

The shadow secret

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Everything begins in the face of another. Even in the painting and drawing of Pedro Calapez. Chiefly in that risk of indiscretion that is drawing. Not in the closeness of light it may bring and preserve, but in the verbal expression of its shadow; this one is much more than mimicry: it is a voice that commands the fragility of the line, that does not let it die alone, a prisoner of indifference, in a dissolution of presence. In a paleness of pencil-tip or tenuous charcoal, just before the nearest blotch absorbs it, it says to us: “Look at me.” In fact, that junction point, that passage, also looks at us, but its face, once made of lines, broken lines, links between two moments, has lost — lost and gained — its own particular face, in order to let itself exist in the larger, general face that is the blotch, the shadow. The line that has captured the face of another, that has preserved the water of a river, the tree of a forest, the colour of a fire or was the purest expression of its own non-face has entered the shadow’s secret. It was seized by a grey, a black, a colour that is like the thinking of drawing itself [of painting, even, if we wish]. The pulsation responsible for the life that runs in the lines of culpability and innocence of what was [a face] and is [a face of] drawing.

The indiscretion that is drawing has its origin in that sort of all heavens and worlds that residually mingle in the shadow, in the shadows. It is like a primordial — and material — element within the drawing itself. It comes close to an indeterminate, to an indefinite, and for that reason it is a blotch, visually a shadow. Something that is not far from a hole and its possible immensity — a tiny hole in the abyss of the world, which is the sphere of the intelligible and the sensitive, in which lie all possibilities of representation, starting with the most immediate everyday life. “Look at me”, says the face of the drawing that has delineated a house or a thought. “Look at me”, says also the face of the drawing that has approached the contemplative and abstract quality of an “I decide”. The drawing lives on the structure of an intentionality that is sight, a sensitive mode whereby we gain access to things, to the world, to the manifold face of the world, that is to say, to its drawing and representation, to its shadow, to its blotch, to its indeterminate and indefinite mode.

Euripedes described this notion of indefinite as “the ageless order of immortal nature”, and gave it, in his tragedies, the quality of a relentless necessity. In the blotch, in the shadow, dwells that which endures, that which passes from drawing to drawing, that which is indefi-

nite: that which the Pre-Socratic Anaximander, author of that notion, defined as “neither in constant motion, nor a mixture”. Rather, it can be described as a rational hesitation — in spite of the speed, nearly always or so often brought to bear on the act of its making, at the moment of the delineation or plangency of the shadow — because it consists of carefully weighed [pondered] arguments. A continuous hesitation, made up of doubts and even errors, vacillations, struggles. Because of this and all that, desires and small/great revenges circulate and dash throughout the drawing, as if within the shadow/blotch resided the figures — their ghosts — of the soul and of the coachman who drives the white and black Platonic horses of the theory in *Phaedrus*. Out of the blotch, or of some nucleus that may skilfully conceal it, hesitation, more than the snapping of a pencil point or a tearing of the paper or leading the Indian ink or colour to relinquish feeling or to a clear sighting of the most sudden light, leads the drawing, like the soul in Plato’s dialogue, to an unbalance of strength, to a loss of the white [horse] and to an alternating compensation in the continuing progression [of the blotch and of lines and of the shadows and of attributing it the passion of colour] of the black [horse]. And all this, all this process is quite fast, since it obeys the various urges of a sensibility. However, I do not think it exists by reason of a defined ideal, being much more driven by fears and desires. Because the drawing is so often, if not always, so quick that it falls to it to impose its interest, sometimes obstinately; and whatever constructing passion there is, it is the drawing that generates it and sets it upon the space to be drawn. To it belong principles of energy, strength and work, which from its shadow, that living fessile, dedicate themselves to the implosion of static images.

