

ponto de convergência

marcelo silveira

galeria

nara roesler

Opening

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

7 - 10pm

Exhibition

15 June - 27 August, 2016

Mon - Fri > 10 - 7pm | Sat > 11 - 3pm

Galeria Nara Roesler | São Paulo
Avenida Europa 655, São Paulo, SP
+55 11 3063 2344 | nararoesler.com.br

Museu da Imagem e do Som

Censor, Opening

Saturday, 18 June, 2016

12 - 7pm

Exhibition

19 June > 31 July, 2016

Tues - Fri > 12 - 9pm | Sun > 11 - 8pm

Museu da Imagem e do Som
Av Europa 158, São Paulo, SP
+ 55 11 2117 4777 | mis-sp.org.br

Marcelo Silveira: ponto de convergencia

Michael Asbury

It is a particularity of the Portuguese language that, at least in its common usage, the word universe denotes both a totality and a subjective way of viewing the world. These two, somewhat contradictory denominations exist in a kind of syncretic relation. Of course, this 'subjective universe' does not correspond to an absolute totality. How could it? Instead, it is contained within it, infinite and partial at one and the same time. One can understand the relationship between these two definitions by means of analogy. They can be compared to the distinct forms of infinity, one that is expansive the other that is contained within a given measurement, a measurement that is then infinitely subdivided. Jorge Luis Borges plays with this concept in a short story entitled 'The Book of Sand': a book whose pages are infinite subdivisions of its finite volume and as such its contents are never ending, making it virtually impossible to return to the same page once the book has been closed.

There is a little of Borges' tale, in *Armazém de Tudo* (Warehouse of Everything), the book on Marcelo Silveira's work, not only for its title but due to the invocation of the mechanism of memory at play in both the artist's work and in the writer's fable. Whether it stemmed from the artist's own volition, the editor, or a graphic designer's caprice, the fact that 'Armazém de Tudo' is unpaginated seems all the more appropriate. A book, by its very own nature, is defined by a linear progression, one that is traced by its page numbers. Having no pagination one may go forward or backward, one may skip and retrace without breaking any obvious chronological order.

In *Armazém de Tudo* we find an interview between the artist and the art critics/curators Moacir dos Anjos and Agnaldo Farias in which Marcelo Silveira confesses that things that he produced in the past bothered him and that rather than forgetting about them, he should face them, return to them, in a coming and going process that ultimately would produce results that he could not possibly foresee.

It is in this very the same light that Marcelo Silveira remembers Guignard's advice to a young Amílcar de Castro, when the master suggested that his student should use a hard pencil so that erasure becomes almost impossible. One must then return to that trace, incorporate it, transform it until it becomes acceptable. We may recognise such advice materialised here, in this exhibition. Perhaps it is one possible convergence suggested in its title. A trace from the past that marked Marcelo Silveira's trajectory both as an artist and a person, that rather than erased from memory takes new form in these objects. Another such trace may have been Marcelo Silveira's 'discovery' in the 1980s of the work of Artur Bispo do Rosário: another majestic example of the materialisation of a private universe. Indeed, it seems more appropriate to find in Bispo, rather than Duchamp, the art historical inspiration for Marcelo Silveira's incorporation of everyday objects, whether from nature or the detritus of consumerism, that appear transformed, revisited, reconfigured in his work. Such is the case of *Com Fé*, which consists of golden foil coffee packages, stretched and framed as if they were gold-leaf. Here the most ordinary material is transformed into exquisite golden monochromes. These are works that, as the artist confesses, emerged from his dislike of the colour gold. Not unlike his attitude towards his previous work, it is the acknowledgement of being repulsed by something or simply bothered by a dislike, that draws his attention, that leads

him remorseless towards that very thing. The colour's symbolic associations with ostentation and luxury are thus playfully counteracted by the quotidian nature of the material while its functional properties are transposed into symbolic currency. Marcelo Silveira returns to those objects of his past, whether from the universe of art or his personal experience, only to discover, as they become stored in the warehouse of memory, that the time that separates the then from the now, has also reconfigured them. It is impossible to return to the exact same page.

