

“My motivation is to pursue what it means to be free today”: a conversation with Marcelo Cidade

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Translated by Roberto Cataldo Costa

Abstract: In an interview with Felipe Scovino, artist Marcelo Cidade revisits different works he made in the 2000s and 2010s, pointing out his motivations and commenting on the critical dimensions of that work, usually focused on public space, either as a field of action or as theme. Themes like the relations between art and crime emerge in the conversation, ranging from issues related to fear, social surveillance, institutionalized violence and the exercise of freedom. The interview also discusses the dialogue between contemporary art production and the historical and historiographic tradition of art.

Keywords: Interview. Marcelo Cidade. Public place. Violence. Freedom.

This conversation between artist Marcelo Cidade and art critic Felipe Scovino took place on June 24, 2015. Part of this interview was published in September 2015 in the first issue of *Jacaranda* magazine. A full version is now published for the first time.

The interview presents aspects that are very typical of Marcelo Cidade’s work. Public space is invariably a place and a theme for his actions. Based on that theme, subjects such as violence, illegality, control and surveillance systems, identity, censorship, and actions or systems that are marginal to Art were postulated and debated. Cidade’s work is transparent; it does not want to falsify or makeup reality because it reveals and studies contemporary phenomena with a critical eye, without falling into waste or unproductive effort. His work vibrates with a will to understand and change a world full of idiosyncrasies, violence and absurdities.

FELIPE SCOVINO:

Your work usually brings into the field of art discussions about themes that artists are usually afraid to get into. I’m basically arguing about two situations: political ideologies and crime. In the former case, *Esquerda e Direita* (Left and Right, 2007) shows us that there is no division between those two ideological systems

and, in the case of crime, several works approach the subjects, but I emphasize *Eu-Horizonte 4* (I-Horizon 4, 2000). I would like you to comment on these points.



Figure 1. *I-Horizon 2* (2000) Photography. 70 x 100 cm.

MARCELO CIDADE:

Thinking about the relationship with some kind of political ideology, I’m a bit surprised by the use of the word *ideology*. I don’t like that word for I think ideology is perhaps the signification of a political state we could determine before the fall of the Berlin Wall, where situations were determined between an idea of left and right or capitalism versus communism. Nowadays I find it difficult to indicate precisely what political ideology is because we are in an era in which left and right are blended in several points. Therefore, it is undetermined because capital-based economy advances on ideological differences and exposes their weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, no longer allowing a clear definition of ideologies and political stances. In *Esquerda e Direita* I use a Siamese grocery cart whose two sides are virtually the same but still correspond to the symbol of consumption. The audience can open and close it to choose to decrease or fully open that market in which left and right fit. The political stance of the works came through a relationship in which I saw myself as apolitical. In the 1990s and early 2000s my life was always highly related to an anarchic stance in life – skateboarding, listening to rap, etc. – denying militant political motivations as those of the [1990s Brazilian youth movement] “painted-faces” in my generation who were teenagers from Brasilia staging a kind of hippie protest. Then I developed aversion to having a partisan stance. But over time I began to realize that such apartisan or apolitical stance

could also be political in the context in which *Eu-Horizonte* appears, when I was able to combine the use of experimentalism of performance and illegality for the first time, because being naked in the city is a crime against morals and proper conduct, in order to break standardization, which would be the verticality of the city, and create this horizon with my own body. A horizon as a metaphor for hope, that horizon we never reach with our own bodies. Back to your question, the relationship between art and crime has always been an important motive for me because I'm interested in using the urban level or the public level in an anarchic way.



Figure 2. *Right and Left* (2007) Sculpture with four modified supermarket trolleys. Variables. Photo by Edouard Fraipont.

