

VOLTAR DE VEZ EM QUANDO

Going back

Voltar de vez em quando (Back from time to time) unveils a polymorphic territory of regresses (in the sense of going or coming back), convoking moments-recourses of the historiography of art, of the genealogy of the place, and of the memory of affections. Challenging gravity, marble bodies halt chronological time and reveal the subjective temporality of coming back, the affective moment that suspends the conventions of being in the here and now, of having been, of always have been being.

Regress as a moment

The notion of going back re-inscribes the past and anticipates the future. In order to go back, one needs to defy the chronometric and historical time that binds all organic cycles, to see the moment as an emotional and psychological interval, and to consider the possibilities of a subjective temporality. Time as violence and the violence of time are diluted as the event becomes the moment, this is, whenever one deconstructs sequentiality, cause-effect relationship, the arithmetic of the sun. One of the oldest inventions of humankind, the devices we have been using to keep time have allowed us, in ever more sophisticated ways, to observe and measure chronological or chronometric time as it sets the rhythm of our everyday lives. Nonetheless, there are many forms of discourse that allude to a historical and mnemonic time, permeating temporalities that guide (and bind) impulses and desires. In going back, one can find a promise, a regret, or the imaginings of want and belief.

Regress as (re)vision

With reciprocity as one of its congenital characteristics, the gaze inscribes the act of seeing in an expanded field of sociability that is both conditioning and culturally conditioned. A field where everything exists in relation to an otherness, where codifying and de-

codifying are constant practices, and where conflict is permanent. Thus, the gaze implies seeing anew — a re-vision. Contemporary art (or part of it, at least) has a participatory vocation in this great category of revisionism as it integrates, denounces, quotes, reveals, and conceals previous images while convoking a past that often consubstantiates the present of the images. In its constellation of almost infinite inclusiveness, contemporary creation incorporates a set of revisionist practices that help us to reflect upon the archive, memory, the past, and other forms of anteriority, and produces meaning as it occupies the interstitial place where the past dwells in the now. This is one of the roles of art in the visual contemporaneity: negotiating the past as a means to produce the present. As such, one must also take representation at its face value: it is the action of re-presenting something, which always carries the dimension of a latent anteriority. In a time of visual urgency, this dimension has multiple expressions in artistic creation, and we often see works of art that refer to other, previous images. Going back to that other, image.

Regress as affection

If the different Modernisms made possible for art to transform into an autonomous field of meaning, free from the obligation of representing the real, Romanticism signaled the moment in which the work of art became a platform for intervention in the real world. These two moments anticipate the emergence of art as a territory that, based on an autonomous stance and independent from a role of mirror, acts upon a domain that goes beyond the artistic field, and convokes several subjectivities. Nature has an internal principle of change and movement that allows for the generation of new identities. The capacity to emulate this principle makes it possible for art to create something original through an exercise that is itself based on relations of similarity. Reality does not simply precede the action of

artistic representation, but also follows it, as it is built from the results of that same action. Going back to a certain place or moment implies a predisposition, a will or a desire that are often pre-cognitive and resist the symbolic. As such, creation is always a product of affection. Affection has a power of epistemological expansion, contributing to an expanded and subjectively real knowledge.

Regress as world

Artistic creations are simultaneously entities that exist in the world, and representations of that same world. The various meanings they incorporate in themselves are the causes and the effects of (an on) the political, social, economic, and cultural superstructure where they are inscribed. They are entities with their own ontology, which address something and, consequently, have semantic content. They are programmatic, this is, they include a positioning or a stance in relation to their subject matter (these positions are presented using rhetorical strategies, e.g. metaphors), and they are subject to interpretative exercises that integrate their ontology (being dependent of an historical moment, their interpretation has, therefore, a contextual nature). The attritions between politics and aesthetics become central to the great debates on representation, which already include the awareness of a global cultural diversity and of the need for a subjective-political dimension. Because of this, and in the words of Arthur C. Danto, artworks are embodied meanings. As the world turns on itself, the work of art is constantly going back to a new place, embodying it in meaning.

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