

What we see is the result of a slow—very slow—process of formation. Time is required for something that unfolds in continuous movement beyond our sight to consolidate. Its presence on the Earth's surface (or, more rarely, beneath water) reflects the constant motion of tectonic plates beneath our feet. A fissure opens a passage to the planet's core, where incandescent materials such as magma, gases, and extremely hot liquids accumulate and, from time to time—often without warning—emerge. Cave drawings discovered at Chauvet-Pont d'Arc in southern France are considered the oldest known representations of a volcanic eruption, revealing how volcanoes have fascinated and terrified us since prehistoric times.

Specialists say there are no active volcanoes in Brazil, but here, carnivals are like volcanoes. The country's largest—and perhaps most complex—popular manifestation is also something built over time, year after year. For much of that time, it unfolds outside our field of vision, accumulating pressures, desires, conflicts, fantasies, hopes, and disillusionments, until it reaches a moment of eruption—at once spectacular and frightening. Opening in February, on the eve of Carnival, *Como funcionam os vulcões* serves as a kind of warm-up, proposing a dialogue with the rising heat that precedes Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, taking the image of the volcano as its metaphor. Here, this popular celebration appears not as a historical or thematic reference, but as a method—a key for reading the world, engaging with it, and making oneself present. A “poetic-urban event,” as Hélio Oiticica defined it, Carnival emerges as a principle, a working method, or a fundamental material for artistic production and thought, and for everything around it.

The works by Amelia Toledo, Arthur Chaves, Barrão, Cerith Wyn Evans, Ernesto Neto, Ivens Machado, Janaina Wagner, Leda Catunda, Maria Manoella & Mauro Restiffe, Rivane Neuenschwander & Cao Guimarães, Rodrigo Cass, Rodrigo Matheus, Tiago Carneiro da Cunha, Valeska Soares, and Yuli Yamagata gathered in this exhibition are read through their engagement with accumulation, transformation, and a broad sense of emergence. They place us between wonder and tension, the spectacular and the latent, prolonged gestation and unpredictability, the fantastic and the silent.

In her final book, *Ma mère rit* (2013; *My Mother Laughs*), filmmaker Chantal Akerman (1950–2015) revisits her memories and recalls the day her mother spoke to her about “the need to laugh in the midst of an announced catastrophe. To laugh on top of a volcano.” The advice echoes popular wisdom, which holds that the harder the year, the more explosive the Carnival. “Happiness is a warm gun,” as Belchior reminds us (listening to Lennon and McCartney in the tropics), or “Joy is the ultimate test,” as Oswald de Andrade wrote in the *Anthropophagic Manifesto* (1928)<sup>1</sup>. Rather than attempting to explain carnivals or volcanoes, *Como Funcionam os Vulcões* carries an indirect question in its title—a call for the public to inhabit boiling territories.

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Janaina Wagner for the reminder