FS:

As a development of the previous question, another image that appears in your work – speaking more specifically of your participation in the 27th São Paulo Art Biennial – is that of the museum – or metaphorically, society – under state of siege. When you install surveillance cameras allegorically (*Direitos de imagem* [Image Rights], 2006), since they are made of paper, and build a line of bricks with broken glass over it (*Intramuros* [Inside walls], 2006), you eventually displace some kind of state of mind from the world into the institution: there are signs of violence, fear, crime, restriction to freedom of movement. The public space of the museum reflects the private in a tragic but above all real way. The much-talked-about relationship between art and life in your work takes place more viscerally and cruelly. Space is filled by suspicion towards the other and by detachment. I'd like you to comment on how you built the image of a state of siege within the São Paulo Biennial.



Figure 3 and 4. *Image Rights* (2004). Cardboard, glue and Velcro sculpture. 27 x 27 x 23 cm. View of the Work at the 27th São Paulo Biennial: How to Live Together. Biennial Pavilion, São Paulo. 2006. Photo by Ding Musa.

MC:

This distrust towards that sphere is something I've always felt and always carry with me, almost as lack of trust not in the sphere of art, but in Brazilian social sphere where everything that is public is degraded. And since I come from a middle class that is influenced by American culture, with a way of life that is totally based on capitalist hope, distrust was always higher. I was raised inside closed condominiums and went to private schools, using a private health system as well as other private services, always feeling distrust and holding a negative idea about what was public – public space, public education, public health. Nowadays I'm a little more aware about what it means to recover those spaces and try to understand what they are in/for Brazilian society. It might be a stance typical of the state of São Paulo, because in Rio de Janeiro, for example, the idea of public space is a little more comprehensive than in São Paulo. I think that after the military dictatorship these spaces shrank, giving way to privatization as a result of a sense of fear. An idea spread by the media, which fostered paranoia and fear of using public space, public schools, etc – as if there were only bad people in those schools, only lines of public health system users at hospitals, and only thieves in the street space. So, back to your first question about ideology and the relationship with the notion of crime, it was my stance, through skateboarding, to go into public space and use it to realize that this fear was very personal and that we can't generalize it. Back to the context of the Biennial, when I was invited to it, curator Lisette Lagnado ["How to live together?"] proposed a space of coexistence where interaction between each artist could create dialogue with Helio Oiticica's concept. But at the same time there is certain innocence, certain romanticism in imagining this field in an artistic sphere like the Biennial, where it is impossible not to realize that the space is still oriented to competition and the marketplace, where artists are there to

show their best in search of acceptance and media appearance. *Direitos de imagem* are cardboard sculptures representing security cameras and they have an ephemeral character because the cameras fell and broke during the exhibition, in addition to people stealing them. The idea was to show certain weakness of this control-based society, as well as forcing the audience to look for that object that was being established as art when they looked at the camera, to reverse the idea of vigilance in which the audience watches the camera rather than only the camera watching the audience. One of the works you mentioned, *Intramuros*, also starts from this social displacement of public character. It addresses popular control systems created for lack of better economic conditions, for instance, building separation walls to prevent thieves from entering, using consumption waste – broken bottles – generating a much more democratic situation for that protection due to a failure of the State. And the work that was designed more specifically for the Biennial, called *Fogo amigo* [Friendly Fire], was the one that caused the most problems because it forced a discussion about coexistence. It consisted in relating the attacks of [criminal organization] PCC in a week in which São Paulo stopped because of the attacks controlled and planned by [crime faction PCC leader] Marcola, who was in a state prison but commanded those attacks. At the same time we had [former banker] Edemar Cid Ferreira, who was also in prison and presided over the Biennial Foundation. But this idea of relating the criminal institution to an artistic institution, or the Biennial, has to do with Foucault's concept of heterotopia. I wanted to associate two spaces that have their paces set by forms of control, despite their own specificities. The fact is that the art space has a libertarian commitment, unlike prison. But at that moment Ferreira used to attend both spaces. And that position or alterity was transferred to the action of the jammers because I restricted the communication action of the people who attended the Biennial, just as it is the desire of the State to block any link of prisoners with the space outside the prison. The work consisted of implementing mobile phone jammers used in prisons. I'm a very curious person, so I researched and found the device. I tested it and it worked within a 15-meter radius. My project for the Biennial was to install six of those jammers to create a kind of cold zone, an icy area where mobile phone signals wouldn't work. However, I didn't intent to break up communication, but rather to create new human communication in which people found themselves through

