

MARTIM BRION: *Rubicon*, 2017

The site-specific sculpture *Rubicon* was created by Martim Brion for his exhibition *Vanishing Points* at the Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência in Lisbon 2017.

Located in the atrium of the museum, the large sculpture directly references the space. The height of the atrium encompasses several floors in its centre. Beyond the centre, marked by columns, the ground floor connects openly to surrounding walkways and adjacent spaces. This architecture creates interconnected and seemingly stacked spaces of varying shapes and sizes. It is a generous and impactful, yet clear and functional architecture, which Martim Brion thoughtfully mirrors in his work.

Rubicon is an inversion of the empty space, created by reflecting the spatial limitations around it and feeding them loosely back into its shape. Three cube-like blocks, of varying shapes and sizes just like the space itself, the smaller two of them stacked, sit in the atrium communicating with one another, as well as with the space and with the museum visitors: Their harmonic colour accord is a dialogue of very distinct tones, their shapes are a materialised answer to the space, and their constellation interacts with the people entering the atrium and moving around between them.

The work conjures up the concept of post-painterly abstraction, in which formal characteristics of painting – colours, shapes, lines and their relations – are realised three-dimensionally in sculpture. As an objective and abstracting analysis of the architecture, *Rubicon* is a counter-weight to the open space, filling a good part of it without obstructing or overriding it, flexibly underlining the spatial structure. Associations of minimalism shine through in the rhythmic and in the repetitive.

Rubicon achieves a conceptual reconciliation of antagonisms. Despite its strong presence and rigorous clarity, it is a playful and supple reply to the statement of the architecture and the space it surrounds. In a thoroughly straightforward manner, the specific spatial conditions are enhanced and artistically commented on. The sculpture is the manifested essence of the space.