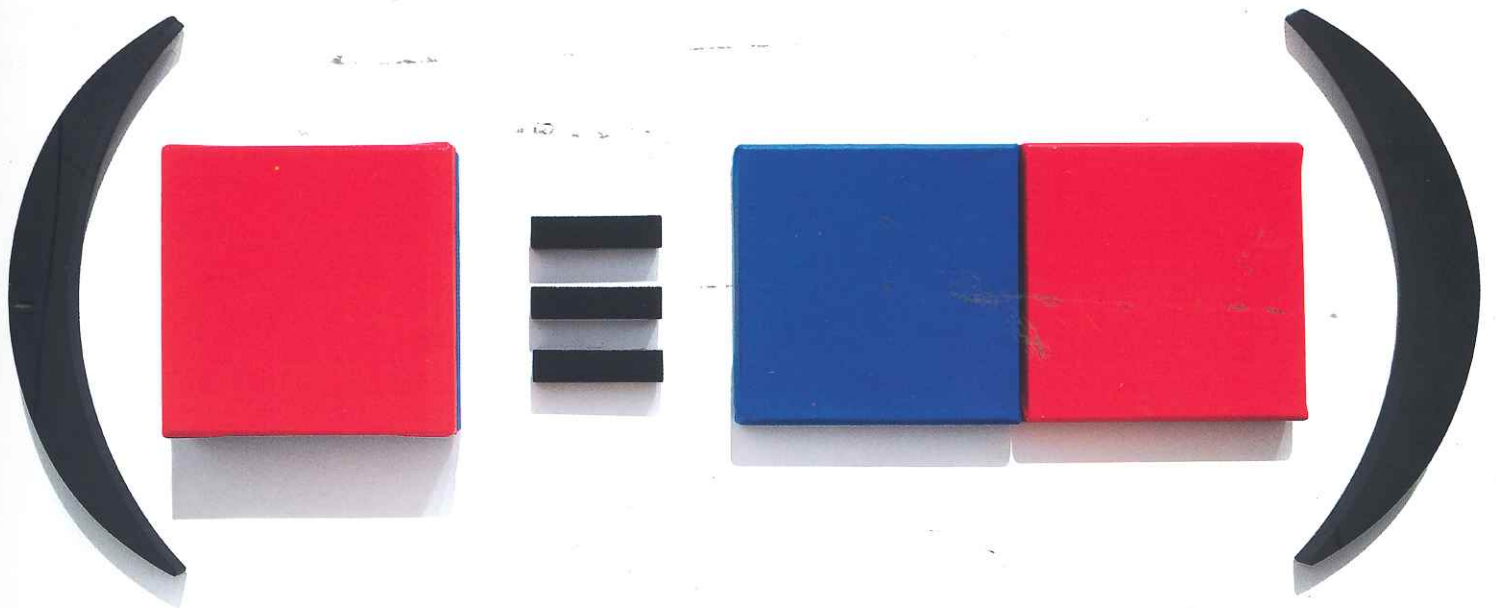


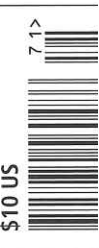
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# ArtNexus



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The exhibition unfolds in two sites of the gallery and at Paris Photo. Between stereotypes, emulsions on aged glass printed on a variety of papers, fabrics, flat or concave glass, the selection grows larger than one hundred images, articulated around *Point du départ* (Starting Point, 2015), an initial work inspired by Giotto's *The Annunciation To St Anne*. The reference to the room is a kind of matrix, and its breaking is a leitmotiv. The annunciation—which is to say, the gravity—opens up according to this point of view: a synthesis of all the deconstructions to come. It is the projection of the private space of the workshop as a blank sheet. A metaphor of the surface (canvas, paper, or glass) waiting for a representation that is governed by antinomies: the cosmic, the psychic, and the corporeal.

The work is assembled and disassembled, and the artist invents solutions in the process: she adds pigments, traces lines, constructs, modifies, enters or leaves, invites characters in, and records the passage of time according to the map of the stars at that moment and in that specific location. Those are all viable ways of preserving the memory of scenes and scenarios that could be understood as autonomous residues: the dynamics of a projection.

An autographed artist's book in seven copies, 25 x 34 cm, comprised of another sixty prints, is part of the theme. Its plaster covers transform it into an art object. An adjacent volume tells us the title, and another, smaller book contains the star maps with the date and time when each photograph was shot; another kind of treatment of the image in allusion, again, to a certain nomadism. Morawetz creates installations specifically for her shots, and her materials are varied: mirrors, fabric, wood, metal, wire.