body movements and had some time to perceive the works in the museum, breaking away from the non-personal comfort of mobile phones. The project was censored. I received a letter from the institution saying that I would be restricting people's right to communicate. After negotiating with the curator, I reduced the work to one jammer, which limited the radius to 15 meters. As time passed, I realized that what actually happened was that a phone company was sponsoring the Biennial. Then there was this "dirty game" and I didn't want my original project to be totally destroyed, so I designed a system in which I put mobile phone jammers into backpacks, improvising with motorcycle batteries. On opening day five friends went there with backpacks, entered the space and the action blocked the whole phone system. We could see people trying to meet in that situation typical of a São Paulo Biennial and nobody knew what was happening because the phone signal has been cut off. No one knew until Camila Molina, from newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, wrote a story about it and it became public. But even so, during the Biennial there were cases of people being close to the mobile phone jammer and realizing that it was not working. Then I found out that the Biennial firefighters turned the device off every day because it interfered with the team's radio communication. It ended up being a work and a discussion about boycott. Perhaps the idea of "how can we together" is a big problem, because it means thinking in a utopian way about how to get close to strangers. And the Biennial proposed a discussion that was interrupted. It work could only happen there, in that situation, even because mobile phone technology has already changed and the means of operation of the PCC itself and the institutions have also changed, so it was almost a situationist intervention at that Biennial.

FS:

Since you mentioned that, I wonder about the Biennial's role and censorship. At the Biennial edition following the one we discussed – the so-called Biennial of the Void [the 28th edition in 2008] – a group entered the Biennial space, draw graffiti on the wall and Caroline Pivetta da Mota ended up being arrested and became a scapegoat in the whole story. In the following edition of the Biennial graffiti artists were invited to take part in the exhibition. What do you think about that?



Figure 5. *Friendly Fire* (2006). Mobile phone jammer. Variables. View of the Work at the 27th São Paulo Biennial: How to Live Together. Biennial Pavilion, São Paulo. 2006. Photo by Ding Musa.

MC:

In my view, an illegal action is an illegal action regardless of its aesthetic form – it doesn't matter if it is high quality drawing or just plain writing. In Brazil, we have this idea of absorbing what comes from abroad without understanding it, creating nomenclatures that do not exist. The name "grafiteiro" is the worst, because it comes from "graffiti writer", then the tag comes from writing, from a writing in which you put your name and the aesthetic appeal comes from a letter rather than a comic or painting or stencil. I think determining what is acceptable and what is not is a language mistake. For society, it's easy to tell evil from good, so a *pichador* [one who just writes on walls] is that bad person who has nothing to do and comes out at night and writes and draw in buildings, and a *grafiteiro* is the good one who draws beautiful clouds during the day with money from the City. It's the biggest contradiction, because it's all the same to me if it's illegal. In the specific case of this Biennial, this misunderstanding is what gives visibility to marginalized people. If an Indian tribe had the opportunity to live within the space of the Biennial, they would walk around naked, shit in the corner, do whatever it is that they normally do, and we white Westerners would judge them wrong. What happened was just that: they gave the opportunity to occupy the void, these people legitimately occupied it, and curators considered it a crime, as unacceptable, as absurd – because they didn't understand it. Then, in the following year,

as a sort of apology, they invited them as a collective, and that was the biggest mistake because, first, there is no collective, and I believe that *pichadores* have an individualistic nature, since they are only interested in fame and success for their own names, which only themselves and a small group of people understand. I think there is a misunderstanding about what those people are, along with heroism, of imagining themselves to be political heroes, engaged people who use *pichação* [what a *pichador* does] as a statement to be antiheroes. In fact, they use vandalism to promote their names, to see who's the best, on a very primate scale of imposition on society. I believe in this kind of action on an urban level; when it goes into an indoor space it becomes interior decoration. So I'm interested in this dubious connotation about what is acceptable and what is not. There is romantic idealization of the artist, and not necessarily because the person who does *pichação* is an artist.

