

Pedro Cabrita Reis

(Lisbon, 1956)

Pedro Cabrita Reis' works go beyond the traditional categories and classification of art. The figurative elements present in his early acrylic paintings of the 1980s gradually disappear, preserving the gestural and expressive charge of that initial period. In the 1990s the artist began painting only on wood supports, not traditional panels, but actual doors. The inclusion of architectural objects makes the pictorial surface increasingly plastic and sculptural: casings, doors, and windows begin to constitute the works' frames and spatial boundaries.

Cabrita Reis' art is characterized by the assemblage of building materials and recycled objects. The resulting abstract compositions expand into the space with the energy of archetypal forms, heightened by the use of raw materials that seem unfinished. His sculptural work is profoundly connected to aspects of architecture, since the act of construction constitutes an activity that has been present since the origins of humanity and is basic to every culture and society. "But the city does not tell of its past, it contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the street corners, in the grids of windows, in the flow of the staircases, in the antennae of the lightning rods, in the flagpoles, every segment furrowed in turn with scratches, serrations, notches, slices." (Calvino, I., *Invisible Cities*, Turin: Einaudi, 1974). The memory of a region's geography, its landscape and history, emerge in the artist's constructions of white and monochrome volumes, immersed in a dimension that represents a multiplication and stratification of time. According to Cabrita, the architectural exercise is fundamental for understanding the world, since it describes the way that men take possession of, relate to, and redefine the region that surrounds them, occupying and constructing it. *Blind Cities #4*, acquired for the CRT Collection, is emblematic of the artist's poetics. The plywood blocks, aluminum windows, and pieces of glass painted in opaque white paint with contrasting and irregular black lines, echo houses and cities shorn of their functionality and which are meant to evoke private and collective memories; they are mysterious monuments that express a sense of solitude and melancholy. The viewer must approach the works without the expectation of a narrative or an explanation, but with a contemplative and reflexive stance, for the art expresses only itself, in the same way that Calvino's cities relate their own stories. (EV)