

Ivens Machado

It would be more than enough if we just said that Ivens Machado's works are original. They are linked to the origins of man's relationship with Nature and Work. They are related to that concept of originality that Gaudí summarized as "the return to the origins".¹

As to these aspects Ivens Machado's sculptures belong to the same lineage as that of Brancusi, Henry Moore, the Fauvists, the German Expressionists, Miró, Noguchi and Gaudí's himself. Interested in the sensory and affective relation with Nature, all of these were led into having a direct and craftsman-like contact with matter.

As a counterpoint to artists, such as the cubists, futurists and constructivists, who, having aligned with the progress of sciences and technology, went along with the contingencies of history, this other equally modern lineage turned to the impulses and experiences of primitive societies in order to criticize and resist the demands of progress. Their reference to primitive art did not aim at the search for the aesthetic characteristics of its forms, as did the cubists. They were pursuing the full, raw state of human expression and its sensory relationship with Work. The expressionist drive, for example, was that of imposing the individual's imponderable forces into the rational laws, which were imperative in the industrial era.

Accordingly, The works of Ivens Machado seem to state this primeval pulsation, which escapes from the domain of sheer rationality and flings itself strait into the imaginary world.

As those schools and artists that went against the "progressive" avant-garde at the beginning of the present century, Ivens Machado has chosen to have the experience of the masses as the bases for his experiences. The rudimentary forms as well as the assemblage of residual and aleatory materials we find in the poor's urban architecture lead him into the same type of urgent buildings. His endeavor to "build" does not imply the effort of calculation, of engineering, or even of the building up of a prototype. It is an effort guided by imagination, by the impulsive and emergent handling of images. It is within the realm of gaming, of the unexpected and pulsating creativity that the artist rescues the playful aspect of life, life with no control, life filled with the magic of primeval instincts.

Nevertheless, Iven's "architecture" is not meant to shelter bodies or lives. It is body and life. It is a body merged with the organic forms of Nature, with the abundant and monumental natural world. It is bones and flesh, skeleton and nerves. Ivens' works are living beings in their original ghostliness. In spite of their unponderability, they refer to the world of our sensory experience, to the longing for our childhood or dionysian past when we could still meet with free playful pleasure.

However, where as the modern artists related to the Aesthetics of Nature imposed their historic anachronism onto criticism, Ivens Machado's criticism is no longer anachronic. Maybe it is not even interested in being critical any more. The world of his fantastic beings is already so distant from the contingencies of reality that these beings relate only to one another, within their specific communication logic code, regardless of our attempt at attributing sense and meanings to them.

Consequently, these absolutely original and inaugurating beings are linked to another sense of originality, that of the unique and the extravagant. They could be adequately related to Raymond Roussel's poetic language, in which critical capacity can only take place exactly on the absurd fantasy levels of his texts. The organized world, the very concept of systems or logic are all repelled as much as they go against the world of free imagination, which brings forth its own logic.

Roussel said: "The world is to contain nothing real, no experience from either the world of reality or that of the spirits, but exclusively altogether imaginary conjectures".²

Ivens Machado's sculptures could perfectly wander "Canterel Gardens"³. Although they neither have the same systematic devices nor relate to the gearing of the rousselian world, they would not look out of place there. Both worlds are populated by beings who fling us into the unplausible world of dreams and by objects ruled by absolute and irreducible fantasy.

Nevertheless, in Ivens' works fantasy does not rove over sea and land. It touches the ground – it strikes the world hard. It is present in specially heavy, rustic and brutal objects. Fantasy and imagination came together with a dense load of brutishness, as they did in the work of the German expressionists. Again, Ivens Machado aligns with modern European artists. As in the works of the expressionists, in his sculptures brutality reveals itself as the reverse of beauty, the face of beauty we can see in our decaying societies, where spiritual principals are bound to be oppressed by materialistic principles. Therefore, brutality is the means to change the beautiful and ideal images of the past into tragic images. The way Ivens Machado deals with classical forms and their idealistic perfection is inside out, totally and perversely turning the classical ideals into something negative and wild, aggressive and slashing. Even sexuality, when it is present in his works, has this same aggressive and perverted characteristic, which pervades human experience in our violent era. It is a debasing experience, which turns man into the material image of "the fallen angel".

In his originality Ivens Machado comes forward as the primitive man who, on uttering his first sounds, shouts out his perplexity, his strength, his weakness. His expression precedes, or else means to precede, the norms of social life, of civilization, of cultural mechanisms. It is meant to be the expression of man in his raw, natural state. It intends to bring forth the artist's impulses before the unknown. "... the aesthetic act has always precedes the social one. The totemic act of wonder in front of the tiger-ancestor came before the act of murder"

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August 1994

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Originally published in the exhibition catalogue *Ivens Machado*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, 1994.

Gaudi's writings, in "Antoni Gaudi (1852-1926)", exhibition catalog, Museum of Art, São Paulo – 1988.

Roussel to Pierre Janet, in "Le Macchine Celibi", catalog for the side exhibition to the Venice Bienal, 1975 – Alfieri Editore.

"Canterel Gardens", Martial Canterel's fictitious gardens in the book "Locus Solus" by Raymond Roussel, Folio Collection, Gallimard, 1963.

Barnett Newman's text, "The first man was an artist", in "Tiger's eye", New York, no. 1, October 1947.