

MIGUEL BRANCO

1963



Untitled (Acteon), 2022, Patinated bronze, 14,5 x 16 x 6 cm
Exhibition Fontainebleau, Miguel Branco, 2022, Art History Festival, Château de Fontainebleau, France © Georges Poncet Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon



Untitled (Acteon), 2023
Oil on wood, 13 x 12 cm, 20 x 13 cm, 26 x 32 cm © All rights reserved Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris, Lisbon



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

I have always been fascinated by cabinets of curiosities, which are, historically, a prefiguration of museums. In addition, animals fascinate me. My approach to them is not naturalistic, nor do I consider them an extension of the human being. They are what we can never be, what we can never understand. The animal is the absolute 'other', a cryptic presence

Miguel Branco

Miguel Branco is one of the major artists on the contemporary Portuguese art scene. His work focuses on metamorphosis and conveys a sense of strangeness, exploring images and the mechanisms it provokes. Borrowing most of his models from the history of art, notably from Georges Stubbs, or drawing from the illustrations of old scientific works such as the Natural History of Count de Buffon, his works, paintings, drawings or sculptures, lend themselves to completely a new pictorial work. Although he openly cites these sources, the artist uses them in an extremely personal way: He creates his own images from older images, places animal figures in a new context or under a new light, with infinite knowledge and distance, and transforms and enlarges the images in order to make us rediscover the greatness of the Masters (Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard, Goya, Velázquez, Bellini, Stubbs, Hogarth, Teniers...). He also takes us on a journey, in his sculptures, to the heart of civilisations or countries such as Egypt or India, thus creating a dramaturgy where the sensation of the work is to incarnate an essence that is both present and absent, an



Exhibition Fontainebleau, Miguel Branco, 2022, Art History Festival, Château de Fontainebleau, France © Georges Poncet Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon

invisible that is beyond us, as well as being a process intrinsic to the work. Whether animal, human, object, place, skull or butterfly, his work is characterised by the constant presence of a scenic device: something or someone impalpable is the protagonist. This use of different sources and historical strata is at the heart of the artist's creative process, as the Portuguese art critic Bernardo Pinto de Almeida explains:

As if using a scalpel, Branco dissects and cuts out numerous representations from classical art, which he deconstructs and then reassembles into enigmatic hybrid images. They are meticulously (re)constructed and remade by means of successive re-configurations, by editing and pasting varied pieces from other sources, very often virtual ones. He makes ample and free use of the immense possibilities offered by new technologies, such as increasing and reducing scale, enlarging, erasing, cropping, pasting and editing images...These forms, which he in turn remakes and remodels and manually reshapes, always give rise to new images, given that they are obtained through innumerable operations of virtualisation that have removed all vestiges of what is usually called their origin and even any sign that there ever had been a first image.

Miguel Branco studied painting at the Lisbon Academy of Fine Arts. From 1994 to 2018, he directed the Department of Drawing and Painting at the Lisbon Centre for Art and Visual Communication, Ar.Co.

He is represented in several public and private collections in Europe and the United States. His work has been presented in galleries and public institutions such as Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon; Museu de Serralves, Porto; Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; MUDAM, Luxembourg; Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lisbon; Museu da Cidade, Lisbon; Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck; Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon; Culturgest, Lisbon; Galerie Paule Anglim, San Francisco; Galerie P. P.O.W. New York; Gallery Pedro Cera, Lisbon; Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst, Gent; Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon. **In 2016-2017, the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in Paris, devoted an important exhibition to him, presenting 70 works in dialogue with the works of the Museum. Also, the artist was honoured by the Art History Festival and the Château de Fontainebleau, as part of the France-Portugal 2022 Season.**

The artist was presented in 2022 at the Mudam Luxembourg - Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, within the exhibition *Face-à-Face* as well. He is also presented in 2023 at the SNBA, Lisbon in the exhibition *Uma Terna (e Política) Contemplação do que vive* (Coleção Norlinda e José Lima); an exhibition entitled *Terra - ou os quarenta nove degraus* is dedicated to him at the Carmona e Costa Foundation; it is also on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Lisbon, in the exhibition *I III III IV V - five decades of ar.co.*



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



Solo exhibition *Deserto*, Miguel Branco, 2012, Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris, Marais © Georges Poncet, Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisbon