

GALERIE JAEGER BUCHER

5 & 7 rue de Saintonge 75003 F-Paris



**MIGUEL
BRANCO**

DESERTO

Opening Friday 27 January from 6 - 8:30 pm

January 28 > March 31, 2012

From **28 January to 31 March, 2012**, the gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of the artist **Miguel Branco** entitled *Deserto*. Born in Castelo Branco, Portugal in 1963, Miguel Branco studied at Lisbon's Faculty of Fine Arts and has been the director since 1998 of the Painting Department of AR.CO. (Centre of Art and Visual Communication of Lisbon). His works have been shown at international institutions such as the MUDAM in Luxemburg, the CAM—Centre of Modern Art of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon—as well as at the Serralves Foundation in Porto.

For the last twenty years **Miguel Branco** has devoted himself mainly to painting, with the exception of a series of clay and iron sculptures he made between 1987 and 1989. Several distinguishing features characterise his work, whether in painting or sculpture: first of all the *notion of scale* is essential to him, since the majority of his paintings and sculptures exist in a very small format; sometimes they are smaller than postcards. This refusal of the epic scale - of the grandiose, rhetorical but dead style of historical painting of the past - is correlative to an amplification of space, an attention to surfaces and an intensification of perception that distinguish all his works. Nothing disproportionate in scale, nothing enormous, nothing even that suggests a search for elaborate signification, but rather a total discretion, simplicity, humour and absence of solemnity. The artist systematically *builds on the traditions* that his work discretely alludes to, whether in its technique or in the choice of themes from the history of art, such as **portraiture** (in very small formats), **animal painting** (inspired by George Stubbs and Teniers) and **still life** (in both paintings and sculptures). The third distinguishing feature of all his works is the presence of a *scenic dispositif*, i.e. *an impalpable something or protagonist* acting in and through them. Whether it is an animal, a humanoid, an object, a place, a skull, a scribe or a butterfly, this impalpable *entity* resonates in each of us, revealing a truth and hiding it at the same time, as if what was created in *silence* redefined the limits of what acts upon us.

The exhibition *Deserto* that we are presenting from 28 January to 31 March 2012 is made up of several interconnecting installations conceived specifically for our two spaces in the Marais.

The articulation of the works and their arrangement, as well as the itinerary of the observer who discovers them while strolling through the exhibition, are fundamental to an understanding of this strange and mysterious artistic universe, created by the abandonment of things and speaking to us with the subtlety of a silent voice that nonetheless has a clear message.

Several installations are being presented: the 2011 work *Untitled (after Landscape with Diogenes* from Poussin) is composed of small bowls, plates and bell jars, all made out of immaculately white resin. The work alludes to Poussin's famous painting dating from 1647, in which the ancient Cynic philosopher Diogenes watches a kneeling young man beside a river drinking out of the hollow of his hand. Contrite and ashamed of his attachment to superfluous, worldly things, Diogenes casts away his wooden bowl in a gesture of defiance that symbolizes both his renunciation and his absolute trust (in nature).

Another work called *Untitled (Remains)* from 2011 is made up of small bronze bowls and cups. Each piece, by virtue of the choice of material and patina, was conceived and laid out as if in reference to Roman and Etruscan archaeological excavations. The artist thus creates the illusion of "an imaginary museum" and invites us to discover the vestiges of a fictional historical past: the simulacrum of a museum (a place that preserves and sacralises art) reproduced within the space of an art gallery. The power of these works lies precisely in this tension between past and present that runs through the series.

The fifteen bronze monks of the series *Untitled (Monk)* from 2011, with their subtle use of patina, plunge us into a universe brimming with ancestral and archaeological references. Like the anchorites who withdrew into the desert to devote themselves to prayer and penitence, these unworldly beings have chosen a life of solitude and meditation. They are in search of spiritual enlightenment and higher truths—warriors of the spirit centred in themselves but ready for battle. There is a latent tension in these works that derives from the structural elements that compose them. Refined ascetics in the image of that icon par excellence of Gandhara's art —The *Ascetic Buddha* of the Museum of Lahore—they offer us, in their very destitution, the image of a new form of emergence.

Joining them are a series of ten works on paper *Untitled (Desert)* from 2011, ten butterflies of large format, ephemeral but colourful marvels of nature that have always been symbols of metamorphosis (from the larva and caterpillar to the chrysalis). To create these works the artist obtained pictures of butterflies from various scientific publications or collected real butterflies from around the world, which he then had photographed. So that there would be no naturalistic connotation but only the pure form, the essence of butterfly, which could be worked into and housed in other forms, he removed the colour from the images by a numeric process, reducing them to a monochrome blue, a shade of blue that is found in the Islamic and Portuguese "azulejos" but also in Chinese porcelain. As the visitor to the exhibition strolls through this collection of lepidoptera, he is invited to experience within himself a metamorphosis identical to that of the butterfly. These works do not try to impose on us their images but rather to teach us to look at what we think we see. The large format has a double purpose: on the one hand, the singularity of the image is held

up for contemplation; on the other hand the image is emptied of the sentimental connotations associated with the representation of butterflies. Just as they are symbols of resurrection and metamorphosis, these images emptied and flattened out become spectacular through their graphic impact.

As the visitor makes his way through the maze of silent and skilfully constructed installations—with their budhas, beggars, monks, scribes and butterflies—he will encounter different perceptions and different experiences which will perhaps enable him to feel at one with the world of art and its diverse manifestations.

