

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS

87 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris, France. Tuesday - Saturday 11am-7pm and by appointment
+33 (0)1 43 70 00 88 | www.galleriacontinua.com

GÉOMÉTRIES INSTABLES

**ANTONIO BANDEIRA, SÉRGIO CAMARGO, MARCELO CIDADE, RAYMUNDO COLARES,
JONATHAS DE ANDRADE, ANTONIO DIAS, ANDRÉ KOMATSU, JUDITH LAUAND,
CILDO MEIRELES, CANDIDO PORTINARI, FRANZ WEISSMANN**

curated by Camila Bechelany

19/02/2022 - 28/05/2022

With the valuable collaboration of:
Pinakothek São Paulo

GALLERIA CONTINUA is pleased to present *Géometries Instables*, a collective exhibition delving into the work of eleven Brazilian artists, and the fourth episode of a cycle of exhibitions that retraces the geographies in which the gallery has established itself over the years.

Géometries Instables brings together recent works by Marcelo Cidade, Jonathas De Andrade, André Komatsu and Cildo Meireles, joined by a selection of historical artists, thanks to the precious collaboration of Pinakothek de São Paulo: Antonio Bandeira, Sérgio Camargo, Raymundo Colares, Antonio Dias, Judith Lauand, Candido Portinari and Franz Weissmann.

Curator and art historian Camila Bechelany presents a path of references and influences in dialogue through the works on show. Exploring some of the historical, cultural and social conditions of Brazil, Bechelany departs from movements such as Modernism, Concretism and Neo-concretism to arrive in contemporary practices, also indicating the influence of specific international trends of the last century, such as minimalism, pop art and conceptual art, in the practices of the exhibited artists.

Ranging from the milestones of the country's modernism to the practice of contemporary artists, the show touches on recurring subjects of Brazilian artistic production from last century. The various attempts to approach, create, define and represent the specificities of this giant country

standing on the border between Western and non-Western influences cross the selection of works. *Brazilianness* is therefore approached both on an identitarian level, and in the sense of the several modernizing aesthetical contributions - as well as criticism - made by the artists. A special attention to geometry is the most prominent trace highlighted by Bechelany, who outlines responses to the concrete movement as a formative trend still in the practice of the artists today.

The attempt to identify and represent an ideal Brazilian identity is expressed in *Estudo Para Pintura Mural Cacau*, of 1938, by Candido Portinari. Born in Brazil to Italian parents, the artist grew up in a rural region in the state of São Paulo. From this simple childhood amid the coffee plantations and his later travels in Europe, he created works on canvas, paper and frescoes where working class people constitute the base for a new vocabulary of "Brazilianness". The realistic study of a crouching man presented at GALLERIA CONTINUA was incorporated to one of the nine frescoes commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture, inaugurated in 1945 in Rio de Janeiro, then the capital of Brazil, where Portinari celebrated the various economic sources of the country as well as its population.

Some of Portinari's representational preoccupations reappear in Jonathas De Andrade's *Eu, Mestiço (Me, mestizo)* series, as the artist confronts keywords used in a study from the 1950s, by Columbia University in partnership with UNESCO, that aimed to

define the Brazilian racial, cultural and ethnical heritage. He puts it in relation with the performances of his own subjects while posing in front of the camera. Jonathas De Andrade's *Infundável Mapa da Fome (Endless Hunger Map)* series combines his research-based practice and social interest to a more formalist approach, inviting a group of Kayapó women to trace traditional symbols over historical maps from the Brazilian Army, ignoring the imposed boundaries and covering them with indigenous patterns, denouncing the danger of impositions on the safety of ancient and ancestral lands.

Judith Lauand, the only woman to be part of São Paulo's historical Grupo Ruptura, participates to the show with two abstract paintings of mathematical rigor. Her precisely organized lines seem nevertheless dynamic and animated; on paper they create rhythm and tension on paper and echoing a precarious balance. Sérgio Camargo also participates with two sculptures to which apparent geometry and order are essential, but dissolving at the same time. His *Sem título* works from 1970 are solid and unitary blocks of marble fragmented into a plurality of modules that manage to create an unexpected dialogue between order and dissolution.

The strong relation between free movement and geometric rigidity is common to works presented by Cildo Meireles and Raymundo Colares. These two artists are aligned with Neo-Concretism, a movement born in Rio de Janeiro as a response to the rational austerity of São Paulo's adherence to Concretism. *Virtual Volumes*, by Cildo Meireles, is deeply grounded in a phenomenological, speculative space. The *Gibi* series, by Raymundo Colares, originally implied a physical and tactile involvement of the audience, who was invited to explore the folds and colors of the paper. As many artists of his generation, the geometric abstraction and specifically Mondrian's compositions played a role on his work, creating sequences of alternating shapes and chromatic gradations.

These themes prefigure interests found in the works of Marcelo Cidade and André Komatsu, both concerned with discussing social issues while using a formal language in dialogue and friction to Concretist experiences in Brazil. This movement was especially attentive to geometric, abstract forms and to the use of color, but lacked a socio-political commitment. In this sense, Cidade and Komatsu are closer to Neo-Concretists, who used a similar visual vocabulary but adopted a more poetic and political approach, wanting to include a greater sense of freedom and flexibility into their work.

Marcelo Cidade is interested in the urban context in its visual and political phenomena. Through an often subversive

and informal practice, Cidade questions the ideals of modernist architecture, appropriating urban spaces and inventing new languages through its elements, building unexpected and surprising arrangements, through various aesthetic operations.

André Komatsu describes his work as the reflection on a series of perceptions that he experiences while traveling along streets and the urban space. The objects and materials that converge to form his artistic universe hide under their appearance an invitation to social resistance. Often starting from fragments of the *polis*, the artist proceeds to its reconstruction, creating new models for existing forms.

Although the artists presented in *Géométries Instables* use visual tools that are in conversation with the European canon of art, directly or indirectly, none of them is passively absorbing such influences, but rather actively reappropriating and mixing them with other sources. The artists on show subtly subvert an old and ordered hierarchy between Europe and Brazil. For each of them, it is the stability of their own language and identity which is at stake, beautifully taking the risk of hanging on the thin lines of unstable geometries.