



brígida

baltar

irmãos

galeria

nara

roesler



exhibition view -- galeria nara roesler | rio de janeiro -- 2016









autorretrato, 2016
embroidery on fabric -- 38 x 37 cm

a quimera das plantas [o shimeji e a cebola roxa], 2016
embroidery on fabric -- 60 x 41 cm

imagem da capa:
irmãos, 2016
philodendron and philodendron hederaceum on bronze
ed. 1/2 + AP -- 31 x 10 x 5 cm



os hematomas, 2016
embroidery on fabric -- 74 x 42 cm





os hematomas e as petéquias, 2016
embroidery on fabric -- 73,5 x 77,5 cm

brígida baltar - irmãos (siblings) paola santoscoy

One of the most widely represented mythological beings, and perhaps one of the most attractive in its possibilities of representation, is the chimaera. Greek mythology describes it as a fabulous animal, a hybrid monster with a lion's head, a goat's body and a dragon's tail. But its interpretations are many, and the notion of hybridization encompasses all organism species or varieties.

This new set of artworks by Brígida Baltar has a connection with that notion, through the fact that medical science has borrowed that term to christen a compatibility test relating to transplants. In 2015, the artist had to go through a bone marrow transplant, and she underwent a so-called chimerism, whereby she tested positive for compatibility with her donating brother. Baltar appropriates the myth in a personal way to create a series of embroideries and sculptures of hybrid species of vegetation, organic abstractions created from what she experienced in the flesh throughout her illness and recovery, converted into metaphors and form, like self-portraits that speak of a constant transformation / alteration / mutation / renewal. *Irmãos (Siblings)* is built from that place of beautiful, bizarre fraternal combinations, fragile in their chances of survival, and utterly potent in their endless possibilities of life.

In order to address those artworks, I would like to share two thoughts:

1. From the immaterial to the material, much of the work done by Baltar in the last twenty years originates from her emblematic piece *Abrigo (Shelter, 1996)*, which sees her document the action of digging a hole measuring the same as her body on the wall of her then-home and workplace. Some time and a few other interventions later, she recovered the leftover bricks to crush them into dust and reuse them in various ways: from drawing to rebuilding miniature bricks to creating floor tile designs in exhibition spaces. This use of dust may have sparked her interest in the immaterial, prompting her to explore ephemeral mediums such as dew and fog: *A coleta de neblina* and *A coleta de maresia (The collecting of fog, The collecting of sea breeze, 1998/2005)*. In using those materials, the artist found ways to articulate emotions stemming from intimate events, to retrieve invisible stories, and to conform the architecture of nature and the space that surround her.

This exhibition features a set of bronze sculptures that are hybridizations of two plants, some of them identical and others different: *Imbé* and *mangue-da-praia* ou *Imbé* and *imbé* (2016), for instance. The size of those pieces harks back to the actual plants in nature, but not their weight. The lightness of the leaves is replaced with the weight of metal. I confess that I felt like touching them, measuring my palms and feet against those sculptures; feeling their temperature. And I also confess that some more anatomical questions went through my mind that pertained to the weight and temperature of our organs.

These (imaginary) experiments in hybridization of plants also manifest themselves in colorful pieces of embroidered fabric that, among other things, point to processes of cultural miscegenation and colonization. Whereas the flamboyance of the vegetation locates these images within tropical imagery.

2. From the body's architecture to the architecture of bodies

Going back to Baltar's earlier works, *Pó e Imagem (Dust and Image, 2010)* is a composed of miniature replicas of the coastal mountains that outline her native city, Rio de Janeiro, and rise to eye level, in such a way that the surrounding landscape becomes part of the artwork. Geography on top of geogra-

phy. These very tiny mountains are built from the same dust of bricks from her old home. Dust that resulted from the act of sculpting her body into the architecture. In *Irmãos (Siblings)*, these geographies turn to flesh. A series of fabric pieces titled after skin disorders: *A afta, O hematoma, As petéquias (The mouth ulcer, The hematoma, The petechial, 2016)*, hanging in front of the viewer as fine compositions of shape and color, confronting us with the rawness of deeper afflictions. The changes in the scale of the fabric are also an important element, making all the more evident their connection with the body, on the one hand, and on the other hand their relationship with the ornament.

Finally, the series *Autorretrato com pelos (Self-portrait with body hair, 2016)* is probably the most direct reference to the brothers whose bodies have been transformed, but it's also the most politically-charged piece, as far as I see it. It's embroidered on fabric tissues, in such a way that the intimate character of embroidery as a technique merges with a piece that's also very intimate, and traditionally male. Baltar's work, up until this point, is in many aspects recognizable as female. However, the hybridization here doesn't appear solely as "one and another," but rather as a "beyond," a "trans," a transgender, I dare say, that bodies and plants alike participate in.

about Paola Santoscoy

Paola Santoscoy (b. 1974, México) has a degree in History of Art from Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, and has a Master's Degree in Visual Studies from California College of the Arts, in San Francisco. She is currently the director of the Museo Experimental el Eco, in Mexico City. In 2011 she worked as assistant curator of the 8th Bienal of Mercosul, in Porto Alegre, Brazil. And in 2010, as a curator of the exhibition *La Naturaleza de las Cosas*, which was part of the 1st Biennial of the Americas in Denver, USA. She worked as a curator in different exhibition spaces in Mexico City: *La Panadería* (2000 - 2001), *Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil* (2001 - 2003), and the *Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo* (2004 - 2007), and also as an independent curator. She is a regular contributor of contemporary art publications.

about Brígida Baltar

Brígida Baltar (b. 1959, Rio de Janeiro) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. She studied at *Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Baltar began to develop her work in the 1990s, through small poetic gestures that took place around her home and studio. Biennials include the 25th São Paulo Biennial (2002); The 17th Cerveira Biennial, in Cerveira, Portugal (2013); The Nature of things — Biennial of the Americas, Denver, USA (2010); *Panorama de arte brasileira* (Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2007) and the 5th Havana Biennial, Cuba (1994). Selected international exhibitions include: *Cruzamentos: Contemporary art in Brazil*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, EUA (2014); *SAM Art Project*, Paris, France (2012); *The peripatetic school: itinerant drawing from Latin America*, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, England, (2011); *Museo de Arte del Banco de la República*, Bogotá, Colombia, (2012); and *Constructing views: experimental film and video from Brazil*, New Museum, New York, USA (2010). Her works are in many collections, including: *Colección Isabel y Agustín Coppel*, Mexico D.F., Mexico; *Museum of Contemporary Art*, Cleveland, USA; *Fundação Joaquim Nabuco*, Recife, Brazil; *Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art*, Middlesbrough, England; *Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brazil; *Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo*, São Paulo, Brazil; among others.

