

**Ana Cláudia Almeida & Tadáskía**

by Clarissa Diniz

In this exhibition, Ana Cláudia Almeida & Tadáskía share, among themselves and with us, some of their most recent works, made during a period in which the artists – raised, respectively, in Realengo and Santíssimo, neighborhoods in Western Rio de Janeiro – find themselves living in or coming and going from the United States. It was there that, recently, they lived together in newfound closeness, sharing a house, a studio and meals during a brief residency period in Nevada.

Although the show draws them together, it resists likening or comparing them. It is not so much a play of lights in which one reflects the other. We prefer to walk in the edges of mirrors to enjoy the shadows that their reflections can't reach: "To me this exhibition is an invitation to perceive not only familiarity, friendship and my interest in approximation, but also to what differentiates us in our history: the distances and the gap between the both of us. The magic of the misencounter in the encounter," confessed Tadáskía.

We would like to warn, therefore, that the disparities between Ana Cláudia Almeida and Tadáskía are not complementary. Their differences are not equivalent. The singularities of their oeuvres highlight precisely the unknown that resists the presumed familiarity that circles them today – because they are artists, because they are black, because they group in the *carioca* suburbs, because they paint, because they draw.

The dialog between their practices exists not despite but because of their individualities.

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For Ana Cláudia Almeida, to paint is essentially to transform. Diametrically opposed to the messianic belief in "art that transforms the world", for the artist the main metamorphosis is the one inherent to the act of creation. Deeply attracted to the physiochemistry of matter and time – and, with the same intensity, taking care not to discipline them –, Ana manipulates and composes with paint, plastics, oil sticks, fabric and images according to her clear commitment to the memory of what they undergo together.

Even if in the video "Piraquara" (filmed according to the stories of her grandmother Maria de Lourdes Santos) or in the recent piece "Diário" – a sort of visually annotated diary –, the artist deals directly with the theme of memory, it is most of all in her paintings that we may witness an interest in a politics of form. In the manner in which she layers, mixes, transfers, folds or expands (among many other actions) the colors with which she works, Ana Cláudia has developed a way of making that is ethically and aesthetically situated against erasures.

The artist takes care that her final gestures do not annihilate the vestiges, the impregnation or the density of those that came before. She sides with the previous markings as a generous principle for what will follow, as evidenced by her fascination with monotypes, present in the large-scale paintings in the show. Ana Cláudia Almeida articulates, in the formal dimension, the ontocosmological experience of ancestry:

"The ancestral is not that which dies. The ancestral is what remains," teaches Leda Maria Martins.

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In turn, Tadáskia is interested in transformability as an existential premise. In her drawings, sculptures, books, photographs and installations, transfiguration of colors, lines, forms and stains produces a latent state of impermanence, in which the most varied possibilities of transmutation are on the brink of taking place, of repeating, of renewing at all times.

The fluidity and lightness with which transformability is announced in the artist's imaginary challenge causality, the economy of necessities and urgencies or even the moral-judiciary rhetoric that establishes duties and claims rights. Differently from the transformative work that transpires in Ana Cláudia Almeida's works, in Tadáskia transformation seems to be of the order of apparitions, of things that simply happen or not. If Almeida's work is charged with memory, perhaps Tadáskia's is taken by magic.

Apart from the bewitching behavior of her works' visual aspect, the fable-like character of her writings and tales become an antidote for the submission of representation to a realist episteme. In pieces that act as loose-leafed books, in producing leaps and turns in the flow of senses, it is the linearity of narrative reason itself and its supposed coherence that Tadáskia unsettles. It is this territory of intentions, in the show, that drawings and sculptures playfully testify to *ladybug joaninha's* saga.

As an artist producing meaning, movement and transformations from the differences and incongruities between "being" and "seeming," Tadáskia reimagines the rationalities and socially imposed (im)possibilities. Her practice is not situated beyond the "Real" but before it. Her eminently oneiric lexicon makes the exercise of dreaming the changing of forms her politics.

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In the group of works that now occupies Fortes D'Aloia & Gabriel and Quadra, in São Paulo, we witness an artist's own color becoming estranged given the chromaticism of the other, or we admire the transformation of her works' dimensions when seen according to the scale of another. However fleetingly, even the intentionalities of certain gestures can become disoriented when brushing up against the other's space-time. In the end, approximation – and curatorship is here to prove it – means producing equivocation.

The opposite of equivocation, however, is not truth. Its configuration is more geometric than moral: what is at stake is not being wrong, but unmaking the supposed unity of the real. Equivocation does not emerge from different forms of "seeing the work," but situates itself between "the different worlds that are seen," as put forth by Viveiros de Castro. Its opposite is not reality but the univocal.

Equivocation is not, therefore, an insufficiency of comprehension nor an impression on the level of perception, but the very condition of interpretation. It is through equivocation that we insert variations in the univocal, transforming unity into an endlessly interpretable multiplicity.

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A society that dreams of being less exclusive urges us to experiment with new formations that hold space for the liberty – at times magical – of transmutation, as with transformation

as a politics of fabricating memory and permanence. A formation that does not force subjectivities, bodies and meanings to interrupt their continuous metamorphoses in order to fit into the imperial shutters and, fossilized by a patrimonial imaginary, “conquer the privilege” of not being forgotten – always as much as now.

According to this transformative vocation in the show, we desecrate the mirror as an archetypal form of representation and relationality. With *Ana Cláudia Almeida & Tadáskia*, we wish to unlearn the comparative grammar that converted proximities into similarities and naturalized translation as an exercise in fitting foreign meanings into the terms of our own metrics.