While selecting pieces by Pedro Calapez for the present exhibition, we looked carefully at all the drawings in the *Lentas nuvens [Slow clouds]*, 2012 [24 watercolours] series; though it would ultimately not be selected, it is featured in this catalogue and played a key role in the layout of the exhibits. In this series, we can say that everything begins with a cloudiness, with the maritime liquidity of a becalmed sea, followed by raging waves, and then clouds and an atmosphere that surrounds the purplish and violaceous hues of an idyllic land, which only exists now in the art of memory that is painting, alongside poetry. Then, a blue sky, not a baby blue, but a striking blue; and fields, green cerealian meadows; should we close our eyes upon them, we would be able to see erupt the brownish-yellow of lupins or the dark blue of gentians. They also preserve, these *Slow clouds*, the burnt sands of torrid deserts, striped with deep blacks, as well as ochres and a black blotch. The latter is like a target that emerges, an *arche*: a beginning and a shadow. It inspires us to block out the past and develop a fully contemporary understanding of artistic elements. Underlying this is the attractive notion of release from the dead weight of error and the illusion of the past. The black shadow urges drawing to shake off its chains, being an exercise on distance: first, in the time of learning and living art — when these *Slow clouds* evoke Giorgione, Salomon Ruysdael or Constable, or even one of Turner’s tempests blowing off over the Atlantic or, much closer to us, a greyish blue by Nolde or Howard Hodgkin — and

then when everything comes together in an embracing perception of space, in reflection and refraction, in an almost alchemical fashion; visual form and sensoriality are attributed to a chromatic *substance*. Even if that *release* as more drawing is no more than an unfolding of the black blotch, of the shadow, into further blackish greys, now transformed and traversed by what is perceived in the moments of [creative] time and of skill's adventurous heart.

*But Lot's wife looked back,
and she became a pillar of salt*
Genesis, 19, 26

Anna Akhmatova wrote a poem about Lot's wife ["Lot's Wife", *Anno Domini*, 1921-23].

They followed god's angel. He was leading them away from Sodom. They were the just ones. Or so it was told. Or so they seemed to be. Perhaps they were. The city that was theirs was large and prosperous, and thus had grown on the slope of the mountain. Lot and his family followed the angel. His wife too; her steps followed the angel's track. The Book did not find her name worthy of preservation: she is simply Lot's wife. Sadness lined her face, and she led her younger son by the hand. The angel's bulk, white with flaming hair, advanced ahead of her. A yearning pained her, for Sodom, her birthplace, its labyrinth of streets, its market; a wounded feeling told her of the yard where she sat to spin, of the house where she had bore her children and known love. In an outburst of unrestrained suffering, she turned and looked back. Her eyes were blinded with salt. Sodom remained in the distance of memory. And, a transference of salt on salt, Lot's wife was left standing by the side of some path.

I transcribe the last lines of Akhmatova's poem: "Who would waste tears upon her? Is she not / The least of our losses, this unhappy wife? / Yet in my heart she will not be forgot, / Who, for a single glance, gave up her life."¹

Why do I, too, care for Lot's wife? Why did I call her to these pages on drawing? Because of her simple action of looking back, at what was left *behind*. Because her senses still clung, for a moment, in a volitional gesture, to what she was about to leave. Like someone who wished to commit herself to that final glance and then abandon everything for ever. I compare Lot's wife to a sheet of paper ready to receive a drawing. There, everything that must remain remains. There, you cannot simply erase what you did and create drawings upon drawings, like on the board or canvas that support painting. Because paper tears easily, because paper, as it receives the drawing, accepts also the mobility of its quick inscription, to which the palimpsest is an alien concept. Drawing, just like Lot's wife, clings not to waste. Layers upon layers. One final layer of drawing conceals a number of lives that preceded, and which remain under a

¹ Translated by Richard Wilbur, *Collected Poems 1943-2004*, Waywiser Press, London, 2005.

tempestuous surface of colours and painful blotches, which are and will always be pulsing memories. Lot's wife wanted nothing more than do away with that weight. That final glance at her city would have allowed her the white, limpid sheet of paper, fully consecrated to oblivion. Anyway, might it not be that Lot's wife created the first drawing? That blotch left on the dark *earth*, after the translucent pillar of salt that was once her had melted down.

