

Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel

Galpão

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## Gabriel Lima

### Proximate drivers

August 19 – September 23, 2017

Simultaneously engaging with and resisting the constraints of lived experience, Gabriel Lima employs his paints in the pursuit of a representation of consciousness. *Proximate drivers* is his second exhibition at Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel | Galpão and features eleven recent paintings in oil. Populated with images ranging from distinct people and animals, to surrealistic landscapes and pure abstractions, these ethereal paintings embody Lima's dynamic and exploratory approach to his practice.

The cohesive body of works included here defy a singular reading. Through his fractured manner of depiction, Lima encourages various visual and conceptual reconstructions that supersede existing paradigms, while questioning the relevance of painting within and beyond the confines of the exhibition space. Inspired in part by his interest in the socio-geographical complexities of Brazil—such as massive urbanization in conjunction with corporate domination of rural lands—Lima continues the long-standing tradition in painting of analyzing man's relationship to nature.

The women depicted in Lima's portraits have dubious expressions, rendered in such a way as to portray essential and universal vulnerabilities and strengths and conveying a shared sense of resolve. What are they looking at? Are they protecting themselves, searching for something, performing some sort of labor? Or perhaps they are simply observing. Or waiting. Lima's emphasis on their interior states suggests both a sense of displacement as well as a transcendent presence.

Perhaps their sense of displacement is due to the fact that the accompanying landscapes—through which one imagines these figures must negotiate their way forward—offer little salvation. Rather than portray an inhabitable space, these paintings collapse time with their depictions of environments that for a brief moment may read as halcyon pre-Anthropocene settings, before revealing themselves as post-industrial, or other-worldly, wastelands. In several of these landscapes a sun in the distance appears at first to be setting, though there is no horizon line beyond which it can fall. The expansive depth Lima creates throughout these canvases is abruptly flattened by the inclusion of a black ghost-like form that appears throughout the works on view. Heavy in tone, but light in form, the self-contradictory nature of this motif at once breaks down and expands the canvas.

In one of the biggest works in the show, a capybara is depicted over an abstract composition. Despite their natural habitat of savannas and forests, capybaras have adapted to live on the shores of São Paulo's highly polluted rivers. Rather than dictating how viewers understand the presence of this animal—as symbolic of environmental destruction or unexpected survival—the possibilities for interpretation are left open. This interstitial space within which one finds oneself while examining Lima's paintings is the essence of his practice.

As John Berger writes in the opening passage of *Ways of Seeing*: "It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled." To accept Berger's statement is to accept the potential that lies within such an indefinable space. Lima is doing just that—pushing painting beyond matters of looking and seeing in order to pose questions of being.

Gabriel Lima was born in São Paulo in 1984. He lives and works in New York. He graduated in Fine Arts from Cooper Union (New York, 2007–2010) and has a Master's degree in Painting from Royal College of Arts (London, 2011–2013). His recent solo exhibitions include: *life, vest; coffee, tray*, Kai Matsumiya (New York, 2016); *Hanoi, Hanoi*, Galeria Múrias Centeno (Lisbon, 2015); *Autêntico*, Union Pacific (London, 2015); *Us And Them Forever Bound Up In Here And Now*, Galpão Fortes Vilaça (São Paulo, 2014); *world interior*, Galeria Múrias Centeno (Porto, 2014). His participations in group shows have most notably included: *The Third Hand*, Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel | Galeria (São Paulo, 2017); *Nimm's Mal Easy*, Ausstellungsraum Klingental (Basel, 2015); *Jac Leirner*, Albert Baronian Project Space (Brussels, 2015); *Ex Materia*, Berthold Pott (Cologne, 2015).

#### **Exhibition details**

**Exhibition:** Gabriel Lima | *Proximate drivers*

**Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel | Galpão:** Rua James Holland 71 | Barra Funda | 01138-000 São Paulo, Brasil | T +55 11 3392 3942

**Opening:** Saturday, August 19, 2 pm – 5 pm

**Exhibition period:** August 19 – September 23, 2017

**Hours:** Tuesday – Friday: 10 am – 7 pm | Saturdays: 10 am – 6 pm

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