

in hands

08 may- 10 aug \_ 2024

text  
ana roman e  
marina schiesari

between hands

This is a text in three movements. Each one seems, at first glance, autonomous. When united in this space, they form a choreography or a polyphonic communication in which each voice is unique but interdependent. The movements of the text focus on the hands – extremities of the upper limbs, articulated by wrist and extending to the fingers. In the first movement, the hands are serene, engaged in silent discovery and construction. In the second, they move intensely, reflecting conflicts and resolutions. In the third, they find balance and dance in harmony.

i. in hands

French philosopher and essayist Jules Michelet, in his book *The Bird*[1], delves into the behavior of birds. At a certain point in the essay, he asserts that the birds, lacking the hands of squirrels or the teeth of beavers, could be seen as workers without tools. However, their lightweight, rounded bodies become their instruments: with their chests, they press and compress materials until they become pliable, mixing and conforming them to overall work. In birds, their entire body is a hand.

The nest, their space of shelter and protection, mirrors, in a certain sense, the shape of their bodies: in the layering of twigs that serve as a place for resting, one could see fingers; the whole body of a bird is a tool for construction. And we, using our human hands, are capable of reproducing the shape of the nest by curling our fingers and cupping our palms upward. The gesture is one of welcoming both the material and immaterial world into our hands while creating containers, spaces of safekeeping and protection[2].

This exhibition is, in many ways, the stretching of arms and the bending of the hands as we invite young artists – Ana Takenaka, iah bahia, Nathalie Ventura – to dialogue with those who are represented by Galeria Raquel Arnaud – Carla Chaim, Carlos Nunes and João Trevisan. The interweaving of these artist's poetics is like a construction of a nest, in which condense and cool down the branches, depending on the stage of construction: in the exhibition, there are moments where close relationships are sewn; in others, there are only indications of proximity or distance.

The artists gathered here, like the birds in search of building their nests, use the hand, the body, the breath in a research around the gesture. mas; em outros, tem-se apenas indicações de proximidade ou distanciamento.

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ii. coats and two way streets

The relation between the movements of the hand and the mental processes is complex. Leaving the debate on scientific field in the background, to focus on reflections of philosophy and literary criticism, There is a certain tradition that associates concrete actions performed by the hand, such as holding, taking and grasping, the thought processes, such as remembering, dreaming, asking and, at the limit, synthesizing. For Paul Valéry[3], for exemple, the hand is an extraordinary organ which resides all the potential of transformation of humanity: it is capable of counteracting the course of things and can modify them. When the hand works with the matter, its movements are precise and investigative, like a detective in search for something lost. There is a mental image to be extracted, through meticulous movements that identify where to touch, where the matter is sensible, fragile and moldable. The form that arises from these actions, giving the matter a function or aesthetic dimension.

The artists gathered in the exhibition teach diverse ways to seize and bulid with the hands. In their gestures, we find a type of alchemy: it's as if, through one's hands, was possible to unveil its secrets and bring to life new forms to be in the world. In the next paragraphs, we will dedicate the exercise to identify layers (coats) that compose the poetic of each one, in order to point out similarities and diferences which they appropriate in the matter and create their works. We intend to create, this way, a two way street.

Ana Takenaka and Carla Chaim draw. Interested in the movement of the hand (and the body) on paper, their artworks resoate with Degas's affirmation: "The drawing is not form, it is a way to see the form"[4]. In engraving and monotypes, Takenaka occupies the representation of sensations and thoughts through trace, of gesture, exploring the potencialities of the line and its abstract and representative fields. For Chaim, the drawing expands beyond the borders of the paper. In her works, her body leaves marks that reflect the tension between the imposed rules, such as a restricted color palette and organic movements that challenge them.

Carlos Nunes and iah bahia fold. Folding is a verb that, in itself, holds an interesting ambiguity: its meaning is to double or turn an object in a way where one or more parts of it overlap. There is, in the poetics of both artists, the desire to increase or decrease the size at the same time. Nunes creates rules to explore relations between diverse compositional elements. His work culminates (or part of it) frequently in a gradual exhaustion of matter. In the exhibition, he presents an annual series of works with silk paper that are folded by the artist and tinted by the sun. In bahia's works, connections are established between abstract points and lines, creating defined territories. In the series Solitons, for exemple, she explores the form of lonely atomic waves. By experimenting with forms through fabric, develops a topological methodology, revealing a double space that challenges tradicional notions inside and out.

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Nathalie Ventura and João Trevisan poke. "Poking" is an informal expression that means to investigate, explore or move something with care or with curiosity. To juxtapose materials of distinct geological origin, Ventura pokes at the fragility of lifestyles in the face of contemporary environmental and social challenges. In turn, Trevisan explores the relations between tension, weight and lightness. In his paintings and his drawings, overlapping layers over time reveal depth and chromatic variation. The artist, just like Ventura, constructs landscapes in escavations in matter.

iii. marks in hands

The tact is a present sensation all over the skin. Like Vergílio Ferreira writes: "In any part of the body we can mark the presence of an object, the presence of the real"[5]. We can ask maybe if there would be different types of tact: the tact that notices the things of the world and is distributed throughout the skin and that which manifests itself mainly in the hands, that reflects and prolongs the activity of self[6]. This last type of tact also creates memory and, over time, a kind of library that can be touched, understood and recognized by touch. Invisible marks are produced superficially on the surfaces of our hands.

In the current exhibition space, there are distinct surface repertoires: from Japanese paper to craft, from charcoal to oil, from the sewing of the dressed object to the binding of notebooks. The hot materials and gestures (like the paper) and cold (like the acrylic) are perceived and explored by the hands of the artists accessing the spectator's sensory library. Creating, potentially, a meeting between sensibilities – of the artist and of the spectator – and possible links between the self and the other: the desire felt in the body of those who see the works to scratch, stretch, fold, dig... The hands become bridges between us and the world.

[1] MICHELET, Jules. The Bird. T. Nelson, 1874.

[2] Para um debate acerca da importância das diversas maneiras de armazenar ao longo da história, ver: LE GUIN, Ursula K. A Teoria da Bolsa de Ficção. N-1 Edições, 2021.

[3] VALÉRY, Paul. Eupalinos el Arquitecto y el Alma y la Danza. Antonio Machado Libros, 2019.

[4] Idem, Degas Dança Desenho. Editora Cosac Naify, 2003.

[5] FERREIRA, Vergílio. Invocação ao Meu Corpo. Bertrand, 1978, p. 273.

[6] Ibidem, p. 274.

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de segunda à sexta das 11:00 às 19:00  
e sábado das 11:00 às 15:00