

[CAIXA DE PANDORA]

REGINA SILVEIRA: *INUSITADOS*



Pandora's Box Project

Surprisingly vast, the **Ivani and Jorge Yunes Collection** – CIJY – brings together works of art and objects from different times and spaces, from Brazil to dozens of countries, from antiquity to the middle of the last century. However, except for the display, nothing belonging to the present. Considering this absence of contemporary art, art advisory **KURA by Camila Yunes** created the project **Pandora's Box**.

The name comes from the Greek myth. Pandora, the first woman created by Zeus, was curious and reckless in opening the box that contained all the evils of the world, letting them escape. What few people know is that hope remained in the box. There is something of hope in a work of art, as well as in an object accurately made and both demonstrate a desire to move forward into new regions of expression and personal being.

By bringing contemporary art into this collection, the Pandora's Box project stirs curiosity at the same time that it makes various periods in the history of art and objects coexist with the present, the disturbing world in which we live. We do this precisely by betting on art as a vector for hope.

Camila Yunes Guarita

Previous Editions:

/ Barrão

April, 2018

/ Ana Dias Batista

September, 2018

/ Vik Muniz

April, 2019

/ Paulo Nimer Pjota

August, 2019

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Of the certainty of evil

Marcio Doctors

November 2020

I am interested in the shadowy side of Regina Silveira's work, meaning those regions, which are out of the light, which we know to exist and which are like the underground force of the unconscious and which, for this very reason, are obscure; they are uncomfortable, deep and silent, and may even go unnoticed.

At the same time, what also attracts me in her work is the ability to be explicit. And making things explicit is a way of bringing them to light. In other words, her work tries to "illuminate", to go straight to the point without subterfuge; to reveal the evident.

When these two dimensions (the shadowy and the explicit) are transposed into political reflection, her artistic production gains power of evidence and the relations of power and oppression become crystal clear, without attacking us. In other words, we assimilate it in a smooth way. This unique chemistry belongs to her work and that is why it attracts children so much. It is a conscious production with a certain sweetness that speaks to us of something heavy without necessarily making us realize that this is being endeavored. We do not feel attacked, despite what is being revealed is oppressive and outrageous, placing us face to face with the sores of our society.

In order to make this idea more evident, I would like to compare the artist's participation in the BREATHING Project of Casa Museu Eva Klabin, which I have been developing for 16 years, and this of the Yunes Collection, which is part of an important initiative to interact with the collection, promoted by the advisory Kura Arte, through the Pandora's Box Project. When I invited her to participate, it was because I considered that her contribution could be a valuable link in the creative-curatorial chain that I am instituting with the project BREATHING, whose objective is to think about the specificity of a collector's house-museum. There was a lack of a more politically vigorous thinking, capable of making an artistic commentary on a muted aspect of this type of museum, the collector's place of power, as well as explaining the "shadowy side" (underground) – a little more discussed by others artists who had taken part in previous editions – which is a phantasmagoria sheltered by these collector's houses.

In our several conversations, it was evident that Regina Silveira was such artist. Although the project BREATHING is one promoting interventions, with site-specific characteristics, the artist suggested some works previously carried out that could establish the curatorial sense that I was trying to establish and that were precisely adequate to the situation and the specifics of the space.

Insolitus, *Black swamp (nest)*, *Mundus admirabilis*, *Mutante 1* and *Mutante 2* (<http://evaklabin.org.br/projeto-respiracao>) all make a vehement comment about the power relations in the contemporary world, as well as in a collector's more restricted universe, an important link in the chain of economic power and valuing of today's society.

A new version of *Mundus Admirabilis* and the *Mutante* series are also present in this edition of Pandora's Box. *Mundus admirabilis*, which was presented on the facade of the Casa Museu Eva Klabin and is now in the Pavilion of the Casa Yunes pool, is part of a desire to update biblical plagues and clearly criticizes the situation we are experiencing in the world today. The first version was held at the Banco do Brasil Cultural Center in Brasília, in 2007, in the heart of national power, in the exhibition "Jardim do poder", and had a monumental scale of 20 x 20 x 7 m.

