

# Histological Cuts

Bernardo Soares says that if the heart could think it would stop.

The brain, indeed, thinks, so it is said. Why doesn't it stop? Why is there the anguish of cerebral paralysis? For more litho, the almost stone. Almost rock. Almost a cliff that stoops over the valley and is in-ert, watching the water of the river flow like blood flows in arteries. Tombstone, funeral pillar, necropolis half way up the slope contemplating villages.

Fossil time. Petrified. Like thousand-year-old bones.

That which doesn't think, one imagines, lives in a deep coma. This contradicts itself: it still lives and it no longer lives. Time becomes the same for it. At each moment that which exists in space is repeated, nothing, not even a grain of pollen carried by the wind nor a drop of dew brought by the morning chill, so the same that it is not even possible to speak of moments. Sleeping Beauty's hundred years are as nothing.

What would we say if we knew anything of physics? That what stops, because it stops, moves at the speed of light? And that time no longer has any meaning; that space contracts upon itself, being reduced to a minimum thickness, that of the dot?

And yet, "I am minimum, but when I lend my elementary reality to the nothing", says Reinaldo Ferreira (how useful poets are), in a very short poem justly called "The Dot", "the nothing is only the rest", that is, your world – mine, yours, his, never our world, all of your world, theirs. Condemned to singularity like a prisoner in the isolation of his cell, like the monks who locked themselves behind walls in order to flee from flesh and the devil, but who took them both with them.

To annul them is to annul the time that flows in our veins. It is the inert body that is no longer capable of establishing the difference between a before and an after. The probable eternal happiness, still and laughing, without "hurting at all", like in another poet, Camilo Pessanha. Who also says "wild roses in winter bloomed by mistake".

Is what hurts alive?

Intriguing is the art of sculpture, of drawing.

It depends entirely on the conditions of the space, the broad sheet of paper, generally white, the marble block, and the classic bronze.

In the case of Cristina Ataíde, also the wax, the iron. Or the wood. And the colors.

External meaning and objectivity. Which is extensive.

But here is paradox. How can one sculpt the duration, the rhythm, and the disharmony of emotion? How can one transform the balance of the full being, here and now, all present, that which runs and is thickened? The unfinished into the perfect? The eclipse into circumference?

Emotions can't be measured: no one has a meter and a half of love, much less six kilos of burning rage, a bushel of pure hatred, a pound of soft tenderness. They are not extensions, they are affections of the self that suffers, exults, and thinks. Unlike extension, of the wealth, of the things that one can have and go through, count, put into safes in banks, lock away or throw onto the clandestine rubbish dump of the empty lot behind your house, friendships last. You are a friend to your girlfriend, a girlfriend to your friend, since schooldays, since the days that are measured by the ring-ing of a bell, how many years is it now?

Tempus, (not that which is heat or cold, merely meteorological circumstance, today it is raining from the north to the south of Portugal, snow is falling on high ground, but the Tempus that goes until the gilding of the sun and makes the wild roses bloom, tinges the white clothes on the washing line – before detergents arrived along with progress, all the strange languages that we have stutteringly become used to, feeling what? Vaguely nothing: does a detergent contain something specific to make a heart muscle beat more quickly?).

True time is youthful, it is that of blood in the gills: une valse à vingt ans, une valse à cent ans, une valse à mille temps. It is what one feels inside the thorax, comme une musique militaire allemande où l'on n'entend que la grosse caisse – Brel and Vian remind us.

The Time of the metaphor-hearts – of the solar plexus, perhaps – that accelerate and become peaceful, that run disorderly, out of fear and anxiety, out of euphoria, of shame, of just pride.

But Cristina Ataíde's sculpture stabilizes them. First in the wax, deformed in heat, but like cooling emotions, becomes immobilized. There remain memories – Who knows? – of a coagulated time.

Then in formaldehyde. Immense, red, ground and finally stopped also. At rest. Now nothing hurts them.

And then, these sentiments flattened out, as if on a planisphere, the map of your world that was round and was circumnavigated, now here you have it: laid flat on the ground and on the stone; tremendously increased, exposed on the plate of glass, hyperbolic in the lenses of a microscope. You may now see the veins through which the blood ran, the sweat and the tears, where you felt the living genius.

Step by step, with the gaze that takes in everything in one glance, but which lingers on this or that moment, to immediately move on, as if in search of lost time, finally time recovered on a slab on the floor.

Fallacy? Sophism?

But is that which is called art only that ability of making sophisms of paradoxes? Of granting life to that which contradicts life?

Lying in order to hear the unspeakable truth?

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