In 1985 Marcelo Silveira visited the São Paulo Biennial for the first time. It was a moment in which painting itself had re-emerged, reconsidered after a prolonged dominance of conceptual practices within the international art circuit. That particular Biennial has become remembered for an installation of large format paintings, aligned along a long corridor, nicknamed *A Grande Tela* (The Large Canvas). That significant moment in Marcelo Silveira's formative years, given that at the time he thought of himself primarily as a painter, returns here, reconsidered and reconfigured by the time elapsed. Marcelo Silveira's installation (or should we call it a painting?) *A Grande Tela*, possesses a similar relation of attraction and repulsion as the series *Com Fé*, only this time it is a relation with a particular discipline of art. He confesses to have destroyed many of his canvases from the 1980s: an act of no return that was perhaps later imbued with regret. Here we find him returning to the theme of painting, only now in reverse. It is a return that carries with it a different world view, a personal universe seen from the perspective of the now. In this sense *A Grande Tela* is concurrently a re-construction and a deconstruction, a coming and going, a personal degree-zero of painting.

Marcelo Silveira's work stems from both universes, that of art and the subjective, personal or familiar one. In his case, these universes are not as contradictory as the definitions would suggest. They manifest themselves, or converge, in each and every work to a greater or lesser degree, sometimes overtly complementing each other, at other times one being more implicit than the other. Speaking to Marcelo Silveira in preparation for this short essay, the artist invariably refers to a past, a past that is both his own and one that belongs to us all. It is not so much a question of the artist reviewing the traumas that life has put before him, at least that is not the impression one has when speaking to him. Instead, the feeling one has is of an artist in the midst of a process of joyful inquisitiveness, a personality trait that he has carried with him since childhood.

This aspect of his creative process is evident in his series entitled *Luminosos* (Luminous). These wall-hanged forms emit light as if announcing a spectacle of some sort. These simple geometric forms adorned by a disposition of small light bulbs take us back to a pre-neon era. They possess an aura that invokes memories of popular festivities, old shop fronts or perhaps circus displays. The artist recalls, for example, the excitement he felt as a young boy with the arrival of the circus in his hometown of Gravatá. He remembers not so much the spectacle itself but how the tent structure would emerge as if from nowhere. His *Molengas* (Maleables) series, which consist of articulated wooden arrangements, possess such characteristics, such adaptability, only now bringing the spectacle onto themselves. Marcelo Silveira remembers his interest in wood arising from his father's habit of bringing him strange wooden objects, discarded bits and bobs that he

would come across during his daily routine. Wood, that material that is ordinary when abundant, can also be noble and versatile. The Molengas are objects that should be rigid, yet they are malleable, they should enthuse one with the nobleness of the wood that constitute them. Indeed they do, yet they also invoke, in their malleability, the ordinariness of cardboard boxes. As art objects, they display their formal properties for the connoisseur to consider, yet with every new configuration, they deny any aesthetic conclusion. They stand or hang between painting, relief and sculpture, and as such one may think of them in relation to erudite discourses such as the Theory of the Non-object for example, yet such seriousness collapses when faced with their ludic versatility, their invocation of popular improvised contraptions.

The fine line that exists between such world views, such universes, is again playfully exacerbated in the uncanny juxtaposition of a coffee table and a picture frame. These objects, originally intended to inhabit distinct planes, if we think of them in Cartesian terms, are brought together as if in a child's play, as their title suggests. The series *Faz de Conta* (Make Believe) blurs the line between the fake and desire. Like the case of the circus, these are proto-theatrical constructions in that they transform, even if only momentarily, ordinary objects into magical ones. Their functionality may be questionable, but it is made viable through imagination, through the effort of making believe.

