

Time, Body, Otherness¹

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Abstract: These elements are recurrent in the artist's work: Time, as duration, in narrative photographs, films and videos that inscribe time in the image; the Body, as a place of experience and where the feminine emerges with political connotation; the Other, in works that deal with encounters, in the constitution of language derived by the contamination between subject and object of the discourse.

Keywords: Art, photography, film and video, Time, Body, Otherness.

1 Link to the original text: <https://www.e-publicacoes.uerj.br/index.php/concinnitas/article/view/55226>

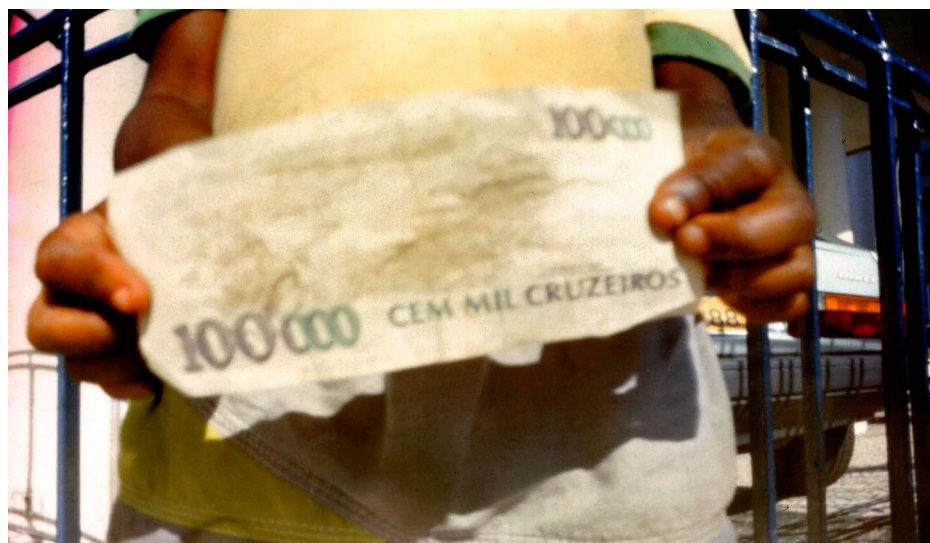
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Muller and untitled (the money), 1993 (Diptych of the series Os Meninos (The Boys), Rio de Janeiro, 1993/1994)

Photograph with pinhole camera
Photographic printing on resin colored paper,
130 x 100 cm and
35 x 60 cm



For a better understanding of my work, it's important to highlight my degree in cinema and remember the first Super 8 productions in the 1980's related to the so-called experimental film.

These were decisive essays and studies for later productions that, even being eminently photographic, retain visible influence from cinema – in the scale of the works, in the exploration of sequences, fragmented series and, more specifically, in the matter of Time, that dimension which is abstracted in the passage from cinema (where image gains *duration*) to photography.

In my work, Time is emphatically represented, it is almost a theme. Taking advantage of different artifices, this is a kind of photography that wants to *last* and to be analytical, organized in the construction of narratives.

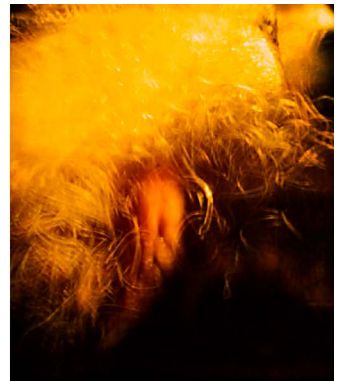
These initial investigations will also define an experimental trace in all subsequent production. They always look for a metalinguistic dimension, taking on a critical stance regarding all mediums used, their criteria of representation, of memory, subjectivity and invention. This also defines the hybrid character of this research, it is a type of photography that is *not quite* photography or a type of film that is *not quite* film, oscillating between objectivity and subjectivity, public and private, documentation and fiction.

From another standpoint, recent video productions still reveal Time as a central question. In this research, through filmic resources that produce a suspension of action, but are not translated into movement, time is inscribed in the image, modelling it as its form, achieving a kind of a *raccord* – a connection – of time. Thus, the image crystallizes, presenting itself as Time in its pure state.¹

Body is another recurring subject in my work. The fragmented body, rebuilt and brought back to its natural scale in sequences and photographic series, portraits and self-portraits that invest in the representation of an existential condition of the poetic action's subject. In this sense, the feminine appears as investigation of a way of being, in its fragmented,

1 I here mention the concept of the *crystal-image* created by Deleuze (1990) referring to the new image of cinema, the *time-image*, image of hybrid nature, always double or reduplicated, creating a circuit of indistinction between imaginary and the real, actual and virtual becoming thought and operating a direct *presentification* of time, affect as absolute exteriority, the spirit as the very reality of time.