Morawetz creates fictions and atmospheres using very simple objects, a few fixings, lights, and fabrics, in order to produce the illusion of a new space. This resembles the practice of a stage designer, where actors are recreated and de-structure their own piece. As in the previous shots with the members of a Butoh dance troupe, the circularity, the stellar, and the questioning of the boundary between subjective and objective are highlighted. Passages of the soul recorded on a variety of surfaces. This is a feminine art that eliminates everything superfluous. Its only flickering reflections are the paths followed by the lines: thus the sensation of weightlessness.

This fiction helps viewers discover themselves: Euclidean space and, by extension, the gallery itself. The uncertainty of perception creates

**Ricardo Brey.** *Birdland*, 2001. Showcase, saxophone, ostrich eggs, capes, rubber tube, buttons, parts, license plates, metal objects, tie, pencils, desk, dishes. 62<sup>63</sup>/<sub>64</sub> x 54<sup>23</sup>/<sub>32</sub> x 54<sup>23</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in. (160 x 139 x 139 cm).



an out-of-time experience, and the result goes beyond the measure of the execution: from there come its power and its mystery.

"The idea is that everything communicates and that each new action retains the traces of the preceding one (...) this is my observation about emptiness as a creative force," says Gabriela Morawetz.

SUSANA SULIC

## Ricardo Brey Galerie Nathalie Obadia

For his third solo exhibition in France (Galerie Xippas, 1993, and Crestet Centre d'Art, 2000'), Ricardo Brey (Havana, 1955) presents at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia eight collages and four large drawings (all from 2016), two installations—*Birdland* (2001-2016) and *Árbol Cortado y Escombros* (Cut Tree and Debris, 2013-2014)—as well as his earlier *Venus* (2004). Exile, time, displacement and the issue of identity are recurrent themes in Brey's work. His titles, written in several languages or created through the use of neologisms, indicate the most important concerns of an absolutely subtle, subjective and mysterious work that builds and deconstructs, creates and destroys; in which remains and debris, waste and ashes are nothing more than memory ghosts, echoes of oblivion, allegories of the brevity of life and its inescapable end.

Powerful and fragile at the same time, subtle, earthy and material, open and closed, Brey's work explores both the transience and the immutability of situations and things. While he vindicates chance and improvisation, his work comes across as extremely conceived and constructed. There is a kind of "affectation" in the choice of materials (stars, mirrors, chains with metallic bells, etc.) that clashes with the "mundane" (oxidized iron boxes, grease stained cartons, a worn-out military blanket, broken plates, tires, etc.), objects that return with the passage of time as part of a formal and conceptual vocabulary that, through repetition, weaves a network of new discourses. Everything changes and yet everything remains identical.

The choice of a dark polychromy for the collages—his colors are reduced to the soil to such extent that it could very well be a monochromy; the matted black of the burned wood, the green-gray of the aged metal, the rust, the matte blacks and whites of the photographic paper—is Brey's way of challenging the luminous contrasts found in the magnificent drawings that he presents in this exhibition. Indeed, although we feel a form of accumulation in his works (stacked cartons that remind us of the lead "books" presented by Anselm Kiefer at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in 2015), refinement authorizes the space to reclaim its place in the drawings, having as a dark counterpoint the various variations on the "circle", "the enclosure" or "ellipse;" species of metaphorical cosmogonies in which a constellation of dispersed phrases and letters unfold across a graphic world full of subtleties.

There is also the threatened or devastated natural world, another obsession having to do with disappearances, in which Brey evokes the relationship between permanence and the instability of things and places. In several of the last collages, he emphasizes the figure of the tree, or, rather, that of a fragment of a trunk that underlines the organicity of the forms. The piece titled *Exilio Temporal* (Temporary Exile) associates the photograph of a trunk composed of multiple shoots that could announce the rebirth of the tree but that Brey condemns by introducing pieces of wood attacked by termites.

In the piece *Keep Your Lamp Trimmed*, a photograph shows a tree trunk already cut to exhaustion, divided in the center by an indefinable object (a stone, perhaps?), but also condemned by the horn that pierces

it from side to side. *Soyez Vigilants* (Beware), Brey warns us as we are faced with the degradation of nature by man, chance or fate—whatever the cards deal—as clearly shown in the installation titled *Árbol Cortado y Escombros* (Cut Tree and Debris). Brey's oeuvre could be associated with the more militant and direct work of Frans Krajcberg, who uses burnt trees to denounce the destruction of the Amazon rainforest.