It was the drawings in *detrás [behind]*, 2012 [170 × 125cm, acrylic] and *terra [earth]*, 20015-2016 [102,5 × 153,5cm, acrylic and oil pastel] that brought to my mind the *Genesis* episode of Lot's wife. *Behind*, they preserve, in a selection of blotches, an art of greys and whites that dimly prefigures, in the verticality of drawing, a sense of excellence [— achievement — such as could be found in someone who, being able to contemplate the stars on a cloudless night, could also know how to bring them down upon the *earth*, taking them, according to his astronomical preferences, within himself] and connection with something indeterminate, the Greek concept of *apeiron*, which comes from *behind*, from the beginning of my text. What more precise meaning could we ask from a drawing than the reverse of its physical limit [*peras*], than the opposite of the finite and immediate perfection of the space offered to our eyes? Through the indefinite, through the infinite, the drawing achieves its passage to something more than its opposite: to a transposition and a plurality, thus somehow evading its limiting margins. *Behind* and *inside* the drawing lies its simplicity, which takes the form of a constant *idea* of *escape*, that is to say, of departure; something that is often enthrallment and servitude — here we have again the notion of giving one's life for a glance, to put us in mind of Lot's wife — and in which the soul is not separate from the mind or from the body and what is beautiful is then necessarily just. It is here that the acrylics in the *earth* series can and must find their place.

The drawings of *earth* surprise us not just with their weighty black, but also with how it turns into a whirlpool of colour, a surfacing of the soul that will lead us, for instance, to the *pathos* of light we can find in the drawings of *Elementos triviais [Trivial elements]*, 2015 [123x80,5cm, dry pastel]. The *earth* series separates from what is left of the body an earthy ground of dirt and blotches and sober shadows of blackness, allowing one of its works to display the course of a white line. This line, conveyed with the energy of a powerful brushstroke, oscillates over itself, rising and falling, like some character that, standing on the forestage, utters a long, intense white monologue. Soon, however, another *earth* drawing reveals a crack in its brutal purple-black, while the white continues to pierce through and float, pursuing its own silence of drawing and painting, attacking as if an electric shock were being transmitted through an imaginary liquid presence.

Everything begins in the face that indefinitely projects itself out of its own world. The shadow comes apart, dissolving itself from its utmost depths, throws itself onto the surface that

surrounds it and then proceeds much further, projecting itself outwards. First, a time of uncreated things, like seeds from a pod, from a capsule-like receptacle that sunlight causes to open with a small explosion. Then the latent face of the drawing will expand itself across other drawings, in later times; not only inscribing itself in the horizon of the hand and skill of the one who started it, but also formalising itself as an idea that galvanises the eye and gaze of others. Of many other faces. For a drawing is always a lucky hazard that favours fates. Onto the [broader] face of abstraction, which is a kind of imaginary entrance hall for these works on paper by Pedro Calapez, multiple rules of understanding and illusion converge, in which colour stands for pure use and a hidden form of reason, also pure and simple, beneath the drawing's dimmest section. Maybe this is a little — or a lot — of what is offered to us in “Untitled”, 2015 [121 × 80,5cm, oil pastel], in an atmospheric gliding of impressions that nearly betray the abstract ambiance, as they establish via undulating colourations a certain mode of painting, which renounces the values of its peers to shelter itself beneath a voice that listens, out of the timeless duration of colour.

In this manner the face reflects itself and goes forth from its drawing, onto the face of another. A [certain] eternity sustains it. Wittgenstein describes it: “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present. Our life has no end in the way in which our visual field has no limits” [*Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, 6.4311]. It is that “life with no limits” that *seeing* looks for and finds in drawing: a value in which everything is as it is, in which everything happens as it happens. Thus that which is in art is solely in the face of art; it is outside of the world, outside of the face of the world.

