

PRESS RELEASE

Exhibition

20 DISARRANGEMENTS. Panorama on Brazilian art

DATES:	21 st January – 8 th May 2005
WHERE:	exhibition hall on the first floor
OPENING TIMES:	from Tuesday to Sunday (holidays included), from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
CURATOR:	Gerardo Mosquera
ASSISTANT TO THE CURATOR:	Adrienne Samos
DIRECTOR:	Carlota Álvarez Basso
CHIEF CURATOR:	Iñaki Martínez Antelo
COORDINATOR AND REGISTRAR:	Marta García Viña
PRODUCED BY:	MAM, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo
WITH THE SUPPORT OF:	Brazilian Embassy in Madrid

ARTISTS ON EXHIBITION: 20

- Jorge Barbi (A Guarda, Pontevedra, 1958)
- Paulo Climachauska (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1948)
- Umberto Costa Barros (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1948)
- José Damasceno (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1968)
- Wim Delvoye (Wervik, Belgium, 1965); lives and works in Gant, Belgium; and London, United Kingdom
- Fernanda Gomes (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1960)
- José Guedes (Fortaleza, Brazil, 1958)
- Adriano and Fernando Guimarães (Brasília, Brazil, 1968; Brasília, Brazil, 1962)
- Kan Xuan (Xuan Chang, China, 1972); lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Leonilson (Fortaleza, Brazil, 1957 – São Paulo, Brazil, 1993)
- Lucas Levitan and Jailton Moreira (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 1977; São Leopoldo, Brazil, 1960); live and work in Porto Alegre, Brazil
- Jorge Macchi (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1963)
- Cildo Meireles (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1948)
- Marccone Moreira (Pío XII, Brazil, 1982); lives and works in Marabá, Brazil
- Vik Muniz (São Paulo, Brazil, 1961); lives and works in New York, USA
- Ernesto Neto (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1964)
- José Patrício (Recife, Brazil, 1960)
- Sara Ramo (Madrid, Spain, 1975); lives and works in Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Adriana Varejão (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1964)
- Alex Villar (Vitória, Brazil, 1962); lives and works in New York, USA

WORKS ON EXHIBITION:

The exhibition is composed of approximately 57 works of art in different forms: installations, interventions, objects, paintings, engravings, sculptures, videos, etc.

Other "DISARRANGEMENTS":

- Museum Panopticon: performances "Breathing +" and "Breathing -", 2002, by Adriano and Fernando Guimarães (25th and 26th February from 8 p.m)
- Fundación Laxeiro: "Pintura (Cóctel Molotov)", 2003, by Paulo Climachauska.
- Music Shop ELEPE Daily Price (Dr. Cadaval), and MARCO Bookshop: "Inclinações musicais", 2002, by Lucas Levitan and Jailton Moreira.

VENUES:

- MAM, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Brazil (16th October – 30th November 2003)
- Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (16th December 2003 – 15th February 2004)
- Museo de Arte Moderno Aluísio Magalhães, Recife, Brazil (11th March – 2nd May 2004)

CATALOGUE:

MARCO will publish a bilingual offprint in Spanish and Galician with the adaptation of texts that appeared in the catalogue published in 2003 by the MAM (Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo) to mark the opening of *Panorama da arte brasileira 2003*. This catalogue, on sale together with the offprint at the museum shop, is a trilingual edition in Portuguese, Spanish and English with texts written by Gerardo Mosquera and Adrienne Samos about the artists and an interview with the curator by the journalist Washington de Carvalho Neves, apart from technical specifications and reproductions of most of the works on exhibition.

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Gerardo Mosquera –art critic, curator and art historian– was born in Havana in 1945 and has been curator of exhibitions in the *New Museum of Contemporary Art* in New York for more than a decade. He is member of the editorial board of the magazines *Art Nexus*, *Calabar*, *Ideas & ensayos*, *Nika* and *Third Text*, as well as founder of the Havana Biennial and co-curator of “Ante América” in 1992-94. Among his latest exhibitions, the most remarkable are “No es sólo lo que ves. Pervirtiendo el minimalismo”, MNCARS Madrid, 2000, and “Wilfredo Lam”, XXIII São Paulo International Biennial, 1996. Gerardo Mosquera has written many books on contemporary art, such as *Beyond the Fantastic. Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America* (editor), London, 1995; *Contracandela*, Caracas, 1995, and *El diseño se definió en octubre*, Havana, 1989, Bogotá, 1992.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

As additional activity, MARCO has organized a **performance workshop (*Play, discourse and body*)** which will take place in February under the direction of the Brazilian artists **Adriano and Fernando Guimarães**, who are on exhibition.

Where: MARCO's conference hall

Activity intended for Fine Art, visual art and dramatic art students and similar degrees, artists and anybody who may be interested.

When:

- Thursday **17th** and Friday **18th February**: workshop from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Monday **21st**, Tuesday **22nd** and Wednesday **23rd February**: workshop from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Thursday **24th February**, from 8 p.m.: presentation to the audience of the workshop results.

