Pause
CLAIRE DE SANTA COLOMA
17.11.17 – 13.01.18
Inauguração | Opening 19h – 22h, 17.11.17

Pause, the title chosen by Claire de Santa Coloma (Buenos Aires, 1983) for this exhibition, could be easily interpreted as a desire or a need following a period of great visibility of her work in the context of MAAT’s exhibition of EDP Foundation’s New Artists Award, which she won. But like her creations, which do not seem to want to state more than what is seen – abstract, clear line and elegant wood sculptures that are silky and appeal to the touch – the title contains more than it is apparent at first.

In the Online Portuguese Dictionary (dicio.com.br) the word “pause” has the following meanings:

“interruption of an act for a period of time”
“slowness”
“sign used in music to indicate interruptions”

And finally: “interval between the beams of a wooden structure”

And suddenly the title, which seemed to merely point to a state of mind or a powerful physical need to stop and think, contains and provides a key, among many possible keys, to understand this set of works produced in 2017.

The wood sculptures reveal the intervals and veins contained inside the tree, they are objects that result from the acts of removing, smoothing out and polishing, instead of adding or juxtaposing. And the frottage drawings radicalize that process, becoming a sort of x-ray or drawing of the wood and revealing what the naked eye is unable to fully perceive: the tiny nodules, modulations, bends, lines and spaces within the wood.

Frottage, from the French frotter, meaning to rub, was a technique developed by surrealist Max Ernst around 1925 in which he placed a sheet of paper on the studio’s wooden floorboards running and pressing a soft pencil against the paper until it captured the texture of the floor.

Once more, now also resorting to paper, Claire de Santa Coloma, enhances a double dialogue: with the history of art and with the matter she chose to work with, i.e., wood.

Matter in the material sense, as well as in the sense of subject or theme – the two dimensions are inseparable. We are not in the terrain of interpretation or connotation, but in the field of denotation.

Looking at Bench for contemplation that is precisely what we come across: a rectangle hanging from the wall like an abstract painting in front of a bench on which the memory of the seated body left imprinted two marks in negative that are now a comfortable invitation to sit down. Or also in Sculpture on canvas, a piece of wood reminiscent of a shell or fountain placed on a raw linen canvas.

More than pointing to everyday objects or pieces of furniture, which could be expected because they are sculptures, these works create landscapes. Inner landscapes, not in the subjective sense, but landscapes that come from inside, from inside matter.

Isabel Carlos, 11.2017