*Bright yet vague. She is perhaps twenty-two. She is shabby.
She crosses the road and looks at the daffodils and
the red tulips in the florist's window. She hesitates,
and makes off in the direction of Temple Bar. She walks fast,
and yet anything distracts her. Now she seems to see,
and now to notice nothing.*

Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*, 1922

London, late in a sunny January morning: Jacob, Virginia Woolf's character Jacob, who is as good an observer of the face of another as he is a poor percipient of his own, loses himself in conjectures about a girl who walks in front of him. He constantly speculates about his surroundings. He is no older than the girl who now walks fast, now is distracted by something; just like her, Jacob constantly hesitates, unsure about whether he will reach his destination through Temple Bar or Aldwych, since that destination was an assumption that could be approached in a free and easy spirit, from any location. Everything was bright, yet vague; the girl continued to be observed, and in a certain way followed, by Jacob. Everything in the city's bustle had the

brightness of a series of static images, which, being shown in succession, acquire a film-like quality, disclosing not exactly objects but relationships of change, which appear and disappear: constant, intermittent, indefinite vanishing points within a stable yet indeterminate frame of reference. Jacob or that girl probably chose to hold on to a gleam of sunlight; perhaps because the sun is an empirical accident in a January morning. Yellow daffodils, red tulips. Bright yet vague. Already reduced to the eclosion of their own colours. Vague, but not transcendent, even though in its abstraction of colour it may become, in the minds of those two who walk, for the free and easy pleasure of walking among the multitude of their city, the major issue in a minor (though truly disturbing) dispute — the dispute between the face that observes and the face that is observed.

This wandering of Jacob, a character driven by passion and experience, through a morning in an already remote January between the two World Wars of the 20th century can bring to us the bright *Trivial elements*; bright, and also vague, because out of that manner of being vague, of knowing how to go far, of losing themselves in the remoteness of colour and in its eruptions throughout the various stages in the series — here a red, there a black, then a bar of Mars yellow or a passionate old pink — all that comprises a causal series, a why. It is as if the colours were spreading, across the surface that receives them, an infinity of events that are decisive, yet trivial. They are the bright carriers of a reflection within a colour and within the transition from a black to a pink, from a yellow, associated with the combative Mars, to its mingling with a sweetened, but still acidic, lemon yellow, or a black, whose heat levels oscillate as it is poisoned by a marshy green; and vague, because they wander around the limits and illimits of their times and spaces, because they are indefinite, free and obscure and also restless, versatile and rambling — unsure whether to enter the Temple Bar metro station, as probably the shabby girl did, or perhaps go to Aldwych, where I suppose Jacob's absent-minded — bright and vague — steps took him. Colour defines a progressive distinction in combinatory art — the old pink that the harsh wind of a powerful orange blurs, the Prussian blue that opens the dress to reveal a titanium-white breast and a sky blue that lashes at faces just before the bright and vague eyes of youth disappear into earth-dirty blue. Then, in seeming geometry, like verses in stanzas, bright yellow, orange, carmine, ochre, turquoise and a soil-blackened green followed by a lettuce green start oscillating. Colour is a concept that directs drawing's research; it is the expression of its own face: together they create drawing's shadow and reflection, as well as its silence. And silence is the dust out of which the uniform mixture of light and obscurity emerges.

La Tempesta

Giorgione, c.1510, oil on canvas, 73 × 83cm, Accademia, Venice

After the Storm

Per Kirkeby, 1985, oils on canvas

The *openspace* [the painter's spelling], 2015 [152,4x101,6, synthetic enamel and oil pastel] series shows us drawing conceived as a rupture. White is the blotch's predominant element, its shadow. It is the beginning, like the model of a nature/strength dichotomy. Like a military strategy, white has shadowed the shadow itself with its brightness. During combat, the strategy of drawing releases fragments of colour, which largely, in many of the pieces in *openspace*, tend to combine with the material of the white colour and develop a time of drawing within a drawing — a simple white margin. This is what is left of a conflict that has sometimes, through the agency of broad colour strokes, progressed as other, further drawings.

