

Title	Iran do Espírito Santo	Author	Paolo Colombo
Date	2006	Artist	Iran do Espírito Santo
Publication	COLOMBO, Paolo; JUNCOSA, Henrique; TONE, Lilian. <i>Iran do Espírito Santo – Irish Museum of Modern Art</i> . Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA); Rome: Museo Nazionale Delle Arti Del XXI Secolo (MAXXI); São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2006.		

iran do espírito santo paolo colombo

Title	Iran do Espírito Santo	Author	Paolo Colombo
Date	2006	Artist	Iran do Espírito Santo
Publication	COLOMBO, Paolo; JUNCOSA, Henrique; TONE, Lilian. <i>Iran do Espírito Santo – Irish Museum of Modern Art</i> . Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA); Rome: Museo Nazionale Delle Arti Del XXI Secolo (MAXXI); São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2006.		

Iran do Espírito Santo works mainly in sculpture, drawings and installation; wall paintings and panels are rarer, but crop up with some regularity. These sculptures represent ordinary objects, such as boxes, candles, lamps, and various widely used everyday things. By executing his works with care and extreme precision, the artist achieves perfection in capturing the quintessence of their details and contents, a process that transforms the objects from particulars into universals, as if they were hyper-Uranian ideas or the unchanging, incorruptible models from which all reality, with its multiplicity of forms and manifestations, is derived. These ideas are perfectly demonstrated by the *Can* series (2003-2005), a series of twelve cans of different sizes, each of different dimensions, created from circular bar of stainless steel turned to perfection on a lathe. These sculptures with everyday cylindrical forms are presented as objects whose formal perfection excludes *a priori* any naturalistic or descriptive intention in the artist's work. The same is true of metal sculptures such as *Candle* (1999), or *Naked Light* (2002), and also of the fourteen drawings in felt-tip pen that compose the *CRTN* series (2005): composed of lines, at first boldly marked and then becoming fainter and fainter until the colour peters out completely. These drawings, easily interpreted as a covering or a filter for the light of a window, have their inverse proportion in the large glass sculptures such as *Restless 25* (2005) where the object is almost perfectly transparent.

At the same time, however, the artist's use of materials (mainly steel, aluminium, granite, sandstone and glass) tends to move in the opposite direction, towards the inevitable imperfection and imprecision typical of all artefacts, things and objects in the dimension of reality. In Espírito Santo's work, colour plays a fundamental part in our perception and classification of objects. In his marble boxes *White Box* (2003), *Grey Box* (2003), *Black Box* (2003), identical in technique and dimensions, colour provides a key to the interpretation of the works in their individuality and a clue for conjecture about their contents. Likewise, in his smaller sculptures, with forms that evoke the little capsules used to hold rolls of film, it is their black colour that identifies them much more unmistakably than their forms. Together with colour, there are also other aspects of the materials that the artist chooses to employ that affect the cognitive process of the viewer of his work: texture, for example, meaning all those secondary properties of matter that help define our perception of it (brilliance/opacity, surface continuity/discontinuity, transparency/solidity, etc.). In works where the artist uses sandblasted glass, crystal or mirrors, as in *Restless 25* (2005) and *Untitled (Unfolded)* (2004), the transparency of the material enables one to view the space behind the

sculpture as well as the external, frontal and lateral spaces that the work incorporates in its reflecting surfaces. The result is that the viewer's perception of the work goes beyond its clear-cut physical boundaries, expanding and taking in the setting in which it is placed. In addition, its texture also influences our perception of the weight of an object, which in the artist's work systematically contradicts the data presented on the purely formal plane.

The work of Espírito Santo has various points of contact with that strand in art that, ever since the 80s, has explored the nature of the object, the copy and the *simulacrum* (think of the American artist Allan McCollum and his *Surrogate Paintings*). However, his works combine this with a constant, profound aesthetic probing that seeks beauty in an equilibrium of forms and dimensions, while it contains a subtle, implicit irony that often uses dimensions and contents to undermine the information conveyed by the forms. So the artist explores the Platonic relationship between a real object, its ideal form and its position in space, while the perceptual recognition of the incongruence between matter and form enables him to affirm the archetype, the idea, as the first level of the cognitive process. Though Espírito Santo can be considered in many ways a conceptual artist, we need to emphasise a divergence between theory and artistic practice, because the research behind all his work grows out of the object itself and a painstaking study of its most visible and tangible qualities. Another characteristic feature, of central importance in Espírito Santo's output, is the way he creates links between his works. This is also reflected in his installation designs for exhibitions, always developed with meticulous attention. Within an exhibition, the occupation of a single space by two or more works and the sequence of the spaces containing other works are modulated with great care and profound reflection so that nothing in the *mise en scène* evokes the least trace of didacticism or documentary purpose. On the contrary, each work is perfectly integrated with its setting, and creates an exclusively aesthetic rapport with the other works on display, so that the viewer's gaze glides softly from one sculpture to another, his movement through the spaces of the exhibition cadenced by his soft breathing, almost in a state of apnoea.

Espírito Santo sees our minds as possessing the faculty of perceiving and recognising an object or reality itself even before we have any sensory perception of them. The uncontested supremacy that the artist attributes to the mind stems from a perceptual study of the object, which carefully and conscientiously explores its structure and composition, leading to a sort of modern Cartesian credo, a faith in the prerogative of consciousness to affirm thought and hence establish order and harmony to chaos.