

“...a fluid and unknown power”

Amphi is a Greek prefix that means “from both sides”, “of one and of another species”, or even “that which circulates, which goes from one side to another”.

In 2000, Daisy Xavier held an exhibition called “**Amphibian**” (1) and, in it, she appeared to inscribe some of the work’s principal subjects. It clearly outlined her interest in states of transition, in the dilution of boundaries and in situations of constant becoming in which the materials foreshadowed latent displacements.

Those ‘amphibious’ sculptures and photographs that transited between liquid and solid states were also malleable to various types of spaces, and already sought to add the dynamic, discontinuous sense of the unconscious to the idea of body.

Interested in creating poetic objects that question their own forms in the same sense that she questions their stability and their physical order, the artist is forever proposing situations of transition, breaking the difference between opposites and bestowing the art’s work with a fluid and unknown power.

In the current show, Daisy Xavier declares, affirmatively, that she is dealing “with the artificiality of opposites” (2), that is to say, that terms of dichotomy are merely conventional categories or artificial instruments for constructing language, given that, in reality and in existence, all things are interwoven.

The artist appears to be constantly questioning the clarity of the boundaries between things, to con-fuse the inside and the outside, the right side and the reverse, the static and the voluble.

Her works produce possible visual inscriptions for the idea of voluptuous fluxes that do not accommodate the immobility of solids, the establishment of parameters, or even the ordinary lexicon of speech.

“Negação” [“Negation”] is a video about the demolition of a house built in 1890 – one in which the artist had lived for most of her life. The filming of this destruction surely possesses obvious affective ties, but what may be of consequence is not speculation regarding the intersection of biography and work, but to seek the ‘amphibious’ enlace that permeated its structure. The video is an endless loop of demolition scenes and of their reverse, when we then watch, simultaneously, their phantasmatic re-erection. Daisy Xavier says that “destroying and constructing are two movements of an identical fact” (3). This reminds us of Picasso when he said that to make art is to destroy, thus declaring that it is only possible to construct poetic language if one first dismantles reality.

The circular dynamics that permeates the projection does not distinguish the beginning from the end – that which precedes something that comes later – in a trans-temporal relationship that replaces the status of progressive time with an unpredictable, changeable order.

“Negation” appears to be linked to the Freudian concept of ‘Verneinung’, for it creates symmetry between denial and affirmation, given that one can only deny something that has already existed, that was already present. In the video, Daisy Xavier returns yes to no and vice versa, converting the notion of antagonism into one of equivalency. Similarly, present and past alternate and recreate one another in a spiral, as if evolving within some paradoxical chain that breaks with the hierarchy of time.

Along with the video, the artist presents a series of photographs of the demolition, also seemingly constructed from little destructions, and from the film editing of dispersed, disconnected segments. The assemblage of these scenes, edited so as to break with conventional, linear narrative, activate relationships between the body and the house, subverting the separation between content and form, image and thing. The body is immersed in the walls, staircases, flooring and banisters, in full identification with place, composing with it an irrevocable magma and denying any conflict between their natures. Editing dilutes the differences, producing a movement of synthesis between apparently disjointed parts and drawing alterities together by means of univocal yet unusual correspondences.

In this exhibition, Daisy Xavier reaffirms her interest in activating correlations that contradict the world’s objectivity to reverberate above common sense by establishing immemorial spaces and times that suspend the precision of chronological and rational boundaries. The video and the photographs parade through a floating space-time that avoids the invariable axes of order, assailing other textures, such as those of revolution, undulation and drift.

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- (1) “Amphibian” was held at the Centro Cultural Candido Mendes de Ipanema in September, 2000.
- (2) From an interview with the artist.
- (3) Idem.