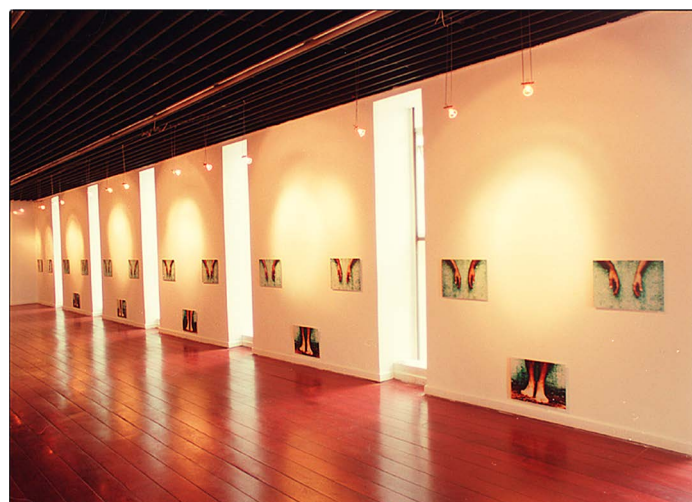
*Untitled. From the
Vulva Series #2 #
3# 7, 2000/2004*
Photograph with
pinhole camera
Photographic
printing on resin
colored paper,
each photo
11,2 x 8,8 cm



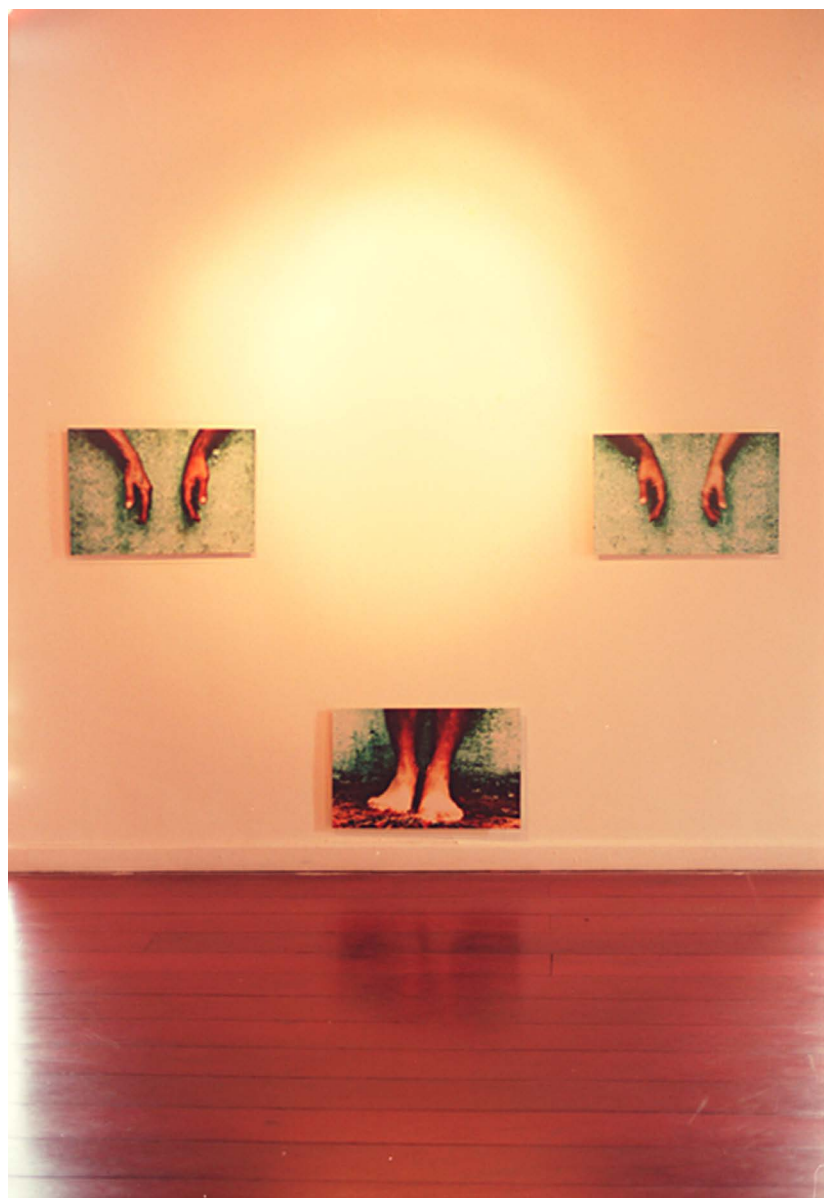
dispersed, multiple and mutant nature. The body as a *place*, an original *situation* of experience. The feminine gains an almost political connotation, as a flag, an affirmation of *difference*, of *strangeness*.