Price of **enrolment**: 90€ (60€ for students and Friends of MARCO)

Vacancies: 15 participants maximum

Date of enrolment: from the 28th December 2004 to the 28th January 2005 at MARCO's ticket office.

Selection of participants: from the 29th January to the 4th February

SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT:

The exhibition “20 DISARRANGEMENTS”, curated by the well-known Cuban art critic Gerardo Mosquera, has its origins in the 2003 edition of the *Panorama da arte brasileira*, (the second most important periodic exhibition of contemporary art in Brazil, only surpassed by the São Paulo Biennial), organized since 1969 by the MAM, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo. This is the first time that the *Panorama* leaves Brazil and is internationally presented. MARCO will be the only Spanish museum hosting this exhibition, which shows what is currently being produced in one of the most innovative contemporary art scene.

The fact that the MAM decided to engage a foreign curator shows the interest of the organizers in modernizing an event so strongly consolidated. That is why the curator considered his task in two directions: working with art and artists, but also calling into question the *Panorama* as an institution. He aimed to organize an exhibition and at the same time to “disarrange” its institutional framework in order to undertake a complete change. Gerardo Mosquera has somehow created an “anti-panorama”, because he consciously refuses the idea of presenting an anthology or a study of contemporary Brazilian art, in order to present an exhibition based on a concept of its own, capable of standing by itself and travelling abroad.

The concept of “disarrangement” has not been imposed by the curator, but created from what has been learned through art practice, after a research carried out in eleven Brazilian cities where the work of more than a hundred artists was assessed. The title was taken from a Cuban pianist and composer of the sixties, Felo Bergaza, who aroused great enthusiasm among the audience with his musical arrangements, so radical that he would call them “disarrangements”. “His passionate imagination as composer and performer used to outshine the original performance, even though its framework was never broken”. This is the concept on which the exhibition is based: creative disarrangements of structures, materials, formal dimensions or the content of the works of art. As Gerardo Mosquera said, “some artists create their works through the formal and conceptual recourse to “disarranging” a structure. Disarrangements can be carried out in the formal dimension of the work of art, in its content, in its projection or in all of them”.

All the artists on exhibition were selected because they played a leading role in these trends and their works intertwine in a perfect manner with the visual discourse of this exhibition. Four of the 20 artists on exhibition do not come from or live in Brazil (the Galician Jorge Barbi, the Belgian Wim Delvoye, the Chinese Kan Xuan and the Argentinian Jorge Macchi). The addition of these artists stamps the exhibition with a more thematic and open character, and is the result of an “auto-criticism” from within intended to exhibitions determined by regional or national frameworks, which, according to the curator, are now obsolete. That is why an artist whose work complies with the exhibition concept will be included in the country hosting the exhibition. On this occasion, it will be the Galician Jorge Barbi.

DESARREGLOS is presented as a thematic exhibition of international interest. This target, according to the curator, has three different aspects:

First, encouraging the dissemination of contemporary art in Brazil, which is nowadays one of the leading art scenes in the world. There are many Brazilian artists in the international scene, but very little is known of Brazil as a first-class art space with its particular character. People often get the impression that Hélio Oiticica, Ligia Clark or Cildo Meireles came out of nowhere, due to the ignorance of Brazilian cultural processes, artists and movements.

Second, taking the exhibition to countries or cities that do not belong to “international circuits” and that show an emerging energy. The know-how and the example set by Brazilian plastic arts may encourage a fruitful exchange of experiences in these places, particularly for young artists and critics.

And third, striving to create a plurality of international circuits capable of establishing their own practices and values beyond the context. This will give a meaning to terms like “international art”, “international art language” and “international art scene”, and introduce in the international circuit an exhibition that can raise interest by itself.

TEXT BY THE CURATOR:

It is a stereotype to state that Brazilian art has generally followed a constructivist approach –in the widest sense of the word– as a result of the impact during the fifties of concretism in Brazil, the most influential consequence of the original constructivism. But, as in many stereotypes, there is some truth in this.

I think that the most important thing that Max Bill ever did in his life was to visit Brazil. This Swiss artist and architect presented an individual exhibition in the Museo de Arte de São Paulo in 1950, and gave lectures in this city and in Rio de Janeiro. It is a well-known fact that the following year he was awarded in the first São Paulo Biennial, and in 1953 he toured around Brazil on the government's call. His proposals stimulated a new period in Brazilian art, and their impact has reached the new millennium, acting as the foundation of an art trend that has taken it as far as to original poetics.

However, the exceptional influence of concretism in Brazil is more evident in the creative "disarrangement" undertaken by Brazilians rather than in their support. But disorder does not involve an utter denial. It is amazing to realize the strong tendency of Brazilians to establish structures, to create unusual "new realities", to put serial components in order, to work by addition of units, to use geometry or a sort of mathematic drive in a direct or indirect way... Besides, Brazilian art has a unique sensitivity towards materials, and it is based on the object, its reality and its physical presence. Although it coexists with many others, it is a prevailing style that stamps a particular character on Brazilian art and highlights its relationship with current trends on the other South American countries.