In *Catecismo* (Catechism) the subject of faith re-emerges, now quite literally. It consists of reproductions of images taken from a 19th century book intended for the teaching of the catholic apostolic confirmation of faith. The book itself was handed down from generation to generation, restored or more appropriately patched together in the process: a time-worn religious book that finally becomes profane by the act of its last inheritor, the artist. Its profanity afflicts not only its religious origins but its artistic destiny, given that its conservation occurs through the conversion from one domain of belief into another. The ritual act of revelation is turned into the artist's own profane profession of faith: the faith required to exhibit them, to transform them into art.

As we have seen, the convergence that is stated in the title of this exhibition can be understood in multiple ways. As I see it, it suggests a relation between two distinct universes, that of Marcelo Silveira, the person with a particular background, and that of the artist, whose formative years have been determined by a particular art historical trajectory. Both these universes are traced and re-traced through and in the work. It is a convergence that is perhaps best exemplified by another of Marcelo Silveira's childhood memories, that of the Armazém Malaquias, his grandfather's warehouse, which the artist remembers as follows:

Perhaps, this attachment of mine came from my experience with the Malaquias' Warehouse, where residues of ancient things that had past through there would accumulate. [...] My grandfather gradually changed his activities while being very jealous of his shop: at the end of his life he only sold construction materials, yet he kept the old posters on the wall from the time he sold meat, beauty products, textiles. [...] I began to see my life perhaps as a great warehouse.

Michael Asbury, June, 2016

List of Works

Com fé, 2013/2016

wood and coffee packaging
160 x 100 cm each

Faz de conta, 2012/2016

wood, plaster and golden paint
70 x 50 x 40 cm each

Catecismo, 2012/2016

photographic reproductions mounted on wood
variable dimensions

A grande tela, 2012

forty glass domes, wooden boards and linen fiber
variable dimensions

Molengas, 2016

wood and goatskin
variable dimensions

Luminosos, 2008

wood, light bulbs and electrical energy
variable dimensions



Com fé, 2013/2016
wood, thread, and coffee packages -- 158 x 100 cm each



Faz de conta, 2012/2016
wood, gesso, and golden frames -- 70 x 40 x 40 cm each



Catecismo 2012/2016

photographic reproductions mounted on wooden frames -- variable dimensions



A grande tela, 2012
40 glass domes, raw linen -- 50 x 400 x 200 cm



Molengas, 2016
various types of wood, goat leather -- variable dimensions



Molengas, 2016
various types of wood, goat leather -- variable dimensions



Luminosos (estrela e alvo), 2008
wood, light bulbs and electrical energy -- variable dimensions

About **Marcelo Silveira**

Born in 1962 in Gravatá, state of Pernambuco, Marcelo Silveira lives and works in Recife. He featured in the 1st Bienal Internacional de Buenos Aires (2000); the 5th Bienal do Mercosul (Porto Alegre, 2005); 4th Bienal de Valencia (2007); 29th Bienal de São Paulo (2010); and the 10th Bienal do Mercosul (Porto Alegre, 2015). Recent individual exhibitions include *Um dedo de prosa* (MAMAM, Recife, Brazil, 2016); and *O Guardião das coisas inúteis* (MAMAM, Recife, Brazil, 2014). He has participated of group exhibitions in institutions including Frankfurter Buchmesse in Frankfurt; Instituto Tomie Ohtake in São Paulo; Palácio das Artes in Belo Horizonte; MAC-USP in São Paulo; Centro Cultural Maria Antônia and Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, both in São Paulo.

Censor, 2013/2014

MIS - Museu da Imagem e do Som

June 18 to July 31

Censor is a fictitious film festival motivated by the reality of Brazil's political authoritarianism era. The piece is composed of twenty five polychromatic film posters in dyed wooden frames, topped with three magenta-colored acrylic sheets with partial and full cut-outs that at times hint at and at others reveal parts of the content. The interaction of image and text suggests different readings of the posters. Title and subtitle, catchphrases, textual fragments, data sheets state the explicit, pragmatic purpose of each film. On the other hand, the interpretation of the "censor" is conveyed by the stamp print authorizing the screening of the seventh-art piece.



Censor, 2013 / 2014

acrylic, wood and vintage posters printed in offset
25 posters. 100 x 70 cm each

