

"How to Mint Your Own Coins?"

The question that names this exhibition of Ana Cople's recent works reverberates and expands. Her inquiry into the image, into its oracular, symbolic, and numerical values, runs through the graphic codes and processes explored in the works on view. In the field of contemporary printmaking where Ana works, each of her images raises questions by summoning figures and phantoms of commodities, skulls, caravels, candelabra, plants, and historical characters, among other signs drawn from coins and emblems, old oracle cards, travel accounts, and allegorical *Vanitas* paintings. To this visual repertoire are joined the ideas of the multiple, of the circulation of copies, and of the matrix itself, which widen her field of poetic and political questioning. It should be stressed, however, that only her gesture can bring us into contact with the innermost part of images. "The satisfying process of carving"¹ is what turns this repertoire of appropriated images into matter for the multiplication of her attack.

The curious coincidence between the fortune of a magic card, the labor of printmaking, and the making of coins lights the artist's way toward an inquiry into the value of labor. Among the many references that feed her imagination, one oracle card stands out. In divination, the Eight of Coins shows an artisan at work, furrowing the disc of a coin with a chisel. Yet even once interpreted, oracular images remain irreducible to a single meaning, ceaselessly metamorphosing, or veiling what was always there. While the card's reading suggests stability and success earned through hard, skillful work, the enigma

¹ The artist's words.

surrounding its arcanum evokes instability and risk. For the uninitiated, divining is a complex and alluring operation, suggesting that what is visible and immediately recognizable may reverse into something that takes on invisible meaning. Reversibility, in turn, also marks the enigma of printmaking. Another inescapable aspect of oracle cards, as of the old illustrations in travel accounts from the Age of Discovery, is the presence of errors. It is not uncommon to find discrepancies such as eyeless angels or figures with severed limbs, among other aberrations. Symptomatically, signs that are not what they seem awaken our gaze to the value of their traces. And so, however strange, this floating information touches us, like the divining of the future, revealing emblems of value and the discrepancies in the figures of our social and economic history.

Floating information floods the work *Colonial Cycle 1: Brazilwood*. The unpredictable effect of this wheatpaste panel, made by the artist in 2024, wavers between the noisy cacophony of its serpentine, multiplied lines and the figures of wildcard matrices, which sum up in generic form contours that could fit any number of situations and scenes. Unlike the work of reproducing a visible image, this excess of information reverberates as a capture and occupation of the visible. In recycling generic historical figures, Ana's wheatpastes summon the parasitic clichés that inhabit our social imaginary. Carried along by their contours, our eyes glide between yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Following their lines, we make out an almost imperial character, condensed into baroque curves of suggestively sagging jowls, in the silhouette of a faceless figure framed by little circular waves that disguise

its lack of connection to the body. With irony and rawness, Ana's prints lend their electrifying energy to the historical and social processes they portray.

In light of these works' dialogue with the past, the rawness of the anonymous, immemorial illustrations that irrigate her imagination seems less accidental than intentional and piercing. In turn, the abrupt cuts of the satisfying process of carving, present in Ana's wheatpastes, confirm a desire to see and to imagine the fold of time in the space between what we do not see, what we have ceased to see, and what we have yet to see. In the very time of the now, as our gaze blurs, something of an indecipherable nature, for the artist, endures.

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