



ROSÂNGELA RENNÓ **INSÓLIDOS**

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Rosângela Rennó (Belo Horizonte, 1962) presents “Insólidos”¹, her new show at Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, in Lisbon. The first verse we quote below, a fragment of a poem by Manoel de Barros, is intimately connected to the Brazilian musician Egberto Gismonti (Rio de Janeiro, 1947), the author of the “Música de sobrevivência” that the artist so admires.

*““What is good for garbage is good for poetry
Especially important is the word repository;
repository is a word I know well:
it has many repercussions
like a well filled with silence
tastes like wreckage”²*

As music and poem reconnect the artist's work to the questions pertaining to the transience and the precariousness of images, we detect a correspondence between this close poetic relationship and Rosângela's Rennó's most recent pieces. However, the artist uses photography as phenomenological “capta” she gleans through the world, searching in print and film archives she finds or buys. Regardless of the source of these archives and documents – many of which originally belonged to collectors with a special interest in the early years of photography – and of how they were first indexed and organized, her work introduces another sphere of connections and reinterpretations as she recontextualizes them, offering us the vision of yet another imaginary universe.

It is in this transition that photography calls for a repositioning of the observer's gaze in photographic forms and processes materialized in different media. These images are always linked to a narrative we are invited to share, but the power contained in each image can simultaneously make us lose sight of its history under the aura of its beauty and charm. The images can be projected, superimposed, or collected in artist's books that, respecting or fragmenting the original (as a facsimile), confront the

¹ TN: Insólidos is a word play between the Portuguese *insólito* (uncanny, unusual) and *sólido* (solid, sturdy, strong).

² “Matéria de poesia” (Matter of poetry), Manoel de Barros, fragment 1 of the homonymous poem, 1974. Translated by José Roseira.

viewer with events and places that convoke historical, social, and political moments.

For example, the work "A01 [cod.19.1.1.43] – A27 [s|cod.23]", 2015, presented as a surviving repository of images in which the concept of archive is recovered and recontextualizes its own history as it evokes the theft of nineteen photo albums from the archives of the Pereira Passos/Malta Collection, which were deposited at the Rio de Janeiro General Archive. Still, the book reveals a process that goes beyond the simple documental collection and is transformed into a cinematic construction in which each page is converted into a visual field, as if it were a planned kaleidoscope. The images represent the transformations of Rio de Janeiro, how its landscape changed, but also other things that usually escape our attention as time goes by. In this piece, the artist's work and imagination open yet another field of possibilities that goads our imagination to give continuity to it, infinitely projecting it in our mind. A registration number, the title of this piece survives unchanged and corresponds to the original numerical order of the albums in the collection.

This logic of recognition of what is left in each image and of what survives it is present thorough the entire exhibition. From the series "Insólidos" (2014), from which it takes its title, to the project "Imagem de sobrevivência" (2015). An installation of shelves, like sculptures, that includes four carousel slide projectors, totaling thirteen hundred images. The projection of the overlapping slides creates a residual, almost overexposed, image that evokes an almost spectral relation to memory, as they appear and disappear in the transparency of the new images successively superimposing over the previous until all images are lost, dematerializing on the surface of the film, and a new carousel will take their place. On the other hand, the use of slides evokes a discourse on the ceaseless accumulation of boxes or sets of slides, often numbering thousands, epitomized in archives and libraries, as well as the intimacy of the familiar quotidian, where they are used to preserve the memories of childhood, vacations, travels, and other events that, when revisited, celebrate the communion between the persons who shared the same complicity.

The series "Insólidos" (2014) shares this complicity with images that are close to us, even familiar. The idea of sharing can also be applied to how Rennó has been working with different photographic media and its relation to the reification and transience of the photographed object. The four pieces in this series, more objectual and sculptural, are composed of six images printed on pure silk organza sheets, a translucent support, vertically hanging from a horizontal frame. The observer's relationship with the images of each work activates the mechanisms involved in the perception of contrast, hue, and depth. In this way, image is a construction of images that the thickness of the piece transforms into a non-hierarchical game between of the objects that, in sequence, are made visible or invisible, become permeable and merge into more abstract objects, without ever losing the formal and visual index that apparently distinguishes it from the other layers. Just like in the work "Imagem de sobrevivência", it demands from us to look at it again and again, repositioning our gaze in front of the six silk planes in a permanent attempt to reconstruct the visuality and the references inscribed in the piece.

"Insólidos" is also a semantic game, an attempt to use language to translate into one word the paradox of survival of something that is both permanent and fleeting, and the tension in what is uncanny and unusual but also has a strong correspondence with the reality of the fixed image.

João Silvério

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ROSÂNGELA RENNÓ Belo Horizonte, 1962. Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. Graduated in Architecture from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte (1986), and in Visual Arts from the Escola Guignard, Belo Horizonte (1987). Arts Doctorate from the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (1997). Her work is part of the collection of Guggenheim Museum, (USA), Colección Cisneros, (Venezuela/ USA); MUSAC (Spain), MOMA (USA), Gulbenkian (Portugal), Daros LatinAmerica (Swiss), Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago (USA), SMAK (Belgium), TATE Modern (England), Culturgest (Portugal), Museu de Arte da Pampulha (Brazil), MOCA (USA); among others.