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o ponto de ebulição | the boiling point

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Curated by *Renato Silva*

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Open: Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 6 pm

Brazilian society today seems to build itself on a tremendous force that severs the head from the body. It is as though a guillotine moving at a leisurely pace yet with sickening relentlessness were cutting off all channels of ethical dialogue on today's urging questions and needs - yet these channels are essential to move the conversation forward. A wall rises and obstructs every effort towards the coexistence of the innumerable fragments used to building it. And this same situation is the basis sustaining the formal existence of art.

o ponto de ebulição | the boiling point originates where production as well as conceptual and aesthetic determinations seek out to bringing about an explicit departure from key motifs that Brazilian art of the past decades has limned. This mirror, which presents a nearly perfect inverted image, reveals a clear consensus concerning the accomplishments of the generation of artists who dominated the political debate in the art of the 1960s and 1970s.

Today, the relation to preconceptions that were formerly a source of shared meaning is presented in a different perspective. The ostensibly unambiguous appropriation of strategies that informed our thinking in art-making at the time now elicits very different effects. What was once urgently needed is now irrevocable. The energy of the ideas that clamored to be heard in one way or another back then now echoes in another solid body of greater rigidity and tension bearing a stone.

Post-Tropicalist contextualization and all the aesthetic relations that Brazilian artists investigated five decades ago were of fundamental importance to the present attempt to break free. Today, all ideas and forms of aesthetics and philosophy are anchored in an active involvement in the social movements, in the struggling and the occupying of spaces—a development that decisively strengthened the foundations of this exhibition.

It is no longer the melody of Samba whose notes accompany us on this way. The urgency of this debate trumps even that of the problem of constructivism and the issue of how Afro-indigenous culture can enrich the quest for a national identity. That dialogue is not concluded by the simple addition of melanin. The face of modern Brazil is defined by a dissonant, spurious, indefinable trait, and so it is open to all the possibilities that, at this diffuse and precarious juncture, require our full attention.



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In a certain way this exhibition stems from the protests that erupted in 2013, when various social movements demanded political and social change. The show's conception was undoubtedly rooted in these immediate responses from the streets. And the issues that arose from the actions of these movements — which emerged at first seeking freedom through anarchist and radical leftist forms of organization and later spurred the rise of a shockingly conservative and radical elite whose contradictory views spread throughout the streets at a galloping pace. To which one must add a disordered political-democratic representation by the parties, a model that proves no longer functional because this phenomenon — stubbornly labeled “the Left” — has destroyed the social movements. The outcome, which is only just coming about, provides fertile ground for the alarming growth of an evangelical wing that operates in perfect symbiosis with the interests of the radically conservative elite. The social demands, meanwhile, have been silenced by force—total blindness prevails.

Here is a generation that has no faith in the established ideas of yesteryear and has made trenchant critique its credo. All in all, the show demonstrates that its work cannot simply set aside the existence of antagonisms that naturally underlie the creative process. Modern Brazilian art — whose endlessly paradoxical character always contains the political and dialectical dimension — cannot currently consolidate without breaking free in one way or another of postmodernism. It is as though the source had run dry sometime between the decisive milestone of the 1970s and today. The remnant particles dissolve without making a distinctive mark into the fatal schizophrenia that has taken hold of Brazilian society. The prevalent inconsistency is brought about precisely by breaking with the antagonism of a social plan that was never implemented satisfactorily and is now being crushed by the interests of financial capital and big business.

The question we urgently need to address is this: where did the foundation crack that formerly provided a more solid basis for critical debate? Perhaps the secure platform for dialogue and the resolution to this puzzle may be found on the sharp blade of the guillotine: beyond the wall that separates us from one another, and on the utopian ground the exhibition *ponto de ebulição | the boiling point* tries to demarcate. Maybe art is capable, before the coming collapse, to initiate this dialogue with the world.

Renato Silva