

In the Body and in the Landscape, What Remains Is Dust (“No corpo e na paisagem, o que resta é o pó”) — Henrique Detomi

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The landscape does not begin where the skin ends. It begins before that: in the breath that meets the damp air of the grotto, in the feet that feel the texture of the earth, in the eyes that burn under the sun's blinding light. Henrique Detomi works as one who listens to the landscape with his whole body, aware that it is not simply an object separate from us, but a vastness borne in the flesh and merging with the vanishing point.

Born in Minas Gerais, Detomi's practice is shaped by an ambivalent experience in which the landscape presents itself as beautiful, even as the violent scars left by mining remain impossible to ignore. Both coexist within the same horizon. The mountains that trace the outline of the sky are the same ones that pour away in trucks, transformed into dust, iron, gold and profit. Everything the artist experiences becomes material for further developments in his practice, giving rise to dialectics more complex than a purely pessimistic view of his birthplace. Throughout his artistic trajectory, his research has explored aspects of the human relationship with the landscape, moving away from a hegemonic perspective and opening onto more compelling forms of reflection.

In the series *Minutos antes do fim* (“Minutes Before the End”), Detomi constructs the landscape through oil painting, building it up from thick layers of paint and pushing

both texture and the limits of the representational surface toward their fullest poetic possibilities. Yet we are invariably confronted with the presence of a void. By placing masks over the painting support and then removing layers of paint, the artist gives physical presence to an organic emptiness.

These aspects become more evident in the series *Extravio ou do Ouro ao Pó* ("Loss, or From Gold to Dust"), in which mining assumes an even more prominent role. The artist continues to develop his technique while becoming more incisive in his treatment of the support itself. Detomi chooses materials such as iron and stone as surfaces for painting. The empty spaces expand, while the more restrained brushstrokes suggest a landscape imbued with a strange presence, poised at the threshold of abstraction.

The progressive abandonment of naturalistic representations of the landscape gains force throughout the artist's research, to the point that his images move increasingly further away from the conventions of traditional landscape painting. Even so, they help us understand that space and landscape cannot be conceived as external to or separate from human existence, and that they may, in fact, reside within us.

These concerns become even more recurrent with the series *Vertigem* ("Vertigo"), ultimately culminating in *Imerso até os olhos, escuto o silêncio da terra* ("Immersed up to My Eyes, I Listen to the Silence of the Earth"). In *Vertigem*, Detomi moves closer to the language of drawing, producing monochromatic images primarily with oil stick. A hole, ordinarily formed through the removal of earth from the ground, is constructed here through the opposite process: an excess of black oil paint. The large scale of the surface allows the artist to explore the gestures of his own body. The landscape gradually acquires a human expressiveness, particularly when we consider the symbolic associations of the hole, which may evoke both abyssal depths and the mind itself.

In the series *Imerso até os olhos, escuto o silêncio da terra*, Henrique returns to painting, although the images he produces are entirely distinct from those of his previous lines of research. Revisiting the symbolic hole found in his drawings, Detomi associates this element with representations of grottoes and caves. The hole, however, is formed by an excessive layer of black paint that protrudes from the painted surface. This produces an illusion and a disorientation of perspective, as the deepest or most distant part of the image appears to move toward us, projecting itself through the materiality of the paint. The resulting disorientation creates a complex image that allows us to immerse ourselves in the hole while simultaneously inviting us to touch it. Once again, the landscape of the cave dissolves the idea of space as something to be occupied by the human body and assumes an almost mirror-like dimension. It allows us to enter the hole, and this movement takes on a mirrored symbolism: we enter into ourselves.

In the Body and in the Landscape, What Remains Is Dust prompts us to consider how everything is permeable and overflowing. Dust, that minute fragment, is everywhere: it contaminates the pores of the world, clouds our vision and fragments the landscape to such an extent that the separation between the human and the landscape becomes not only difficult, but ultimately impossible. These small fragments remind us that we are made of the same matter, broaden our horizon and place us within a world in which we are immersed and of which we are an inseparable part.