The pieces in *openspace* have *opened themselves* to Giorgione's painting "La Tempesta" and to Per Kirkerby's *After the Storm* series. I will not focus my attention on the figures in "The Tempest". Neither on the woman who breastfeeds the newborn on one side of the picture nor on the man who looks at her from the other. Strange characters, both of them. It is night. A river runs between them. Close by, something stands that may be a votive altar or a tomb; on top of it, two strange cylindrical columns rise. In the foreground are rocks and grass, interlaced dry branches; out of the veins on one of the boulders, two bushes grow. The most exuberant of the pair stretches out three or four branches with atmospheric foliage that act like a veil between our gaze and the woman's nudity. The white cloth on which she sits covers the flank she turns to a dark mass of vegetation, and its intense white is wrapped around her shoulders. The river is a visible and close green-grey-blue; a bridge crosses it; a castle; a city. But all this was shown to us that night by the light of the storm. By a lightning-bolt that generated luminous reflections on the massed clouds [I was also thinking of them when I first mentioned the *Slow clouds* series], lent more darkness to the greenery and somehow highlighted out of that nocturnal landscape the powerful forms of the two figures, especially the woman [I was thinking of her when, a few paragraphs earlier, I mentioned "a titanium-white breast"].

It is that sky of lit clouds stretching across the night that I wanted to bring close to *openspace*. Highly-fluctuating open spaces, similar to the ones I found in the various paintings of Per Kirkerby's *After the Storm* series, which I saw in 1998 [London, Whitechapel]. They preserve the flow of colour — greens, greys, blues, blacks and white —, for it appears that the storm has past, leaving a space, an opening, a time that almost seems kept by a diapason — an instrument that sometimes, it seems to me, keeps time in Calapez's work — and which will no longer yield the shadow or the blotch, only the light of the liquid and atmospheric hue of humidity, or else a riant yellow or an unexpected Orleans red.

The eye is far from being the aggregation of abstract elements that are the paths of colour: an intense blue, that folds in upon itself, an orange or blueish black that rises and curves as it draws itself. The eye looks for a certain point of view, pursues it and explores that stance in accordance with a certain order of succession: from drawing to drawing. It passes from one series to the next; then it goes back, just to confirm its impressions. Finally, it selects this and that other

drawing. More than simply projecting itself as gaze onto the *writing*, the blotch, the shadow and that same shadow's secret, the eye is a solitary walker and the drawings are its chosen paths. Moreover, it becomes the actor of those pieces it selects. It loses its point of view, its opinion, to become gaze, the professed interpreter of this or that colour, or of the dissipation of a brighter circle; and as it incorporates a colour glaze it loses itself in malice, as in the tempest Prospero created in his imaginary island, to recover his ducal throne in Milan, for the sake of his daughter Miranda [Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 1611]. But can the eye ever reach the shadow's secret?

In fact, the pieces in *openspace* make that possible. They perfectly fulfill three of the requisites concerning the imaginal forces of light and shadow, as set down by Nicolas Poussin for Monsieur de Chambray [Rome, 1665]: "Il ne se donne point de visible sans lumière; Il ne se donne point de visible sans moyen transparent; Il ne se donne point de visible sans couleur."

Naked eye, 2012 [61x86, Indian ink]. The drawings are lined up side by side. They offer themselves to the room's walls, free from the confinement of a sheet of glass or a frame. So that nothing is lost of Calapez's use of the line, so that we may follow and share its flow and presence in the drawing, brief, swift, even able to touch us with a light bonhomie, with a well-being that suddenly erupts, willing to converse, before we move on to one of its neighbours, which spreads itself as a small blotch, and then another one inscribes upon its margins the outline of imaginary curtains or an expanse of liquid, lacustral landscapes. Under the *naked eye*, a seminal art of seeing, the black of Indian ink has instituted quick writings, pictures that presuppose the practice of division, marked structures, sometimes ferociously so, but always beneath the mask of one who, inside the drawing, has never lost the composure of a smile. That is the reason why the shape, the line, the geometry, all these elements assume the irony of a trace and a modelling that grows and develops, but soon, suddenly, takes on the opposite direction, going back over its own traces, in a suggestion of circularity. A suggestion that is a kind of remembrance, since it lives off the moment in which the line or the small shadow suspend themselves within a short segment, in order to accord a larger existence and a greater visibility to that same black fragment; all this is nothing more than a well-balanced display of skill in combination with overlapping, seemingly random — perhaps not so random as all that — interventions of the hand or the Indian ink.