FS:

I would like you to comment on two particular works that make more or less explicit references to the history of Brazilian art. They are: *Amor e ódio a Lygia Clark* [Love and Hate to Lygia Clark, 2006] and *Transeconomia real* [Real Transeconomy, 2007]. The latter alludes to the photographic records of two works by Cildo Meireles: *Condensados 2 – Mutações Geográficas: Fronteiras Rio/São Paulo* [Condensed 2 – Geographical mutations: Rio/São Paulo, 1970] and *Cruzeiro do Sul* [The Southern Cross, 1969-70]. In the case of *Amor e Ódio a Lygia Clark*, the artist's hand dialogue is replaced with a symbol of violence, confrontation, of instituting a power. There is no dialogue except mine, that is, of those who hold authority. It's a combat structure. And in the case of Cildo's, it seems to me that you have two common points of interest, such as discussing the outlines of global geopolitics: its crises, authoritarianisms and questionable powers.

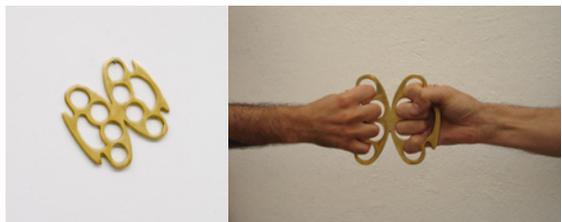


Figure 6 and 7. *Love and Hate to Lygia Clark* (2006) Bronze sculpture. 14.5 x 13 x 0.5 cm. Photo by Ding Musa.

MC:

I think the relationship you established with Lygia's *Diálogo de mãos* [Hand Dialogue, 1966] is interesting because I think I unconsciously established a relationship, even if it is not a direct one. *Amor e Ódio a Lygia Clark* arose from my perception of the problems in the behavior of *Bichos* [Critters, 1960-64]. I saw those works at São Paulo's MAM for the first time and there were glass shades over each of them. No one could interact with the objects, which was her proposition when the work was made. Then there was my love for her work and my hate for the misunderstanding about that idea. The brass knuckles came to me because I wanted an instrument usually used by hate groups; it's a urban and juvenile weapon, there is fetish about of it because it's an object that is not sold in stores, so there are collections and people like Alexander McQueen in fashion, who uses brass knuckles to create a fashion ornament, etc. But my proposal was to blow up that fetish and create annulment of violence by joining two brass knuckles, making a piece that is an instrument of rapprochement between two people, trying to force union through an object of hate, nullifying hate to create certain love. But I think it's interesting that you spoke of *Transeconomia Real* regarding Cildo because indirectly it is a reference. But this doesn't happen only in these works, because there are several ones in which I begin from that, when I mature the question of using of references a little and I know how to make it clear to whom I'm referring. So there are these two works you mentioned, but there is also Lina Bo Bardi with *Tempo Suspenso de um Estado Provisório* [Time Suspended from a Provisional State, 2011], which is MASP'S easel base with shots, alluding to institutional violence and to contempt towards the easel itself. There are some works in which I approach São Paulo's constructivism, such as *Coca com cola* [Coke with Cola, 2010], in which I use the poem *Coca-cola Coca-cola*, alluding to cocaine and cobbler's glue and using a beggar's blanket. I think that the reason for crime, violence, all these everyday stabbings in the streets of Rio de Janeiro or cops killing people in *favelas*, or even reduction of the age for criminal responsibility to 16, they mean to accept all this stupidity and forget that the root of the problem lies in the extermination of education and memory. What I do is to reaffirm the importance of these works as concepts of social change. I find this displacement increasingly interesting, and using these historical facts to somehow question what our modernity and our history are, and going deeper and deeper.

