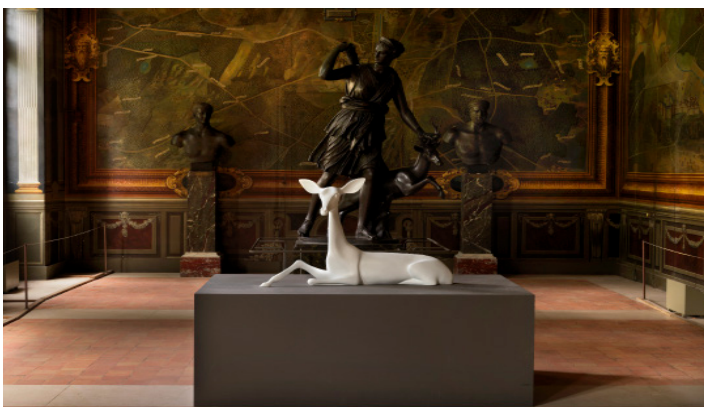
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*As if wielding a scalpel, Branco dissects and cuts through various representations from the history of art, deconstructing and reassembling them into new hybrid and enigmatic images. These images are meticulously (re)constructed and (re)created through successive reconfigurations of elements drawn from different sources, often virtual. The artist makes extensive and free use of the countless creative tools offered by new technologies—collages, enlargements, reductions, cuttings, erasures, additions... These forms, which he endlessly reworks, rewrites, and reinvents by hand, give rise to new images through multiple virtual transformations that strip them of any notion of origin and erase all trace of a primary image (....)*

Bernardo Pinto de Almeida

Whether animal, humanoid, object, place, skull, scribe, butterfly, or landscape, his work is characterized by the constant presence of a scenic dispositif: someone or something intangible is its protagonist. This use of different sources and historical strata lies at the very heart of the artist's creative process. Drawing most of his models from art history—particularly from Georges Stubbs—or from illustrations in early scientific works such as the *Natural History* of the Comte de Buffon, his works—paintings, drawings, or sculptures—are subjected to a renewed pictorial and plastic treatment. Claiming these borrowings, the artist employs them in a highly personal manner: he creates his own images, his “hybrids,” placing his figures in new contexts or under new lighting, with infinite knowledge and distance, hypertrophying his painting so as to make us reconsider the grandeur of his masters (Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard, Goya, Velázquez, Bellini, Stubbs, Hogarth, Teniers...). His sculptures traverse civilizations and countries such as Egypt or India, thus creating a dramaturgy in which the sensation of the work consists in re-embodiment an essence both present and absent—an invisible force that surpasses us.

Metamorphosis and melancholy are consubstantial to Miguel Branco's work. Cinema, particularly that of David Cronenberg, is a true source of inspiration for the artist: the relationship to the body, to prosthetics, to the digital, to mutation, to contamination. Melancholy is historically one of the characteristics associated with Western art, through the reflection it implies on an existential, “inner” dimension. Irony acts as its antidote.



Today one of the major artists of the contemporary Portuguese art scene, Miguel Branco studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Lisbon. From 1994 to 2018, he directed the Department of Drawing and Painting at the Centre for Art and Visual Communication in Lisbon, Ar.Co. He is represented in several public and private collections in Europe and the United States. His work has been exhibited in galleries and public institutions such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; the Serralves Museum, Porto; the Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; MUDAM, Luxembourg; the Carmona e Costa Foundation, Lisbon; the Museum of the City, Lisbon; Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck; Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon; Culturgest, Lisbon; Paule Anglim Gallery, San Francisco; P.P.O.W Gallery, New York; Gallery Pedro Cera, Lisbon; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent; the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Lisbon. **In 2016–2017, the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in Paris dedicated a major exhibition to him: *Black Deer*, Miguel Branco, presenting 70 works in dialogue with the museum’s collection. The artist was also honored by the Festival de l’Histoire de l’Art and the Château de Fontainebleau as part of the *France–Portugal Season 2022*.**



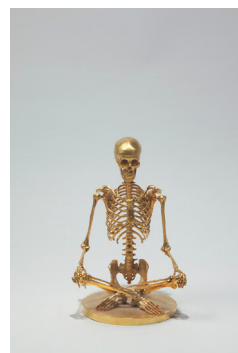
Solo exhibition *Black Deer*, Miguel Branco, 2016-17, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France © Georges Poncet, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

The artist was presented in 2022 at Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean in the exhibition *Face-à-Face*. He was also shown in 2023 at SNBA Lisbon in the exhibition *Uma Terna* (e Política) *Contemplanção do que vive* (Coleção Norlinda e José Lima); the exhibition entitled *Terra - ou os quarenta nove degraus* was dedicated to him at the Carmona e Costa Foundation, and he was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lisbon in the exhibition *I II III IV V - five decades of ar.co*. In 2024, as part of the inauguration of the new museum dedicated to the work of the painter António Carneiro in Porto, Miguel Branco was invited to present around fifteen works. Among them, the sculpture *Untitled* (Black Horse) is displayed in the garden and remains there. **From November 2025 to May 2026, Miguel Branco is featured in the exhibition *The Self as Multiple* (curated by Carolina Quintela) at MACAM in Lisbon.** Thus, in this new series populated by figures evoking representations of death as they once appeared in Gothic paintings and sculptures, in the spirit of the late Northern Renaissance that extended into the 16th and 17th centuries—just as, in another way, they have resurfaced in the strangeness of Borremans’ works and the phantasmagorical installations of Jan Fabre—the artist confronts us, with irony, with the limits of our present condition.

*(...) All these figures now seem to serve him as raw material for reinvention within unexpected scenarios, plunging into the darkness and human frailties that, in reality, threaten us today. They thus reclaim the capacity to reflect, at the level of (re)creation, on what constitutes a courageous challenge in the face of this tragic polarity to which all art, since the earliest times, has confronted us—rendered here, in these works, in a vital and sarcastic form and through a kind of contagious joy.*

*As Gombrich pointed out, “the symbol—in the broadest sense of the term—serves to preserve those same energies from which it originates. These energies that gave rise to the symbols of civilization stem from intense original experiences that also constitute the life of primitive man\*.” It is by questioning the persistence within us of a possible continuity of this most ancient human reasoning that Miguel Branco’s works address us with striking lucidity.*

Bernardo Pinto de Almeida



Miguel Branco  
 1. *Untitled (Naked Lunch) #07*, 2019  
 Silver-plated bronze, 34,5 x 15,3 x 11 cm  
 2. *Untitled (Naked Lunch) #08*, 2019  
 Gold-plated bronze, 34,8 x 18,5 x 13,3 cm  
 3. *Untitled (Naked Lunch) #25*, 2019  
 Gold-plated bronze, 20,5 x 13,4 x 11,2 cm

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