

Watching Paloma Bosquê work is to see how familiar the artist is with the materials she uses: the skin of a bull's gut, beeswax, felt, rosin, and paper. Although often fragile, she fearlessly bends the elements that make up her sculptures and installations. This may be the essential premise of the artist's work: the intimate knowledge from someone who has experienced much and learned to understand the limitations and possibilities of a range of materials. Having a degree in Graphic Design, part of the knowledge acquired by Paloma came from realizing that dealing with these materials always entails a negotiation, and that the reality of computers and grids does not apply to the real world. It was with her hands that she learned how to create solutions according to their responses.

Inventário (The Blind Leading the Blind) [Inventory (The Blind Leading the Blind)] (2018) is a good example of it—the installation is composed of rectangular elements made of the skin of a bull's gut, bars of beeswax, and rosin. The artist plays with precision within complete inaccuracy. She strives to turn something organic, irregular, cylindrical, and twisted into something flat, orthogonal, and geometric. It is as if she wanted to go against the laws of nature, albeit without ceasing to respect them the entire time. The installation is an inventory of two complementary sets, each of them arranged in a linear sequence, according to a preset parameter and placed side by side. On one side, there is a queue of floating translucent planes. On the other, their earthly peers, dark and opaque, slightly displaced to the front. In Paloma's own words her work results of "an uphill struggle" between what she expects or wants from the materials and what is actually possible. She reaches a balance between the two. But isn't the maintenance of expectations a recurring issue in works of art in general? Or is it an inherent matter to being alive? Interestingly, Paloma plays with the appearance and the reality of materials, generating a kind of frustrated expectations. The feeling of standing face to face with this or any other one of her works can be quite opposite of what is expected when we found out what they are made of. Perhaps this perception comes from the delicate way with which these elements are related to each other and with the space: twisted, fluttering, simply supported, on the verge of touching the ground, however without touching it. Perhaps it is due to the use of transparency or translucency, which modify the light that goes through them. The fact is that, in many of her works, we perceive in other ways materials that could incite reactions of repulsion. The artist makes us look beyond the surface of materials and contextualize their value.

Inventário (The Blind Leading the Blind) uses intestine skin, a surface that touches all the impurities we want to eliminate and not to see. However, it is this same skin that absorbs the nutrients that keep us healthy. That is, its role in the maintenance of animal life is extremely fundamental. She also makes us think of everything that an organic matter conveys, such as the beeswax used in the making of the bars used in the installation. Just imagine the work that making it actually entails, how many hours and insects are required, or how much information is contributed by each one of these bees, by the places where they've been, so that a small amount of the product could be made. In this and many of her works, Paloma establishes a relationship between elements that, at first, seem divergent: they're made of different natures, hardness, origins, textures, weights, and matter. Together, they coexist in a harmonious fashion, even when in opposition. The artist's compositions are almost musical. They are rhythmic scores in space, created by small displacements or subtle changes in direction. This is clear in *Inventário (The Blind Leading the Blind)*. The proverb "the blind leading the blind," which is the title of the work, dates from a time before Christ, being found in Sanskrit texts that are fundamental to Hindu philosophy and to Buddhism and Jainism in India. The metaphor refers to a situation in which a person who does not know anything receives advice or help from someone who doesn't know much either. It was reclaimed by the Gospel of St. Matthew, when Jesus criticized the Pharisees, saying that if one blind man leads the other, both will fall in the same ditch. This biblical image was depicted by Flemish Renaissance painter Pieter Brueghel the Elder. The painting from 1568 is now displayed at Museo di Capodimonte in Naples. However, Paloma uses the parable with a different meaning from that used in the Bible. For her, the figure of speech refers to an endless, cyclical movement that lacks an objective result. It also alludes to a body that is closed in itself, as a group that follows a logic of its own, distinct from that of the world around it. "If, on the one hand, having the blind lead the blind could be a



potential catastrophe to those who can see, on the other hand, maybe they lack the perception that one group is only following a logic that is different from that of the majority. Different from their own," says the artist. In this metaphor, the blind can be exchanged for any minority, ideology, or group of elements that are guided by parameters that, in the eyes of most, may seem to lead to the abyss that St. Matthew described. In a moment of extreme political polarization in Brazil, which requires a clear positioning from everyone, perhaps Paloma expresses her political commitment in other ways. Brazilian critic Mario Pedrosa said that Giorgio Morandi was the most radical artist in fascist Italy, who managed to break away from the pictorial tradition of his country unlike any of his contemporaries. Lonely and with the "soul of an artisan," Morandi dedicated his life to portraying a limited set of pots and bottles in a precise and compulsive manner, and almost nothing more. Is it not perseverance, the resistance to not do what everyone else is doing that makes us political? Politics and art can be found in a simple "displacement" of that which is habit or, at first, standard. And it is not with great speeches or almost educational statements that Paloma practices her politics. The artist insists on a manual, artisanal work that is thorough and requires time; it is in her way of doing and in what she does that she is, indeed, political.

Two Stones , 2017

Lamina di piombo, aste in ottone
 feltrata a mano e cera d'api c
 greca / Lead sheet, brass rod:
 wool and beeswax with rosin
 Ca. 202 x 212 x 34 cm
 Courtesy dell'artista / the arti
 e / and Mendes Wood DM, Sã
 New York, Brussels
 Photo Bruno Leão