On this basis, some artists create their works of art through the formal and conceptual recourse to "disarranging" a structure. This disarrangement can be performed in the formal dimension of the work, in its content, in its projection or in all of them. As Gaston Bachelard said: "We always want the imagination to be the faculty of creating images. But it is more precisely the faculty of distorting the images provided by perception and, most of all, the faculty of freeing us from the original images, of changing the images".

Here is an important aspect of Brazilian art imagination: imagination as a "change", as a "distortion" of existing images, even of "primordial" or deeply-rooted images. Most of Brazilian art needs previous frameworks on which and within which to implement its freedom. This is a freedom inside a beloved and pleasing prison, just like the "love in the prison of your arms" that depicts an old bolero I have just made up. I must insist that I am not talking about a design process but an array of aesthetic-discursive strategies, usually very complex and subtle, aimed to make sense. They somehow subvert the constructive framework from the inside, but do not actually break it. Instead, they widen its possibilities towards unknown fields, supporting them in an innovative way and compelling a creative tension of meanings. This usual operation in Brazil must have its origins in neoconcretism, a "disarrangement" whose ambiguous and multidirectional influence has reached the present day and is deeply rooted in the country's art dynamics.

This approach is in line with the postminimalist trends of the so-called international art language. But, in any case, Brazilian "posts" are very international. Minimalism was to a certain extent concretism's "sleep of reason", but it was at the same time a naive concretism in the "American way", that, however, did not build its hopes on the ambitions of design and architecture. Later on, postminimalism became its own neoconcretism. This reverted way of considering things seems very plausible to me, not only because of the anti-hegemonic change it involves, but also because neoconcretism was long before the forerunner of postminimalism, apart from the fact that it opened a new and different path.

Echoing neoconcretism's and postneoconcretism's heritage, Brazilian artists –São Paulo's "rigorist artists" and Rio de Janeiro's "ludic artists", if we follow the classic dichotomy– work with particular and sometimes indescribable freedom, emotion, spontaneity and sensitivity that characterize them with special features that go beyond their dissimilarity. They have introduced a somehow paradoxical expressiveness in contemporary detachment, and they have also turned the aesthetics of the materials into the greatest complexity, providing it with subjective associations, diversifying it, making it more complex and subverting the practice of "international language".

The personality of this anti-samba plastic art does not manifest itself through representations, symbols or important activations of vernacular culture, as it usually happens in South American art, but through a particular manner of creating contemporary art. That is, it is shown in the ways of creating the texts instead of in the ways of projecting the contexts.

The overcoming of the remaining nationalist neurosis and its tense dilemmas made it possible for Brazilian artists to fully concentrate on their work with relaxation (which could be very healthy for many current South American artists, by the way). Such position, together with the attraction towards international avant-garde –deeply rooted as a consequence of the São Paulo Biennials–, and along with other processes provided by Brazilian cultural syncretism, has produced what I consider the surmounting of the Anthropophagy programme. The point is not to borrow and swallow what is "international" any more, but to create it. Although in general terms there is an enforcement of a sort of "international art language" in the world as a consequence of the increasing internationalization of art circuits and markets, the Brazilians, instead of speaking this language with an accent, are creating it in the Brazilian way, that is, reinventing it in their own way.

This change in international practices by Brazilian contemporary art represents a "disarrangement" as well. It makes it easy to proceed in the opposite direction, from Brazil to the world, and to see "Brazilian" poetics in the works of the foreign artists included in this exhibition, beyond their particular features and differences. It does not mean that these artists have been influenced by Brazilian art, but they share common characteristics very usual and evident in Brazilian art, which embody and disseminate the current approach. At the same time, the "disarrangements" by the artists invited help to actively diversify and enrich the scope of the exhibition.

The concept of "disarrangement" as reference point for the selection of artists, works and the conceptual and visual discourse of the exhibition, is inspired in a Cuban musician: the pianist and composer Felo Bergaza, a forgotten figure in the night life of Havana in the sixties. Every night at cabaret Tropicana, Felo aroused great enthusiasm among the audience with the musical arrangements he played in a grand piano. So radical they were that he would call them "disarrangements". His passionate imagination as composer and performer used to outshine the original performance, even though its framework was never broken.

In a similar way, the creative aspect is represented in this exhibition and these works by means of a smooth act of subversion, which may be related to the spirit of these metamorphic times, where changes take place in margins, frontiers, interstices, mini-politics... in a complex net of re-adaptations. Although much has been said about the "age of acquiescence", I am optimistic to think that it is actually a time of dialogue, where transformations take place in a different way, in a horizontal and expanded way instead of vertical and concentrated. We are living a life of re-adjustment that intertwines a plurality of processes, where the social and cultural agents previously excluded have now a leading role. Beyond art and culture, a whole strategy of "disarrangement" is the main feature –and at the same time a metaphor– of a post-Utopian world where the dynamics of transformation, instead of changing what exists, tries to "disarrange it".

REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

“20 DISARRANGEMENTS. Panorama on Brazilian art”

GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS:

CD including texts and photographs of the exhibition in different formats.

IF YOU WISH YO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR MAIL POST TO:

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