Here or there, an almost human figure appears to dissolve in the perceived texture that caused it to rise. Then, two geminated triangles describe a separation's arc of will; they carry the sorrow of a farewell, the leave-taking I hear in the brief seconds of the last movement of J.S. Bach's *Capriccio* [BWV992], "on the departure of a beloved brother"; one dot remains, connecting them indefinitely, or at least so it seems. The *Naked eye* series includes numerous drawings featuring elements drawn from everyday life, but while selecting them the artist

opted to treat those that might be closer to an openly figurative depiction as geometries that interact with one another, scribbling and tracing rough, schematic architectures of walls, doors, igloos — the latter, when considered through another approximative angle, can also be seen as pictures that suggest the stacked stones that compose the traditional *brandas* of Alto Minho, some of which can still be found between Monção and Melgaço: often vaulted structures that offered shelter to shepherds —, or simply depictions of geometric solids.

The whole process of *Naked eye* demanded an exhaustive production of images. [The series consists of 134 pieces, at least 60 of which have been included in the exhibition.] Somehow, we can feel, gliding from one drawing to another, a work that shares features with a demiurgic action. Thus Pedro Calapez's work as a painter, as a craftsman, is driven by a pulsion to give shape, sense and emotional power — in part, to bring order — to the chaotic materials already present in drawing. A demiurgic action, indeed, since it is the first to occur. Its *naked eye* focuses on the similitude between the model and its copy. With its eye fixed on the model, in accordance with Plato's formula, whatever that model may be — a plane in space that intersects another plane or a curtain that opens to reveal a "I want to draw here" —, the image appears to us as more than an immutable shape, since it also seems to bring in itself, during its brief performance, the quality of the essential form [*eidos*] of a drawing that is there, in its quite simple form of existence, in itself and by itself.

Pourquoi avez-vous fait cela?

Parce qu' il m'a dit de le faire.

G.E.M. Anscombe, §15, *L'Intention*, 2001

The drawn black line evolves out of a black rage, a coal block out of which it seeps; however, its interior of dark black reflections conveys a warm, enveloping feeling, as if the displayed drawings taken from the *Rumores [Rumours]*, 2014 [76x56cm, charcoal] and *Pendientes [Hangings]*, 2016 [76x56cm, charcoal] series were asking us whether they were the outcome of a cause or of a reason. And that question should not be asked of any one of us, their viewers, but of their author. Probably, any answer he might give us, no matter how explanatory, would not be far from "Because that was how the drawings told me to make them". Which means that they lose much of their quality as objects when confronted with the "making" Calapez exerts over them, following the lead of his own reason. But "Because that was how the drawings told me", then they are more than objects, since, within their space and time as drawings and within their perceptive range, they carry creative capability, that is to say, one reason or reasons through which causes are formulated. They are a fully realised form of subject — not an object — with which another subject, their maker, struggled while working on them; and as a subject we, their viewers, must accept them.

Why? Each of us may ask. The answer we may find, while considering one of the three “Rumours” or one of the three “Hangings” selected, presumes both the non-visible and the visible in that piece. In these drawings a subject dwells, a subject that was welcomed and treated as a guest by Pedro Calapez. He gave it his hospitality. He took those charcoal blacks, moved them around, guided them, carried them, deepened them even more, darkened them or lent them contrast, softening their tectonic feel, so that the body, which is the whole of the composition, could organise itself as small disruptions of balance and atmospheric ideality.

In *Rumours* and *Hangings*, drawing is a prudent, calculating mirror. Out of black and white, it produces a gradation of chromatic values, which takes the form of a declension of greys. Prior to that *descending* of hues, we must refuse to see the succession of intermediate tones that lead to shadows and light. We must, instead, perform an inverse movement, *ascending to enter* the coal blackness, leading the *vision* and *perceptivity* of the drawing from the vigour of luminosity through light greys to the most intense *shadow*. At that point, we were expecting a uniformity of black, but its sense will allow us to perceive something more than the precise mirroring of our face: a variety of hues and blacks. Then, the image will open itself to the imagination, just like the “make”² in the epigraph, which I used as an hypothetical reply from the subject [drawing] and guest [to be drawn] to Pedro Calapez, causes it to open itself out of the materiality of its charcoal black and attain the Nietzschean “noble simplicity and calm grandeur” of abstraction.