Regina's testimony about this work is lucid and precise and helps us to understand the real motivation of this line of work, which I think is increasingly important to highlight in the set of her production as it offers us a less "anecdotal" view than her work may mistakenly offer to some restricted circles:

[...] commenting on aspects of deterioration and conflict belongs to the conceptual universe of unpublished works that I have been planning and even executing, little by little, in various media, in an attempt to update, in contemporary times, the old biblical, historical and mythical plagues. Operating under the hypothesis of their possible transposition to other territories of significance, the revisited plagues would be non-linear metaphors of the much more ravenous plagues that now affect us, worldwide and globally, on several fronts: social, environmental, cultural and "civilizing", threatening a future that seems increasingly unfeasible. [Available at: <https://reginasilveira.com/mundus-admirabilis>]

Her words make it evident that her work has a strand of social criticism and concern with the deterioration of the current world and her perplexity in the face of the forces of evil, which for me is the great ghost with whom we live in today's world, and that the artist, for many years, has been announcing and denouncing through her fine social and political sensitivity.

The relationship between the *Mundus Admirabilis* interventions in the two house-museums is evident because it is the same work, although the characteristics of its location denote different connotations: in Rio it was on the facade of the House, signaling the dangers of a plague, which ravages the city; in São Paulo, it is in the pool pavilion, where family and social life takes place, drawing attention to the strained relationships that can throb underground in many families in these moments of quarantine and social withdrawal, when conflicts can become more intense.

Another masterpiece, which also belongs to this line of thought and which constituted a monumental intervention in the Renaissance Room of the Casa Museu Eva Klabin, the main hall of the museum, was *Black swamp (nest)*, which was originally made for an exhibition in the city of New Orleans in 2008, the most affected by the Katrina Hurricane. It is a black egg, 1.80 m high, in the center of a swamp of crocodiles about to attack and defend anyone who dared to approach their nest. There is something strangely still in the air, like the "climate" that we may find in the films *The Serpent's Egg* by Ingmar Bergman or *The White Ribbon* by Michael Haneke, in which there is a constant tension in suspension, of a psychosocial drama about to erupt, running through everything. It is the same configuration of evil that we witness today in the various populist-xenophobic governments that emerged across the planet.

The relationship I would like to establish between *Dark swamp (nest)* and the two interventions *Des-Igneos* and *Paraqueima*, presented in this edition of Pandora's Box, is more subtle, but allows me to pull the thread of Regina Silveira's creative genealogy: if *Dark swamp (nest)* is the harbinger of something terrible that was about to happen - the gestation stage of evil; *Des-igneos* and *Paraqueima* are already the explanation of evil.

Establishing this genealogy has a sense of efficient causality (Spinoza), in which we are able to be surprised by the way these forces that interest her are engendering each other, creating a clear demonstration of how the inner sense that drives her is generated, and a explicit dynamics in which the meaning is

no longer a consequence and becomes the underground energy that slides through the whole range of her work.

When we started talking about the *Inusitados* intervention, the press was not yet commenting on the fires in the Amazon and the Pantanal with the same intensity as today. Regina was already fully aware of the problem and committed to creating these igneous allegories of multiple facets, which point to the environmental disaster that we are experiencing; but which can also be perceived as repudiating an outdated and decadent form of artistic expression, such as the four huge heads, which represents the classical arts and which Galileo Emendabili, an artist of funerary monuments, liked to champion; as it can also mean repudiating the sedan chair, which is solemnly presented in the music room (where the “sublime act of creation of the human soul” is expressed), which was nothing but a means of transportation designed to carry the bodies of slave masters.

Fire can also be understood as a way of denouncing the current fires, as well as the authoritarian act of the dictators, who, when they come to power, have as their first aim the destruction of culture. Regina uses the same dictators's strategy when setting fire to the collection, as a way to cause a reflection on the attitude of the collector who, often, even for naive reasons, can gather “works of art” as if they were trophies, without any commitment with the political, ideological, social and artistic reality that generated them. As the artist does not want to be confused with this art history, she keeps her distance, offering the visitor the possibility of grafting a parallel reality, into the dominant narrative. It is a way of subverting the consecrated narrative, validating another possible discourse of art history, capable of questioning values that, because they are structural, may go unnoticed.

However, in the end, what remains is art and that's all I believe. For me, art is the only energy capable of coping with the spirituality of any era by indicating exactly its lack of spirituality (Tarkovsky). Art is a vehicle to let loose the underground forces of creation, potentially, which are made explicit through it and become evident to those who identify themselves with this evidence that fills a spiritual need capable of helping to support and live with the oppressive forces of dominant political, economic and social power. Art is a potentially revolutionary instrument because it is amoral and its evidence is visual and not rhetorical. For this reason the artist is important, even without being often aware or knowing that he is important. The artist is the vector for channeling

multiple expressive powers; it is from this perspective that I understand the work of Regina Silveira and its critical dimension.