FS:

For example, the acid tone of the two works mentioned in the previous question already had its genesis in *Fuzilamento* [Shooting, 2002] when you stood naked and you read in front of an audience that threw cement on a list of social revolutions that had happened. That acid tone is still more evident and precise due to the fact that its reading reminded us of the procedure and the tone used by the concrete poets. A single work fused several – political, social, ideological and artistic – references to fusion and subjected them to irony. The serious tone of a speech of a poet or a statesman who recites or addressed his people is lost, booed, destroyed. There is no hierarchy or verticality. Power is deposited.



Figure 8, 9 and 10. *Real Transeconomia* (2007). The object as money bills. Photo by Ding Musa.

MC:

I think people throw the cement and don't see the aggressiveness or the violence behind it. Interestingly, I'd never thought of it like that. I've been trying to map how each work creates references to the other in order to create a framework of interest points regarding what remains and what was lost in a 15-year survey. I think this stance of appropriation and temporal displacement, whether of art history concepts or matters of public or private space, is something that remains and which I'm still interested in. How is it possible to resist and intervene in certain situations that are presented to me as history or as space? I like what you said, because I hadn't clearly seen this relationship of appropriation and reference about *Fuzilamento*.

FS:

We can say that Brazilian art's trajectory discusses violence as a starting point and means of debate. I remember works by Antonio Dias, Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, Carlos Zilio and Carmela Gross during the dictatorship. For instance, the actions of 3Nós3 in the early 1980s – and more recently, members of their generation such as Alexandre Vogler, Guga Ferraz, Lourival Cuquinha, Ronald Duarte and a number of collectives, many of them based in São Paulo such as Frente 3 de Fevereiro and Bijari, to name a few, which have discussed or used to discuss the tenuous relationship between art and crime. What are the events, not necessarily linked to art, which create motivation for your work?



Figure 11. *Time Suspended from a Provisional State* (2011) 20-mm thick glass made by transparent glass interspersed with PVB (polyvinyl butyral) and EVA (ethylvinylacetate), application of shrapnel containment spray, 38 mm bullet marks and concrete base with wood. 198 x 138 x 38 cm. Photo by Rafael Asséf.

MC:

Whenever someone asks me this type of question my memory goes to zero [laughs]. But I can say that the way we discuss the subject of violence has changed a lot – the way violence has transpired in the 40 years from the 1970s to today. Speaking of a dictatorial period when there was no freedom of expression, people had to use tools to address violence indirectly, criticizing it allegorically, using other means such as poetic ones. Many musicians used metaphors to speak critically. This has always bothered me a lot: how the metaphor of the metaphor turns out to be a surrealist text; and if people have no historical knowledge, they won't understand

it. For a long time I didn't like that kind of music because I didn't understand the small detail of metaphor. Now I see that I didn't understand the connections and the points, and now I think it's incredible. But I think there's a problem: if I didn't understand it, lots of people didn't either. So what I try to do with my work and what I see in the artists of my generation is that this criticism is increasingly direct; it's more and more a punk-rock-like attitude of going straight to the point instead of creating metaphors about possible change. Perhaps because we belong to a generation that suffered with [former Brazilian President Fernando] Collor, with radical economic changes, that saw families being harmed for many reasons and thus want changes immediately, going to the street, doing *pichação*, using creativity to do changes. Besides, violence has also become more violent at other levels. I think that the needs are more urgent, that's why my generation, with all those groups, went to the streets doing the interventions and actions in a radical way, such as 3Nós3, which is perhaps the inheritance closest to that radicality. I got lost...

FS:

I asked you what motivates you. It can be references from the visual arts, texts, films, music...