This black matter, which carries in itself the power of a black chamber, takes me back to a fresco by Fra Angelico that I once saw — and never since forgot — at the Museo di San Marco, which occupies the former premises of the painter’s Dominican convent, in Florence. In one of the cells, Fra Angelico painted in black, over which bodies and flames move, one “Last Judgement” [c.1432]. Or how can I forget, in the fleeting, mirroring reflections I find in the tonal precision of *Rumours* or *Hangings*, the silence of the blacks and greys in Vilhelm Hammershoi’s painting and in Dreyer’s films — I also thought of them when I considered the latent, perennial emotion and splendour of his drawings in *behind* and *earth* — or of the black Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden used in the garments of the noble lords of Burgundy, to highlight something more than the features in a face, the red of a turban or the gold in a chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

The charcoal black *hangs* from *rumour* to *rumour*. It is a hunter of images, of a continuous series of images, like the filmic blackness through which Nosferatu manifests himself [Friedrich W. Murnau, *Nosferatu*, 1922] or the black in Malevich’s “Black Square” [1929]. Calapez knew how to set off from the labyrinthine depth of total darkness, like one who meas-

² Translator’s note: the French verb “faire”, like the Portuguese one “fazer”, can mean both “do” and “make”, whereas these actions are conveyed by distinct verbs in English. This has caused the Portuguese text’s connection to the French epigraph to become lost in this English translation.

ures the sides of the “Black Square”, finds out they are not truly identical, and then *makes* the visible magma run through invisible valleys, fixing as drawing the lines of its fugitiveness.

The perverse flower-glance of Odilon Redon

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

[S Painting, Jugendstil, Novelty]

In Pedro Calapez, the drawing is also made out of the drawing’s debris. Its debris and all of its history, both past and present. From Dürer’s “The Fall of Man”, 1504, through Michelangelo Buonarroti’s “Study of a Sitting Male Nude for the Battle of Cascina”, 1504-5, and Claude Lorrain’s “The Grotto of Neptune in Tivoli”, c.1640, to Rembrandt’s “Sleeping Girl”, c.1654. The fragments are almost endless: Guercino, Salvator Rosa, Fuseli, Egon Schiele... Ellsworth Kelly, Palermo. This series of names and images would not end soon, if I were to list them all. The drawing, or, more precisely, the act of making it, is like casting upon the surface of the paper the contents of a bowl filled with burning embers. Whatever must burn, will burn: that is the drawing. Then, there always emerges the Heraclitean and stoical notion of cosmos, as a representation that opposes chaos: that is the drawing. Rather than some nature, at once coarse and noble, in the drawing we explore a *making* that sets down a discursive abstraction, combined with a profound intuitive synthesis. Emotions, harmony, fury, abandonment, serenity, action, love, hate, the plangency of a silence, transgression and measure make up the validity we find in drawing and in how it *offers* itself to our *sight*. It is in some way the *pathos formulae*, one of Aby Warburg’s favourite expressions, also mentioned by Erwin Panofsky [*Meaning In The Visual Arts. The Renaissance: Artist, Scientist, Genius*, 1955]. That expression acts as the proper measure of the drawing, which might be — and only the drawing will know for sure — the secret of its shadow.

Celui qui regarde du dehors à travers une fenêtre ouverte, ne voit jamais autant de choses que celui qui regarde une fenêtre fermée.

Charles Baudelaire, “Les Fenêtres”, *Le Spleen de Paris*, 1869

“Fenêtre fermée”, 2013 [216 × 250cm — set of forty 42 × 30cm plates — digitally printed on acrylic-painted aluminium plate] is the only work by Calapez featured in this exhibition that is not on paper. Unlike the rest of the works, which are displayed in the Carmona e Costa Foundation’s temporary exhibition rooms, this particular piece can be found in the Foundation’s Decorative Arts Space.