One way that I have to demonstrate this issue is that when Regina Silveira's work is faced with institutional spaces it enhances itself. She finds its necessary dimension because museums and cultural centers are places of power for art and her production tries to question these relationships. The collector's house-museum is also a place of power, where the power of the market and that of the collector are present as agents of economic strength capable of removing the work from the market and lock it up in the magic circle of the collector, as indicated by Benjamim, first for his personal delight and then when the collection is made public, as a way to perpetuate his memory through his greatest achievement, which is his ability to acquire works of art. There is an expression of power in this behaviour, which denotes the economic strength of the cumulative chain of individual money. That is why many artists and collectives today need creative spaces that go beyond the limitations of the museum or the private collection. Thus, art goes to the street or is born on the street. In the same way, Regina Silveira's work operates in public spaces because it is in this dimension that she finds her meaning and in the collector's house-museum this confrontation is explicit in another way: it causes her strangeness. *Insolitus* and *Inusitados* are born out of this strangeness and the *Mutantes* works, created especially for the Project BREATHING, or the *Insólitas*, for Pandora's Box, denote such strangeness.

They are furry objects, à la Méret Oppenheim, that reveal an unusual perception of the house-museums, which is their bizarre side of musealizing the residence and the life of its founder. For the artist there is in this situation a surrealist dimension, which these hairy works accurately translate, creating tension with the environment. Such works, while repelling (because they have an aggressive connotation), attract. This paradoxical movement is an important feature of Regina Silveira's work. The thermometer for measuring this ambiguity are the children. They are enchanted. Why are they enchanted? It is worth reasoning about this movement of disgust and attraction. For children it is as if they are entering in Alice's in Wonderland. Everything is pure imagination and fantasy and that deeply attracts them. In Brasília, for example, *Mundus Admirabilis* became a kind of amusement park with the giant insects, as well as the giant black swamp egg (nest); the *Mutante 1* table, covered in black fur, at the Casa Museu Eva Klabin, attracted children and adults alike as if it were a huge stuffed animal. People couldn't resist touching it.

This prompts me to think that the intentionality and rhetoric of the whole of Regina Silveira's work has a critical impact at the same time that its conception generates fascination for the rigorous exercise of form, for the establishment of the fantastic through the materials and technologies it incorporates and for a playful dimension that she never dismisses. This chemistry allows her to reveal the terrible aspects of reality, which we only perceive when we are involved, as if using a subliminal technique in which we only realize what is happening when we are surprised by the opposite of what attracted us. The mastery of this dynamic reminds me of Baudelaire's quote: "evil is done effortlessly, of course, it is the work of destiny. Good is a product of art". This is why I believe in art.

I wonder: isn't that what we are experiencing today? We live in a world in which the majority brought evil to power, without realizing it, and art started being demonized, as if it were the greatest evil. It is déjà-vu. That is why I agree with Baudelaire when he says that good is the product of art. Only art has the capacity to produce other affections and other perceptions. My intuition tells me that what Regina wants to demonstrate, through her work, is that art also has this task. It cannot be an innocent expression because it is a kind of prosthetic spirit, capable of revealing its charms and its horrors. This paradox is that her work spells out with forcefulness and lucidly; brings light.

Mundus admirabilis, *Des-Igneos*, *Paraqueima* and *Insólitas*, stress this perception of the moment that we are going through today, through visual demonstrations, which are reinforced by the video installation *Surveillance* of a blowfly that never settles, whose sound is that of a cell phone keyboard. The question remains in the air: couldn't this fly be the same fly that landed on VP Mike Pence's white hair in the debate for the American presidential campaign, which attracted more attention than the debate itself? What would be its attribute? Could it be the certainty of evil?

Marcio Doctors

Doctors is a thinker, writer, art critic and curator of the Eva Klabin Foundation. In 1999, he created the Permanent Installations Space at the Museu do Açu, awarded for its excellence in 2004, with the Estácio de Sá Award, from the State Government of Rio de Janeiro. The Permanent Installations Space is the first collection in Brazil that relates contemporary art and nature, inaugurating, in 2000, Hélio Oiticica's first public work, Magic Square nº 5 - De Luxe. He is the creator of the Project Respiração, of contemporary art interventions in the classic collection of the Eva Klabin Foundation, active since 2004. Master in Philosophy from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, with the dissertation "The mystery of the visible", on photography. In his professional career, he had as a landmark, work with the renowned art critic Mário Pedrosa in the 1970s. He was an art critic for *Jornal O Globo*. He was invited to be the curator of the 28th Bienal de São Paulo, which he refused because he disagreed with the direction of the then management of the Bienal. He wrote several texts on Brazilian art, participating in several national and international publications, among others, Anna Maria Maiolino, Ed. Cosac Naif | Fundació Tapies, 2011. Published the following books: *Respiração* Ed. Automatica | FEK, 2014; *Project Respiração*, Ed. Cobogó | FEK, 2012; *The culture of paper (org.)* Ed. Casa da Palavra | FEK, 1999.



