

Things Free Of Things (coisa Livre De Coisa)

BY FERNANDA LOPES

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Is there anything vaguer than the word “thing”? Is any term used more frequently in our daily lives? Looking up its meaning in the dictionary is almost the same as refusing to reach a conclusion – the more than 20 attempts by the Houaiss dictionary to define it serve only to confirm what we all know; namely, that this is a word that can fit in any sentence, because it encompasses more than just one meaning. A thing can be anything real or imagined, corporal or incorporeal. It is simultaneously the unknown, like a mystery or an enigma, or something that does not want to be, or cannot be, named. “Thing” is like a mirror word; one that reflects the meanings of the other words in the world. So, is it even possible for us to recognize a body that we do not know, that we are seeing for the first time, not as a reflection of the existence of something that is already out there, but as an existence in and of itself? As a thing unchained from the idea of things?

Coisa livre da coisa [Things Free of Things] is a series of sculptures that takes its name from the poem Origem [Origin] found at the beginning of the book *Lição de Coisas* (1962), by Carlos Drummond de Andrade (1902-1987). Until then, Cretti’s sculptures showed more malleable, organic forms that seemed to fit together more “naturally” – as if they had been made to be together. In *Coisa livre da coisa* [Things Free of Things] – the result of an exploration that we can see signs of in 2007, in works where cylinders appear to rise from practically unworked rock – we have pieces that affirm sculptures as a deliberate act, a construction. There seems to be no space for naturalness here. The artist works on blocks of black and white granite until they are cylinders that are then treated as units he can link together. These forms are then placed together and together they stay, almost as if against their will. Their fittings are made possible through the use of plumbing joints, made of rubber and stainless steel.

These angular works adopt an anthropomorphic school of thought. The body, which was already working its way into Cretti’s production, now appears more definitively in these sculptures, not only in the way they are built (in this case, the artist’s body), but also in how they behave in space. They are like independent bodies, beings that spread out horizontally and vertically. Something for which we still have no name, but whose presence we have already felt. Free of the uncertainty of existence. Free of manifestations or representations, these works exist

as themselves. At the same time, they also establish another relationship with architecture, with the space around them, another theme apparent in Cretti's work. Coming from the world of the drawn, the lines of these sculptures occupy the space, claiming for themselves space considered to be empty. That found between one line and the next. Lines that seem to contain the desire to extend through space, including everything they encompass as part of the work. They are like quasi-shelters.

The two series of drawings that complete the exhibition also seem to deal with the same issues. The smaller ones, which employ black oil paint, also contain a new element: graphite powder. The lines traced on the parchment remind us of architectural spaces where the graphite powder indicates something like a vestige. A vestige not only of the construction process of the drawing itself, but also of something practically from the realms of fantasy. It is like someone or something unknown has been there and left a mark. As for the large drawings, the black volumes produced using raw oil sticks/sticks of crude oil without an intermediary brush construct places that oscillate between landscapes and architecture. Here, the body that appears is that of the viewer, becoming involved through the scale of the piece

Fernanda Lopes
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