I saw this “Closed window” as four columns built with misaligned stone blocks, as if some archaeologist had placed them on top of each other to form an apparently unstable

structure. This was what I perceptively gathered, in representational terms, from the painting the aluminium plates formed. Instead of simply seeing balance, harmony, volumetry, colour and drawing in that painting. Instead of paying attention to the reference in the title. I just looked at the first sentence in Baudelaire's "Les Fenêtres", for it is right at the start of this brief prose poem that we find "he who looks at a closed window". Then I spent two days pleasurably lost in *J [Baudelaire]*, a section of Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* [Spanish translation, 2005]³. I have learned much in that labyrinth, to which I always return, that small encyclopedia of quotes and evocations that find their acme between the late 1800s and the time that begins with World War II. Benjamin transcribes, from chapter six in Baudelaire's *The Salon of 1859*, a passage concerning the work of engraver Charles Meryon [Meryon is an important figure, in France, of the *Jugendstil*, a movement close to Art Nouveau, due to his engravings of Parisian scenes, which treated them first as highly commercial allegories and then as instruments of social dissolution], in which he writes of "majestic accumulations of stone". Sumptuous indeed are the pieces that form "Fenêtre fermée". In their sobriety, tinged by ornamental beauty, they manage to mysteriously — since the window is closed — allow us to *see* a "foggy sky", the "shadows of great parks", the "deep, impetuous desires (...) of the human heart". The piece preserves, in the volumetry of its panels and in its chromatic work, as a kind of phantasmagoria, a *passage* to a Baudelairean "forest of symbols": shutters closed over melancholies and spiritualisation, the secret depositaries of a mnemonic process (more attuned to the piece's author than to its viewer), that superimposes individual life experience onto the actual experience of those *wandering passages* in dreams.

In "Fenêtre fermée", the four columns, which are actually, or so it seems, four jambs, or simply four surfaces that close in upon themselves, for it is at a closed window that Pedro Calapez is asking us to look and see, in the territory of creation, which also comprises the pride of whoever has created, the need to recognise what is inseparable from the existence not only of a window, *qua* "open window", but also, and especially, from that illimitation of the limit that is, in principle, the hypothetical barrier of a "closed window".

What we may see and create imaginatively out of a closed window reminded me of the issue of identity: the same as. The window is the same window. But it is not the same window, depending on its being open or closed. The window would express a different type of relationship. How would the window be if Pedro Calapez painted, on some other four aluminium panels, a "Fenêtre ouverte"? Or if he decided to paint, on top of this same "Fenêtre fermée", a new version, which he would call "Fenêtre ouverte"? Everything would still be a rapport between the painted objects or between the names that stand for them. Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein circumvented the possible truth in this bipolarity by treating the various instances

³ Translator's note: for the purposes of this English translation, Benjamin's quotes were drawn from *The Arcades Project* (transl. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002.

of the identity principle in accordance with the formulation “the morning star is the evening star”. A star that is not a star, but the planet Venus. The window, too, which is always a window, may be a sign of difference and a source of varied information, or represent the empirical discovery of a new form, depending on whether it is open or closed, just as Venus has a quite different quality in how it strikes our senses, depending on its being the morning or evening star. Pedro Calapez has worked on the identity of a painting regarding itself. And he did so with the interventional innovation of one who *makes* an eidetics of the world of life appear by means of distance, out of looking at a closed window. The window’s shutters are closed. The morning star and the evening star become confused with one another. They are one and the same. The gaze *pierces* — which is to say: paints, draws — a subterranean mediation, and then reflects, projects, onto its art a human scale, lines and blotches, colours; thus engendering an intimate world for a joy that suffuses the secretiveness that is *behind* the “Fenêtre fermée” and that, as a consequence, causes that visual wealth to pass into all those who contemplate it and let themselves be taken by its silence, its form, its colour, its volume and its meditated rhythm, the rhythm of a closed window that, who knows, was perhaps painted over an open window, a morning window on an evening one. Thus Calapez chooses to confront us.