To watch the animation video, [click here](#).



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ARTIST

Regina Silveira (Porto Alegre, Brazil, 1939) lives and works in São Paulo

Over more than five decades, Silveira, a critical figure in Brazilian conceptual art, investigated the tension between movement and spatial perspective, inserting political meaning in installations that interact with specific locations. Recognized for her parodic explorations of space through geometric constructions, Silveira's work is celebrated for both its conceptual rigor and its formal impact. Graduated from UFRG in 1959, in the 1960s she started artistic training under the tutelage of the expressionist painter Iberê Camargo, and also studied xylography with Francisco Stockinger and lithography with Marcelo Grassmann.

With a PhD at ECA / USP (1984), where she lectured from 1974, she has an extensive teaching career. Since the 1960s, she has held numerous individual exhibitions and participated in selected national and international collectives.

She was a guest artist at the Setouchi Triennial, Japan (2016); the Havana biennials (1986, 1998, 2015); of the Médiations Biennale Poznan, Poland (2012); the Mercosul Biennials (2001, 2011); the Taipei Biennial (2006); and the São Paulo Biennials (1981, 1983, 1998). Among the recent awards, in 2013 she received the MASP Award; in 2012, the ABCA Award; in 2009, the Fundação Bunge Award and, in 2007, the Bravo Prime Award. Her works are present in several collections and museums, in Brazil and abroad.



Portrait of the artist Regina Silveira. Courtesy: the artist and Luciana Brito Galeria. Photo by: Ross Collab

Exhibited works:

***Des-Igneos*, 2020**

Augmented Reality (on Four Female Heads,
Allegories of the Arts, by Galileo
Emendabili, 1930-1940)
Production: ZoomB

***Paraqueima*, 2020**

Augmented Reality (on Sedam Chair
- Liteira, Europe, late 18th century)
Production: ZoomB

***Insólitas*, 2020**

Artificial hair on furniture and frame
Production: Studio Regina Silveira

***Mundus Admirabilis*, 2007**

Digital image, adhesive vinyl
Variable measures
Production: Studio Regina Silveira and EC Visual

***Surveillance*, 2015**

Projection, video animation in loop
Soundtrack: Rogerio Rochlitz
Production: ZoomB

Credits to the Regina Silveira Staff:

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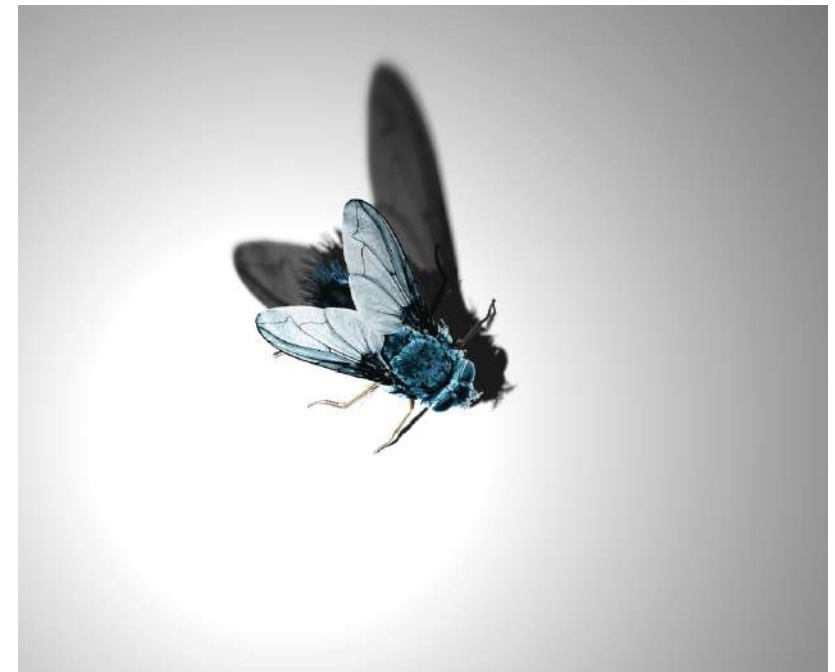
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