

PAULO BRIGHENTI

*Cascata*  
2022  
Concrete, pigment, copper  
58 × 30 × 16cm

*Sopro #2*  
2022  
Encaustic and oil paint on linen  
220 × 350cm  
Cortesy Galeria Belo-Galsterer



Cultura em Lisboa  
**EGEAC** **galerias municipais**

ARCOmadrid  
22–26.02.2023  
booth 9B16

## Paulo Brighenti

The city of Lisbon, through the Galerias Municipais/EGEAC - CML, selected the Portuguese artist Paulo Brighenti to create a project room for the purpose of ARCO Madrid.

The Galerias Municipais/EGEAC are composed of five exhibition spaces dedicated to contemporary art: Galeria Quadrum, Pavilhão Branco, Galeria da Boavista, Galeria Avenida da Índia and Torreão Nascente da Cordoaria.

Over several decades, Paulo Brighenti's work has reflected on and experimented with the different spheres of operativity in painting, and he is currently in the midst of an intensive and challenging production phase.

In this project room for the Galerias Municipais/EGEAC – CML, Brighenti presents a single large-scale painting that seeks to test other procedures and times of action, through broad and free gestures, handling another kind of instrument – his hands and his own body – inscribing on the canvas diverse temperatures, unpredictabilities and concerns, invoking diverse pictorial traditions that emphasise the importance of life and of painting in the contemporary world.

Paulo Brighenti was born in Lisbon in 1968, and lives and works in Lisbon and Torres Vedras. He is the founder and coordinator of RAMA – Art Residency, Maceira, Torres Vedras. He studied Visual Arts at Ar.Co., in Lisbon. In 1996, he was one of the artists selected for the exhibition '7 artists in the 10th month' and, in 2002, he was awarded the Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva Foundation's Drawing Prize. He has exhibited regularly, in both solo and group shows, since the mid-1990s, in various galleries and institutions. His works are part of collections such as those of the Serralves Museum, Porto; MAAT, Lisbon; CAM/ Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,

Lisbon; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Art Library, Lisbon; Banco de España, Madrid; Sovereign Art Foundation, London; CGAC, Santiago de Compostela; António Cachola Collection / MACE, Elvas; Carmona e Costa Foundation, Lisbon; PLMJ Collection, Lisbon; Ilídio Pinho Foundation, Porto; Arpad Szenes – Vieira da Silva Foundation, Lisbon; Lisbon City Council Collection; Luso-American Development Foundation, Lisbon; Norlinda and José Lima Collection, São João da Madeira; Fernando Figueiredo Ribeiro Collection, Abrantes; Coleção de Arte Contemporânea do Estado [State Contemporary Art Collection, Portugal], among others.



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# Sopro [Blow]

Ana Anacleto

Since the dawn of time, the human perceptive experience has been associated with the consumption of art. Within this perceptive experience, there are inescapably (and always were) many factors and dimensions involved. We know, however, that over the last two centuries this experience has undergone radical transformations that require from the viewer a mental and physical availability and, above all, a greater involvement in terms of the increasing demand on all the senses in these perceptive processes. If we add to this the needs of new perceptive dimensions arising from the use of new media and augmented reality devices, we can conclude that we are, in this regard, living in the most over-stimulated and over-stimulating (although not necessarily the most enriching) historical age.

The question inevitably arises: why persist with painting? Why continue an ancestral practice with an irrefutable tradition, with its own codes and whose demise has been repeatedly announced since the middle of the 20th century? Is painting a form of resistance?

With a practice based largely in the disciplinary areas of painting and drawing, Paulo Brighenti has developed interesting research into images and perceptive and cognitive processes involved in reading them. By using a particular formal lexicon that is both strict and cross-referential, he has been able to research the possibilities for the construction of meaning based on the conviction that each image produced stems from a specific perceptive desire, for the production of a certain effect-experience and that there is no visuality (or visual perception) without imagination.

Making use of the traditional typologies of painting—still life, portrait and landscape—and extending the practice of painting to the various domains of physical reality (frequently using all three aspects or taking the physical and architectural space as a structural element for their production), he constructs suspended visual worlds that seem to want to freeze time or retrieve from it a certain instant (by definition irretrievable).

We know, then, that time is an entity that can only be measured in terms of the direct effect it produces, at each moment, on the physical elements (animate or inanimate). A still life, a portrait or a landscape (as models of representation) are, therefore, always attempts to imprison time and, for that same reason, always failed gestures in that they do not allow for the recording of the various small nuggets of unrecognisable (unrepresentable) time of which a specific time flow is composed. The assumption of that failure, of that impossibility, and the continual return to the (im)possibility of its success feed painting and justify its resistance.

That is why we find it particularly interesting—intriguing even—to see how the artist persists in a constant battle with the pictorial matter—the use of time-consuming traditional procedures such as oil or encaustic, and the quest for effects that come close to suppressing the representation, such as glazing, rubbing out, erasure or omission. We are presented with an image at the boundary of visibility. At the boundary of its condition of representation.

His pictorial production is also often the result of a revision of earlier paintings (which themselves are the result of the observation of certain images, phenomena, objects or imagined views), making possible the construction of a unique visual world that establishes a kind of dialogic system within itself. Paintings from different times coexist, enter into dialogue, revisit and rethink one another.

In the context of the project now on display at ARCO 2023, entitled *Sopro*, we are indeed presented with a proposal for the construction of discourse (or dialogue) based on the relationship between just two elements: the large-scale painting *Sopro #2 [Blow #2]* and the small wall sculpture *Cascata [Waterfall]*, both dated 2022.

In attempting to construct an exercise of speculative thought around this potential for dialogue, we propose to call on a concept that was briefly mentioned above: the landscape (and the various ways in which it unfolds).

Usually, when we refer to the term 'landscape,' we tend to mean a specific part of the real world (which is exterior to us), in other words, we are talking about a certain plane of vision directed at the field of the visible (at what is outside us and able to be seen). This vulgarisation (or normalisation) tends to forget that the term 'landscape' stems from a mental concept, a systematised way of ordering the visible based on defining and structuring principles that allow us to establish a certain relationship with the visual field through its transformation into an image. A 'landscape' is always an image stemming from a composite visual experience and is therefore always a construction. This construction is the result of a certain order or hierarchy based on a compositional equilibrium that is inferred from a pre-idea or ordering of the visual world, and which allows us to place each of its various elements in its rightful place: sky at the top, the ground below, vegetation in the surrounding area and with the correct dimensions for us to be able to deduce distances and positions. And all of this within a specific interval of time.

Paulo Brighenti appears to be proposing precisely that we should understand not just the two elements created by him on display in the room (and the result of their ambiguous and tense relationship) but also the whole empty space surrounding them, as a possibility of extension of that mental construction that is the 'landscape,' beyond the edges of the representation. This invitation allows us to involve all our perceptive dimensions and, at times, to pause the accelerated flow of our private (hegemonic) time by encountering the suspended instant of *Sopro [Blow]*.