

For the sixteenth edition of the ongoing exhibition programme dedicated to Nature, Abreu Advogados, in partnership with Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa, presents a series of works by the artist João Catarino.

## João Catarino

In his most recent work, João Catarino presents drawings of a familiar scenery, and one that can be recognized as common in visual art: a forest. We can see different perspectives and elements of the forest environment, captured from varying points of view, some representing the details or a multitude of trees, while others indicating the ground and the shadowy paths among the dense vegetation. Each work comes in its own colour palette, from fresh greens, to warm scarlet shades, or muted earth tones, hinting at the changing atmospheres and the forest as a living system. The drawings' varying tonalities and vibrancy suggest the subtle transformations that occur within a space over time.

However, these images go beyond a simple depiction of natural landscapes. Catarino's works were produced in direct and extended contact with nature. Each drawing required hours and full days spent in a given spot, to capture the dynamic interplay of environmental and subjective elements, translated by the embodied gesture of a hand moving across the paper surface. The works reveal a practice of absorbed perceptual attention and artist's almost meditative engagement with the place, which serves not just as a visual motif, but as an immersive sensory experience that incorporates exposure to light, movement, sounds, the temperature and the smell of the air, the particular weather conditions, a specific season; and maybe even solitude, or tranquillity, or commotion of that certain day.

As such, the drawings convey a broader sense of presence. Catarino's process, which reflects his affinity with the technique of observational drawing, brings a feeling of immediacy to the work, with each piece showing the imprint of the time and the specific circumstances in which it was created. These encompass not only the spatial and temporal characteristics of that moment, which are then transcribed into a visual inscription of the place, but also – and perhaps most importantly – artist's own inscription in it. Our presence and corporeal experience, which is always grounded in the activation of our multiple senses, will ultimately define what the place is, that is, what it means, or what it represents.

**Maša Tomšič**

### BIO

João Catarino (b. 1965, Lisbon) is a visual artist, illustrator, and drawing professor whose work focuses on observational drawing in both natural and urban settings. Since 1995, he has been teaching drawing at Ar.Co and has served as a guest professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon (FBAUL), as well as in Illustration for Design at ESAD-CR. He has led workshops for the Gulbenkian Foundation's CITEN illustration courses and has participated as a trainer in several international Urban Sketchers symposia. Catarino's illustration work is often centred around travel sketchbooks, and he regularly joins national and international nature drawing expeditions, publishing his work with the "Grupo do Risco." His work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions. He frequently collaborates with newspapers and magazines and has contributed to several national and international books on travel journals and sketching. He is the author of the book EN2 and the co-author of the book Tanto Mar. Recently, he authored one of the four Cadernos de Viagem, published in the context of the 200th anniversary of Vista Alegre.