The four large drawings produced in 2016 address the origins, divided into: the threat (*Inferno*), the birth/nest (*Centro Terra*) and the displacement (*Departure*), passing through the *Enclosure*. In *Centro Terra*, the center of the Earth is conceived through an arachnid design as a literary volcano that spits words and phrases (*road, jungle, anguish, cave, Lucifer, giant ...*) on burnt paper. The game of contrasts between the upper part of the drawing, in which a black and compact mass weighs heavily on the lighter mass in the lower part—made of superimposed circles—conforms the work title *Departure*, a drawing in which opposites are connected through a vertical axis.

*Birdland* (the work that is reminiscent to another one presented in 2000 at the Crestet Centre d'art and titled *Nest*) collects in a container that also serves as corolla/nest, nature, jazz, mankind, religiosity, and the origin. The floor surrounding the "nest" is covered with fragments of dinnerware, eggshells, buttons, diaper pins, etc. A sentimental, referential, and sensitive hodgepodge used to inquire about life and its irrevocable contradictions.

## NOTE

1. *Art Nexus*, Christine Frérot, April/June, 2001.

CHRISTINE FRÉROT

RIO DE JANEIRO / BRAZIL

## Marcone Moreira

### Paço Imperial

City and forest, opulence and misery, tradition and novelty, peacefulness and violence: in its contrast-ridden vastness, the Amazon region is all of that at the same time. Its monumental scale holds unimagined diminutiveness, a simultaneous past and present. Marcone Moreira was born somewhat to the east of the Amazon region as such, in the state of

**Marcone Moreira.** Set of works made with the appropriation of bodywork and embarkation woods. Variable dimensions. Photography: Mário Grisolli.



Maranhão, but grew up in its heart, in Marabá, a large and chaotic city in the state of Pará. In the Tupi-Guarani language, the name of this land means "the offspring of a white person and an indigenous person," an appropriate descriptor for the mixture of races and immigrant groups that have come to populate it: individuals from all over the country attracted to the area first by the abundance of Brazil nuts and later by the gold and iron of the neighboring Serra Pelada and Eldorado dos Carajás. This region is infamous for episodes where the worst rapacity and social inequities are exacerbated, including land conflicts, slavery, and abuses of power. It is a way station for workers and goods, ships and trucks (be it autonomous or at the service of large corporations). It is also the starting point for this artist's poetics: Marcone Moreira has devised for his career a path that is all of his own, guided despite his youth by a sensitivity molded in the course of nearly fifteen years of activity.

Following a Duchamp-inspired practice of the *objet-trouvé*, Moreira built a large part of his oeuvre on the basis of the composition of found objects: discarded parts of ship or trucks, and even beach chairs, on which he made no intervention. His attentive gaze was able to find the best possible arrangement for giving such debris new meaning, transforming it into works of art. In time, he adopted a variety of procedures, incorporated drawing, video, and performance, and involved members of the general public in the construction of his works. This was the case with *Visualidade Ambulante* (Roaming Visuality), a process work that starts with the artist offering street vendors an exchange of their used colorful ribbon-decorated polystyrene planks for new ones that he would provide. Then, Moreira arranges the boxes and lids into formations that vary according to the specifics of each exhibition space. In each new city, the installation acquires new elements and stories. In the same way the arabesques and flowers in the driver's seats and canoes speak of anonymous individuals who would not even suspect the artistic potential of their own creations, *Visualidade Ambulante* brings forth the social realities of groups that depend on the informal economy for their subsistence, and who, willingly or out of necessity, devote a degree of care to the decoration of their implements as a way of differentiating themselves from their competitors, peddlers of the same merchandise at the same price and in the same locations.

The flows of the economy run under Moreira's entire oeuvre. *Território* (Territory) speaks of possession, and brings to the fore as a theme the activity that launched the concept of private property: agriculture. The work features four gates, each from a different region in Brazil, joined to form a quadrangle that demarcates a space as arbitrary as the first piece of land ever marked as belonging to a single owner.

On display on the sides of one of the building's arches are two objects that create a force field, as if marking a passage from one galley to the next: two cudgels. In their everyday functions, these tools are designated with the same name and serve the same purpose, but their stories are different. One of them, made of silicone, was used in street markets in Rio de Janeiro to beat fish. The other one came from the interior of Maranhão, where it was used in the harvesting of *babaçu* palm seeds. Worn out, sculpted by use, they bring into contrast tradition and modernity, the industrial and the handcrafted, elements that coexist readily in a continent-sized country filled with multiple realities. Realities such as those experienced by the peasant victims of the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre, to which Moreira's diptych *Ausente presença* (Absent Presence) makes reference. One side of this work displays a mud mold of a peasant's bare feet; the other, a plaque commemorating the execution of 19 workers by the police in 1996.

Moreira's works in this solo show at Paço Imperial speak of economic transitions and relationships of power; they could not have found a bet-