

An atmosphere common to collectively developed image panels—such as street walls, vernacular houses and cheap toilets—permeates the work of Paulo Nimer Pjota. Conducting a study of popular iconography that seems to be operated by multiple hands, the artist produces in the tension between randomness and a meticulous composition practice: a balance of intuition and precision. The results are vibrant scenarios made out of a painting method that emulates a multi-layered collage.

Preferring to work with large surfaces, Pjota uses canvas, sacks and metal plates—mostly found in junkyards—as supports. His pieces can expand to huge dimensions, as with the immense panel he did for the 12th Lyon Biennale, *Entre-temps... brusquement, et ensuite* (Meanwhile... Suddenly, And Then) (2013), which covered the external facade of La Sucrière. On these spaces, Pjota brings together visual narratives combining art history with the complexity of contemporary social imagery. His works highlight the clichés of figurative and landscape painting and mix them with the banal elements, symbols and logotypes of our everyday lives: stickers juxtaposed with classical still-lives, ancient Greek art with superheroes, archeological artifacts with soda cans, machine guns with medical illustration, and so on. Among these fragments of perfectly illustrated objects, there are stains, graffiti tags, scribbles and bad handwriting.

From this turbulent mass, a storytelling process rises. Pregnant with metaphors, analogies and suggestions, it absorbs and recasts the mundane as a constellation of figures hanging in the void. But if, at a superficial level, there is some disorientation, each gesture indicates a precise allegory and suggests new connections, reconfiguring our

Paulo Nimer Pjota (Brazilian, b. 1988) is an artist who lives and works in São Paulo. He is represented by Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo.

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A solo exhibition by Paulo Nimer Pjota will open at Mendes Wood DM in February. His work is currently on view in the group exhibition "The World is Made of Stories" at Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, through 8 May.

Between philosophy and crime part.1, detail, 2015
Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo

sensibilities and old tenets. Rather than linear and clear, it contains chaotic situations; rather than being tied to one fluid understanding, it circulates countless possibilities of interpretation. Among the main interests of Pjota's body of work is the conflict inherent to the peripheral areas of any urban context, as well as the shared perceptions of a globalized world. Attracted by the historical processes involving these subjects, he goes deep into the language of ghettos and mass culture, coming out with an extensive repertory that he uses to underline sensations of violence and turmoil. Above all, however, his work seems to deal with these ordinary place's own cultural formation and public catharses, thoroughly and without value judgment. In this point, if high and low culture, art and vulgar, and canons and slangs all go side by side, there is no nuclear importance in the narrative flow—only diverse voices speaking out loud in a boisterous way.

Aware of the mechanisms and contradictions of the so-called Digital Age, wherein uncountable images are generated every second while perpetuating social inequalities, Pjota objects not only to the way we formulate and propagate information, but also to the attention and affection we give it. In his cosmology of fictions, the structural relation between parts and the whole is no longer founded in a division between classes. As his global tales are flooded by insignificant phenomena and the feelings of those marginalized by the traditional representative fundamentals, new possibilities of social interactions appear. As seen in exhibitions in most continents, his works deal with everyday universal codes. Giving continuity to this peculiar exercise, his upcoming projects for 2016 include a solo show in São Paulo and exhibitions in the Netherlands, London and Miami. ☺

VIBRANT VISUAL NARRATIVES MIX HIGH AND LOW, ART AND VULGAR, CANONS AND SLANGS