

## Persona

By Ricardo Sardenberg

*Beijo* [The Kiss] stands up, *Medo originário* [Original Fear] sits down, and *Ofélia* [Ophelia] lies down. These are the three sculptures that make up the exhibition *Persona*, Gokula Stoffel's second solo show at Galpão Fortes D'Aloia Gabriel. Tantamount to the Jungian archetype, *Persona* is multiple, a jigsaw of masks and transparencies. The paintings and objects on the wall resonate with the sculptural bodies in the space – lying down, standing up and sitting down – whilst encircling the great enmeshed work in the center, which dances in a meditative silence before the kiss, fear and death. With preciseness and freedom, they all play the role of the artist's animus in her studio-cocoon, a new world opening up as collective unconscious.

Gokula deals with these themes as someone in a state of excitement, of alertness, in pursuit, where each snapping sound made by a forest branch seems to hide a secret beast, or an outburst, that can trigger the flight of birds in a landscape. The animus jumping off the body. As if by hallucination, a hill becomes an erupting volcano. With a symbolist sensibility and taking irrationality as a condition for creation, the quest for freedom defines the artist's persona. If heads are decapitated, if masks float in the space, these are Klimtian masks. The small sculpture *Beijo*, supported by a perforated tile (cobogó) made of clear glass is as radically vertical as Klimt's *The Kiss* but reduced to its minimal elements. The hardness of the glass is also water in a well, inverting the fluidity of the greenish painting *Pântano Primordial* [Primordial Swamp], where a female body relaxes in a spring as if in a jacuzzi. The humor behind the figure bathing in the swamp next to the sculpture *Ofélia* – which, in turn, dives into resin, evoking the delirium in Hamlet's famous suicide – is evident.

The kiss does not plunge into itself but into the other works. The Klimtian gold becomes the glowing silver of a curtain that simultaneously reveals and conceals the complex relationship between Penelope and time in her long wait for Ulysses. *Penélope dança tecendo com os fios do tempo* [Penelope Dances Weaving with the Threads of Time] shows a game of seduction and waiting between the female figure, seen from the waist down, and time, represented by threads and weaves: a sort of Kairos, the Greek word for a moment in time, an atmosphere, an entanglement with no chronological order, which, despite being represented by a head that looks like Georges Méliès' moon, is also an immaterial head-landscape like time itself. In fact, the moon represents time ambiguously, given that it also organizes the ancient calendar from sowing to harvesting, which means that it is also Chronos, chronological time. In this complete instability of symbols, Penelope and Kairos/Chronos fall in love in a metaphorical kiss, a ritualistic dance, as the threads connecting them and making room for time changes color. During the day she weaves the thread of time and of waiting, whilst, at night, in delirious dreams, she breaks apart from the body, leaving the moon to shine, solitary, up in the sky.

Here the psyche is inverted; a kiss, the other, a shadow. The standing elongated terrifying shadow emerges as a result of sun beams. In the painting *Raiar* [To arise], to arise is the moment when everything is turned to movement, a vortex of colors and light explosions. It is the projection of the creatures we are, but that we never show to each other. In the landscape, on a wall, on a table or a chair, our shadows appear projected by the sun, like in a puppet show. But we also see the inversion of this expansion, that moment of deep breathing, that moment when the piercing eyes of a nighttime vigil are blinded by the power of the first rays of solar fire, the moment when two fingers come together, such as in *Meditação* [Meditation]. Suspended on the ceiling, a cross-legged figure, a combination of painting and textile – with feet made of wire and hands made of painted bisque – seems to enter a state of transcendence by reaching for the sky. There is humor as well as acrimony, a sideways smile and the hope that everything will pass. A short, fast, fleeting moment, a possible Joycean epiphany, disorderly and linked to tired modernisms. At this point in time, symbolist Gokula is multiplied by Personae.