The body is also a reference in the relation between artwork and space – and in it – with the viewer, with whom it seeks to establish a conversation. Thus, the works present themselves through spatial diagrams, in which scale and installation strategies figure as important elements, always looking for a confrontation with the viewer, in a kind of *presentification* of the representation.

Last but not least, the Other, in works that deal with the confrontation that surfaces from an encounter – of the constitution of a subject of speech from the contamination between the artistic discourse and that which would be its object. These works have problematized more politically incisive forms of artistic action using photography and, now, video, as mediators in the search for a senses triggering attitude in confrontation with the world.



*Durâmen (Dura-
men)*, 1994
Photographic
installation. Pho-
tographic series
on resin colored
paper
Various dimen-
sions. Each photo:
30 x 45 cm; 1993
Photo of the ins-
tallation in Museu
da Imagem e do
Som, São Paulo,
1994



This being said, I present the project *Contos de Passagem (Tales of Passage)*, an experimental video work that brings in its core the issue of Otherness. It is an *audiovisual archive* composed of testimonials from children and youths that live and work in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, telling their stories. We sought to constitute a *geography of the city* in the period of the passage of centuries – from December 2000 to December 2001 – from the viewpoint of these boys and girls, circumscribing a kind of symbolic non-place within the urban social fabric. *Contos de Passagem (Tales of Passage)* is an *art object* of hybrid character: simultaneously anthropologic, ethnic, documental and poetic.

The issue of Otherness has been recurrent in my work and appeared, more explicitly, about ten years ago, when I did a project directly related to the one just described, entitled *Os Meninos* (*The Boys*), in partnership with street children of Rio de Janeiro.

The work had a dialogical character. A kind of game was proposed: having agreed to be photographed, the child was invited to participate taking pictures of any object of his choice. A “two-way street” was created, where the child at times was the object of the photograph in which he was portrayed and, at others, was the agent of the creative process assuming the role of subject. The performance of the boys put in discussion the position of the artist as someone gifted of a special character, in contrast to the artist as someone capable of producing meaning about the world. In this way, the boys were also creators, collaborators of the work.²

*Hilton and Felipe,
at 13 and 11.
Arpoador,
February, 2001
Rio de Janeiro,
Dec/2000 –
Dec/2001. Part 3
Feb/2001
Still of the video
Contos de
Passagem (Tales of
Passage)*



² Paulo Herkenhoff comments that this work “triggers the potency of symbolization and visibility. The concept of quality, with its arsenal of exclusion, is not at stake. By choosing such a precarious medium (as pinhole cameras) and simultaneously efficient for this political project, Trope and the boys are matched symbolically by technology.” (Herkenhoff, 1994:54)

Bruna, at 10.
 Copacabana, De-
 cember 31, 2000
 Still of the video
*Contos de Pas-
 sagem (Tales of
 Passage)*
 Rio de Janeiro
 Dec/2000 –
 Dec/2001. Part 1
 Dec/2000



Os Meninos (The Boys) was done with a camera without lenses, both for the aesthetics and the practice involved. *Câmeras-furinho (little hole cameras)*³ are handmade cameras that use the image formation process within a dark environment through a very small orifice. These cameras have no lenses, viewfinder, focus control, lever to pull the film, or shutter button. The produced image is blurry, often undefined, with perspective aberrations, contrary to the norms of the *good image*. The choice for pinhole cameras is part of a strategy of *strangeness*⁴ adopted in this and in other works, reworked and incorporated in *Contos de Passagem (Tales of Passage)*.

