

NATURFATURA

Catarina Leitão

04.15 -05.27 2023

Opening on 04.15, from 5:00pm to 7:30pm

Solo show curated by João Silvério

nature, how to make

The selection of works Catarina Leitão presents in this exhibition can be understood as a visual essay on different ways of questioning an idea of nature subject to varying processes of domestication and transformation. The exhibition's title, *Naturfatura* [Naturfatura], is present in all the works and indexed in series, announcing a sequenced and seemingly linear working process. However, this is not precisely the case. A more attentive look reveals a work developed as a symbiosis, an analogy of a biological matrix in which drawing contributes to the sculptural process and its reciprocal action is perfectly apprehensible in the spatiality of the body of work that receives the viewer in the exhibition space. The artist has developed her process with a particular focus on sculpture and drawing, giving equal importance to her artist's books, which include "notebooks," or "field notebooks," that, in a subtle but effective way, add a self-supporting library to the experience of the studio. Her "Natural Library" is an artistic device intersecting sculpture, drawing, observation, and fiction. But if all these actions are developed simultaneously — which seems to contradict the seriality inscribed in the designation of her works — the exhibition leads us to a metric that defines, within the limits of the exhibition space, the construction of a narrative that posits itself between the archive of analytical and organic records and the fabrication of structures that seem to transgress the notion, perhaps lost, of an archetypal nature.

The sculptures are like hybrid models of horticultural protection devices that appear to be displays of natural taxidermy, imbued with a plasticity marked by a very austere chromatic palette. The materials used are wood, crafted from proficiently collected and trimmed branches that blend with artificial constructs and establish a relationship of formal continuity with their vinyl extensions, as appendages that express the duality of the human experience of nature. Present in each sculpture, a particular detail is visible on closer observation: a tiny gap separates each connecting element, which seems to denote an imprecise, unfinished finish. But that's not exactly the case: this break, or interval, is a mark that defines the reconfiguration, in the sculpture, of these vegetal-like fragments as unities between the organic and the artificial, in a dialectic of the dual nature of human action, between the romantic delight of observation and the mechanical and industrial transition of that same action. In this sense, the sculptures present a critical, and thus political, posture of Catarina Leitão's work. This stance results from a thorough research work, based on her recent PhD thesis, which

resulted in a speculative research corpus under the title *Weatherproof – Wanderings in the Post-natural, Perspectives from My Artistic Practice*. I transcribe here a brief passage that, in my view, summarizes some of the crucial points of her reflections: "Questions concerning the idea of nature can be found in a diversity of contexts and approaches. In everyday life, nature is the subject of great confusion. Sometimes it is the expression of an authoritative voice, others a phenomenon to behold, or even the fantasy of a place receded in time to which we are supposed to desire to return."

In this context, the *Naturfatura* drawings, of remarkable size and corresponding to the scale and proportion of the sculptures, executed with surgical precision, bring us back to the idea of the library as we go through drawings inspired by stratigraphic fragments, imagined orographies, patterns of an architectural (or domestic) matrix, models of arboreal branches, and a kind of remissive panorama of a fictional construction about a universe that seems close to us. The drawings, immense panels of distant memorabilia, are like a complex bookcase of visual aphorisms that offer us a panoramic vision between the rudiment and the mechanical expansion of the human.

João Silvério

Transl. from the Portuguese by José Roseira

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Artistas | *Artists*: André Príncipe | Anthony Goicolea | Carla Cabanas | Catarina Leitão | Daniel Blaufuks | Isabel Brison | Isidro Blasco | Jessica Backhaus | José Bechara | José Maçãs de Carvalho | Manuel Caeiro | Manuel Vilariño | Marguerite Bornhauser | Maria Condado | Mónica Capucho | Mónica de Miranda | Noé Sendas | Pires Vieira | Ricardo Angélico | Roland Fischer | Susana Gaudêncio | Tiago Casanova

Horário Seg-Sex 10h00-19h30 Sáb 12h00- 19h30

Open Mon- Fri 10am-7:30pm Sat 12am-7:30pm