

PEDRO CABRAL

photographer

Article by [Ricardo Costa](#)

He is born in Mozambique, AD 1955, an ex-Portuguese African colony. Since then he lives in Portugal, establishing residency in Peniche, a fishermen town on the western central shoreline of the country, where he makes a living teaching sports. He takes photos since the Carnation Revolution, which put an end to Oliveira Salazar's dictatorial regime and to colonial wars.



He records effects of Time with an embracing, candid and clear look. He creates depurated images beholding environment and placing what he sees much beyond the moment when such things are seen, as though they were seen for the first and last time.

Having seen all he saw in a dramatic period of the history of his country, he never invokes it. Feeling the pain caused by all inflictions with infant

sensibility, he just lets us see the wounds open by the erosion of time on things capable to seduce him.

Another illustrated teacher, called André Bazin, someone who loved good movies, who believed non illustrated people would emancipate much easier if induced to appreciate objects of good quality, stated that in the source of figurative arts there is a «a mummy complex». He said that the ancient Egyptian religion, reacting against death, saw human survival as dependent of body continuity, since death is nothing other than a victory over time.

Understanding the same, hurt by the devastation that time causes on living things, Pedro Cabral starts taking them in pictures, obsessively, so that they survive to the unavoidable death awaiting them. He does that gingerly, as we want the few traces they keep alive not to be touched. He makes photos of wooden hulls since they are born until they die, the hulls of the fishing boats he sees steering west and eastward every day, the injuries they bear due to friction and shock, to the action of waves and winds. He focuses on their scars, schedules those seeming to have a meaning: fissures open on matter, cracked



paint, colored stains, dashes aligned in harmony or discordance.

He frames and takes the photos creating abstract pictures you know are figurative only due to the matter which composes them, which displays their form and makes them live: the corrupted boards of a hull. Like in non figurative painting, there emerges the mystery haunting them: the vertigo, the astonishment they provoke, the splendor inhabiting them, the charm they emanate from inside.



Abstract painting is a construction. Vasily Kandinsky (doctor of law and economics from the university of Moscow) breaks routines and starts constructing color stains that represent no figures but intense «vibrations of soul», «luminous, anti-material dream visions». Kandinsky often uses the red color, which strongly strikes the observers' eyes, or blue, which quails (*Lucy Flint, Kandinsky biography, Guggenheim collections*).



New York based urban artist José Parlá, who paints in his house studio and works outside throughout city surfaces, makes vibrant works «that explore the



multi-layered histories of cities and urban environments» (exhibition “*Broken Language*”, February 8 to March 28, 2013, *Haunch of Venison, London*).



Knowing for sure about Kandinsky's work, Cabral creates oneiric visions with matter. Probably nothing knowing about Parlá's, he also creates stories using «layers of ephemera and found objects combined with calligraphic abstraction», objects originated



by the sea, in both natural and urban contexts, intimately dependent of its influence. They both use the same primary colors and identical geometric figures, identical entangled lines. Coincidences like these surprise you in the three cases and that must have a meaning. And such meaning is still more intriguing since Cabral does not make paintings but photographs.

Abstraction in Pedro Cabral's photography is a deconstruction caused by an effect of degradation and that can be seen both in hull and rock pictures. In first case a drama is highlighted, in which the human being is implicated. In second case, something similar takes place, but there Man is absent: this is the case in which erosive forces of Nature slowly sculpt up forms on stone along millennia. In both cases, the photographer's eyes, interpreting such a deadly degradation, like the hands of God, turn it in a living thing.



The figurative shapes emerging from the pictures he takes reveal the same intention. It is present on the painted icons which candidly he extracts from wood, iron, cement or from the bows of fishing boats, the star, the cross, the carnation or, on the huge murals of the fishing harbor, painted on the eastern jetty walls, showing anguished human faces. Like certain great artists who express themselves by means of



depurated composition and fine sensibility, with all they contain of simplicity and spontaneity, .Pedro Cabral is a life lover.

This form of love is symbolically revealed by an image of seagulls amusing themselves, by the pure joy of life, hovering open wings in the wind which blows across a stony gorge close to the Papoa half-island, in Peniche.



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See photos: http://rcfilmes.com/pedrocabral_casco_1.htm