CATALOGUE. This exhibition was first shown at the Pavilhão Branco of *Museum of the City of Lisbon* in Portugal from 28 September to 13 November 2011. It has been enriched for the gallery by several new works. A catalogue in colour was originally published for the Lisbon exhibition with an English translation of a text by Bernardo Pinto de Almeida. This catalogue will be complemented by the publication of photographs of new works done for the gallery as well as the translation into French of the text by Bernardo Pinto de Almeida.

IMAGES AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION

Images must be reproduced as shown. All images are credited and bear the following copyright :
«Courtesy Galerie Jaeger Bucher, Paris, Photo Frederico NS.



View of the installation of the series *Untitled (Monk)*, 2011. Bronze with various patina
Dimensions of each sculptures. 11,81 x 11,22 x 7,68 inches. Ca. 30 x 28,5 x 19,5 cm.



Miguel Branco's studio

Images must be reproduced as shown. All images are credited and bear the following copyright :
«Courtesy Galerie Jaeger Bucher, Paris, Photo Frederico NS.



Untitled (Scribe), 2011. Bronze. Edition 1/3.
10,23 x 7,87 x 7,28 inches. 26 x 20 x 18,50 cm.



Untitled (Monk) # 7, 2011. Bronze.
11,81 x 11,22 x 7,68 inches. Ca. 30 x 28,5 x 19,5 cm.

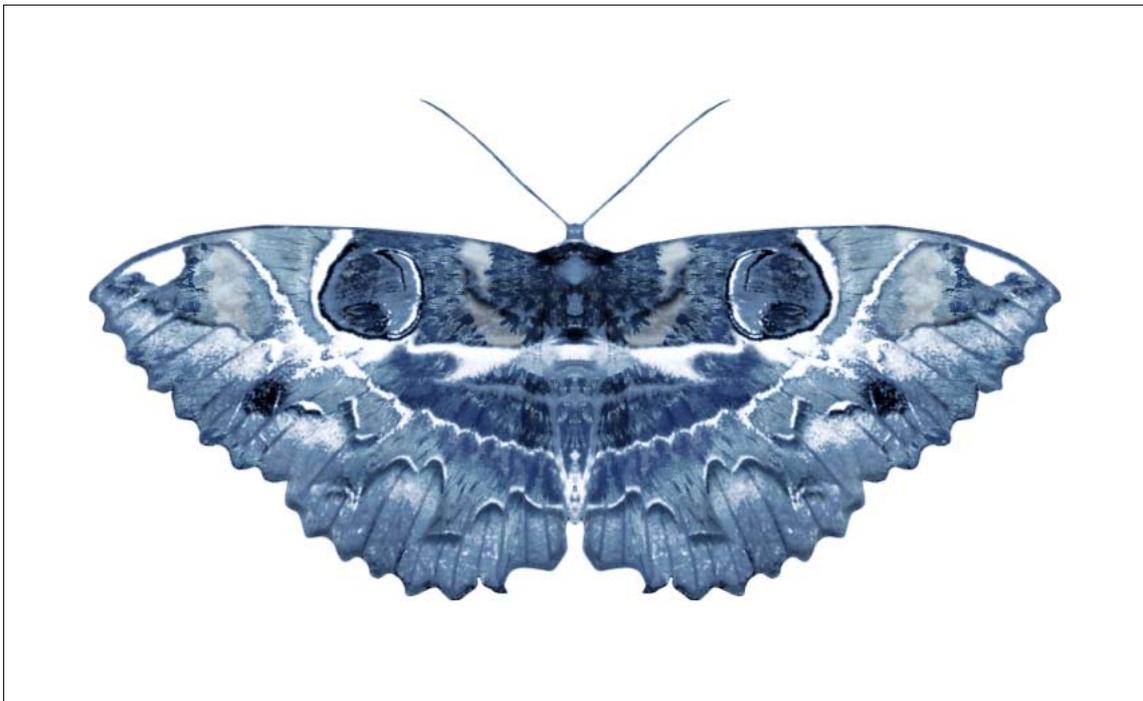


Various pieces from the series *Untitled (Remains)*, 2011. Bronze with various patina. Variable dimensions.

Images must be reproduced as shown. All images are credited and bear the following copyright :
«Courtesy Galerie Jaeger Bucher, Paris, Photo Frederico NS.



Untitled (Desert) # 1, 2011. Digital image, pigmented Ultrachrome HDR ink-jet print on cotton paper.
Edition 1/3. 44,09 x 71,25 inches. 112 x 181 cm.



Untitled (Desert) # 8, 2011. Digital image, pigmented Ultrachrome HDR ink-jet print on cotton paper.
Edition 1/3. 44,09 x 71,25 inches. 112 x 181 cm.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

GALERIE JAEGER BUCHER

Véronique Jaeger
Camille Nau
Pernille Grane

5 & 7 rue de Saintonge 75003 F-Paris
T.+33 (0)1 42 72 60 42
F. + 33 (0)1 42 72 60 49
contact@galeriejaegerbucher.com
www.galeriejaegerbucher.com

Opening hours :
Tuesday- Saturday 11am - 7pm

Opening Friday 27th January 2011
from 6pm to 8:30pm

From February 28 until March 31, 2012

**MIGUEL
BRANCO**
DESERTO

GALERIE JEANNE-BUCHER

Véronique Jaeger
Camille Nau

Opening on Thursday 9 February
from 6pm to 8pm

From February 9 until March 31, 2012

53 rue de Seine 75006 F-Paris
T.+33 (0)1 44 41 69 65
F. + 33 (0)1 44 41 69 68
jeannebucher@wanadoo.fr
www.jeanne-bucher.com

Opening hours:
Tuesday - Friday 9:30am - 6:30pm
Saturday 10am-12:30pm and 2:30pm-6pm

JEAN-PAUL PHILIPPE
ARCHÉOLOGIES INTÉRIEURES