Another work worth mention as a reference to *Contos de Passagem* is *Tras-lados (Exchanges)*, a photographic series done in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Havana, between 1996 and 1997, for the occasion of

3 Expression used by Alfredo Grieco (1997), emphasizing the essencial fact and minimalist aspect of the camera without lenses.

4 Expression used by Russian Formalists, specially Chklóvski, in the 1920s referring to “a set techniques of construction whose function would be to disturb our daily perceptions and force the sensibility to ‘wonder’ about the symbolic arrangement that is presented to us.” (Machado, 1984:112, 113)

the 6th Havana Biennial, in May of the same year. Unlike *Os meninos* (*The Boys*), *Traslados* does not specifically address excluded childhood, and its proposal was to establish a kind of exchange (photographic-poetic-imaginary) between Brazilian and Cuban children managing the exchange of images/messages between them.

The main idea was to produce a work that would speak about Cuba and by reflection, about Brazil. The “game” proposed creating connections and provoking a dialogical situation to investigate connotations that could result from this: information/exchange in an isolation context, language instead of distance, representation of a non-official and non-institutionalized discourse – that of the child.



*Futebol (Soccer),
Rocinha, Rio de
Janeiro, 1997*

*Los Peloteros (The
Players). La Lisa,
Havana, 1997*

Diptych of the
series *Traslados*

(*Exchanges*),

Brazil – Cuba

1997/1998

Photograph with

pinhole camera

Photographic

printing on resin

colored paper, 2 x

(100 x 100 cm)

Traslados (*Exchanges*) was shown for the first time in the Havana Biennial, almost simultaneously to its elaboration. In Brazil, the work was expanded in two different formats attaining distinct narrative structures: projected image and artist's book. *Traslados* (*Exchanges*) was the object of my Master dissertation in Image and Sound in ECA-USP (Communication School at the University of São Paulo), finished in March, 1999. The narrowing connections between cinema and photography in the course taken by *Traslados* (*Exchanges*) led to discussions about the nature of these mediums and the links between them. *Traslados* (*Exchanges*) also indicated other possibilities of the artwork's insertion beyond those that had already been brought up by *Os Meninos* (*The Boys*).

Contos para 2001 (*Tales for 2001*) gave me the opportunity to develop some issues already present in *Traslados* (*Exchanges*) and *Os meninos* (*The Boys*), to problematize and delve into them; how to broaden the docu-

mental character of the work, its potential to act outside the traditional art circuit, as well as to develop interdisciplinary concepts among art and other fields of knowledge.

Further discussion points – the articulation of a symbolic field for the representation of the Other's imaginary, problematizing the relation *subject/object* in the work, the *gestuality* and the dramaticity of the work and also aspects of the image's formal construction, as the adoption of an aesthetics of precariousness and of a primary image technology (camera without lenses, retrograde light weight and low cost filming equipment, editing while shooting, etc...) – unfolded in the transposition of media (photography to video) and were resignified.

Moreover, new elements have come up, as the passage from the *image that lasts* in the suspension of action in pinhole photography to an *image that lasts* in the photographic projections and to the *image that lasts* in the extension of an *attitude* over time through the material recorded with a fixed film camera. In this sense, *orality* appears as the most recent data in the repertory of this linguistic fabric.

Rosilene, at 16.
Leblon, December
25, 2000.
Stills of the video
*Contos de Pas-
sagem (Tales of
Passage)*
Rio de Janeiro,
Dec/2000 –
Dec/2001. Part
1 - Dec/2000



Antonio Marcos,
at 13, Barra da
Tijuca, December
2000
Still of the video
*Contos de Pas-
sagem (Tales of
Passage)*
Rio de Janeiro
Dec/2000 –
Dec/2001. Part
1 – Dec/2000



In *Contos de Passagem (Tales of Passage)*, image and sound recordings were made in the formats Super-8, VHS, High-8 and 16mm. All the recording devices suffered some interventions in their interior – the original lenses were taken off and a little hole was incorporated in their place. Later, all the material was transferred to digital media to be organized retouched and edited. This mixture of technical means and formats and the experimental character of the use of cameras without lenses ended up configuring a kind of *mixed technology*, a research of *image and movement* and its possibilities of experimentation.

The pilot project, a projected videoinstallation was presented in parts one, two and three, relative to the months of December, January and February of that period, in Galeria 1 of Espaço Cultural Sérgio Porto (Rio Arte), from December 16, 2003 to February 2004. The rest of the work remains unpublished.

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