**BENNU**

The series of paintings by Felipe Góes for the Bennu exhibition presents imaginary landscapes that lead the viewer to wonder if these places exist or even if they have ever been to any of them.

This fact does not happen by chance. Anyone browsing the internet or social media is bombarded by captured scenes by cameras, cell phones, security cameras, satellites (among other devices), imprinted on our minds and mingled with those moments we witnessed over the lives.

The eagerness to capture images of everything we see and share immediately on social media (with whom we don´t really know), reduces the possibility of experiencing a moment, a landscape, an emotion. We lack the time to really appreciate what we are seeing. Matisse made a statement to Father Couturier in 1950, which to me translates this feeling: "*When I made my trip to Oceania, I had bought an extremely advanced camera. But when I saw all that beauty, I said to myself: I am not going to reduce all this beauty to this small image. It would not be worth it. I'd rather keep it to myself. Because, after a few years, I would only have it, everything would be replaced, limited to this little document." [[1]](#footnote-1)*

Felipe Góes, fortunately, goes against what happens today. Instead of using captured images by cameras or available on the internet, he, like Matisse, unveils those that have been kept in his memory throughout his life. As many as those he kept when he spent two months analysing mountains and stones during his artistic residency in Phoenix, USA, during his artistic residence in Itaparica-BA, during his trip to Norway or to the coast of São Paulo.

These landscapes arise from overlapping brushstrokes that embody the painting, forming mountains, lakes and trees where the presence of the human being is almost non-existent. There is no a pre-existing project or sketching, to let alone a printed image that serves as a starting point. Only the canvas size, the paints, the brush and the memory. The gestures and the colours go, little by little, defining the forms.

Although young, Góes has a wide production. He has held several exhibitions over the past seven years, having the landscape as the main theme of his work and always leading the viewer to delve into the experience of "observing". For the project *“Landscape: Time in Suspension”*, held at Praia do Forte, in Natal, in 2013, for example, Felipe installed three monochrome and transparent cubes, in which the viewer positioned himself to see the landscape that was coloured red, purple or orange. In this way the artist invited passersby - mostly locals - to look at the landscape in a different way, but above all, it led those who came into the work to sit down and truly **look** at it.

The series of paintings made in the same year of theexhibition *“The Appearance of Memory”*, presented a painter involved with gesture and colour. In the pieces, the artist made use of overlapping layers of tenuous colours such as greens, greys and blues, with small details in orange and violet that gently vibrated on the canvases, making evident his contact with the paintings of Paulo Pasta.

This process continued in the following years where other colours were being incorporated in his works, like the strong reddish and pink, his painting takes shape and it becomes clear to the viewer that the landscape is a "*situation in which to paint." [[2]](#footnote-2)* What matters is not necessarily the image, the subject or the place where this landscape happens, but what happens in the painting itself. The painter reveals himself, and we understand his admiration for painters such as Cézanne and Matisse and their interest in the construction of the colour.

A restless painter, Felipe produced a new series for the *Bennu* exhibition, here presented, where we see works done between 2017 and 2018. In those works, the gesture and colour explode, and the viewer is even more attracted by the landscapes of metaphysical and apocalyptic environment. Intense colours and large overlapping gestures on the canvas give way to dream scenes that surprise us as we approach or depart from the paintings. At the same time, landscapes in dark, almost black tones, provoke a climate of tension, expectation.

The title of the exhibition reflects this climate and appeared when the works were already done. Recently, Felipe found the existence of an Apollo asteroid named *101955 Bennu*, discovered by LINEAR, in 1999. *Bennu* has the probability to reach the Earth from 2135, causing several large impacts.

When we visit the exhibition and we come across landscapes where mountains of intense yellows, purples and roses, purple trees, skies of an explosive pink and volcanoes in full eruption are presented, we have the feeling of being on another planet or another dimension and we ask: after all, do Felipe's paintings transport us to the landscapes he saw in Norway [[3]](#footnote-3) or to a remote beach on the north coast of São Paulo?, in the countryside of Brazil or in an arid region of the United States? In a spaceship or in a pool? In fact, they lead us to all these places and many others. But besides places they give us the sensations that the artist had to be in these places or to imagine them.

It is impossible to experience a landscape without being present, to have time to feel the smell, sounds, temperature, admire the shapes and volumes. With no anxiety to take a selfie and tell everyone that we were there. In the same way, it is impossible to appreciate a painting in a hurry. That is why it is important to see Felipe's work calmly, analysing every detail, discovering the great variety of tones and colours that appear when we approach the canvases and the immense landscapes that explode when we move back. It´s important to **look** at every painting.

Text by Rejane Cintrão

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Bennu. Solo exhibition held at Galeria Virgílio, São Paulo, SP.

1. Fourcade, Dominique (org). Henri Matisse: Writings and reflections on art. CosacNaify, 2007, São Paulo. p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. "*The fact that the landscape is a situation in which to paint has much to do with aspects that I admire in the production of Cézanne and Giacometti, one in the landscape and the other in the human figure. Both seemed obsessed with the idea of representation and, at the same time, recognized the immense difficulty of representing something. For example: appearance of a landscape being painted by the painter, the appearance of the psychological distance between two people, even when they are facing each other. Matisse is a good example too,*", said Felipe Góes in an interview at his studio. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Which remind us of the somber mood of the paintings of the Norwegian artist Harald Sohlberg (Oslo 1869 – 1935). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)