MC:

My motivation is to pursue what it means to be free today, what motivates someone to climb a building, to risk their lives to write their name on it. Or how the work of Artur Barrio in *4 dias 4 noites* [4 days 4 nights, 1970], where he stays on the street during this period, without any gain, just for believing in something. So we can turn to many artists and people who are not necessarily artists, but who believe in what they do. I love Joseph Beuys' concept that everyone is an artist, destroying this hierarchical, pyramidal chain in which the artist would be the most important person. He places everything in the same horizontal line in which everyone is an artist and then nobody is an artist. The idea of ethics and freedom in what is being produced, regardless of whether it is art or not, is what fascinates me nowadays – people who perform for the sake of their own work, whether or not they are artists. And each time we discover a new artist, a new artist appears every time, even if they are older people.

And when I meet people who believe in what they do, I think it's the most beautiful thing that exists, regardless of the art market, the art sphere, or art itself.

FS:

Partly because of a historiography of art that needs to review its own concepts, the generations after concretism and neoconcretism are often considered heirs, to a greater or lesser degree, of a constructive tradition and an aesthetic of fragility. How do you see yourself in this context? In *Transtatal* [Trans-state, 2006], debris is matter and there is also a strategy of incorporating "elements that should not be there, being named as art". How do you operate this transition from failure to invention, from error to "erudite"?

MC:

I guess there are some problems there. What I see as a problem is the stigma about what Brazilian art would be. This ends up as a burden on the artist's back, for trying to understand and repeat a certain formula that has already been accepted, I mean, in a way that does not criticize or question that heritage. Speaking of fragility, for example, what would it mean to use a thirty-year-old concept without contextualizing it under a social parameter? The great importance of the ordinary is to think that capitalist society still generates consumption, and that what is not acceptable would be that garbage, that social waste. And artists try to question what is acceptable or not, perhaps appropriating forms that have already been worn out, maybe a political stance, but activating this garbage through reconstruction would cause what is accepted and what is not accepted as art today. Perhaps my interest in what is not acceptable comes from living a life that has not been accepted – you are free and have a labor status that is not socially standardized, because every Brazilian wakes up at 6 am, goes to work, gets married, has two children and is a Christian. When you say that you are an artist, an atheist and single, people already get suspicious and they say: "He's a tramp, a scum, he doesn't work". That still happens! So when they ask what you do and you answer "I collect pebbles and dig the trash to make a bridge", that's totally unacceptable, it's the social nonsense of living out of selling these things. Even today people get outraged: "Did you sell that garbage

to MAM-SP?" We still live in a conservative society, maybe it's got a lot of makeup, it's very hype and modern, but when you arrive with some kind of work that uses a beggar's blanket, people don't understand and get suspicious, but they'll buy it anyway, even if they don't know what it is. For me it's very important to deal with materials that came from a social life of exclusion, to make the rich consume the poor, to try to reverse that economic scale. After all, as Beuys said, "kunst equals capital", and we'll never be able to reverse that. So how can we subvert a capitalist system? Perhaps ascribing value to what has none. In this sense I'm interested in using the ordinary, trying to subvert the idea of capitalism.

FS:

Your work revolves around a dystopian atmosphere, that is, it's involved in an urban, capitalist and excluding context. The most evident sign is that of violence. However, the work does not play victim to that context. On the contrary, there are both an idea of creating dispute and friction with that sphere/context and of enabling the construction of an image of suspending the dream and utopia of a "better world" that is sold by advertising. In his ninth thesis "On the concept of history", Benjamin refers to Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus*, which "shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress". It seems to me that your work converses with this passage. How can we deal with the devastating impact of "progress"?

MC:

My concern is that what surrounds the work, the context, everyday situations, their differences or what we want to name as circumstances of the world bring a load of realism to the

works, of established realism, of a real problem. I have no need to solve anything, only to show the problem in another light. It's a question that I've been asked through my works. Nowadays, there is less and less of this desire— perhaps as there was in the 2000s with the collectives – to assure a more militant artistic practice, of aiming at establishing radical changes and speculate about revolt, even if it's static, through the work of art. I've found my space: facing political facts as they are rather than thinking that a romantic aspect of art can change something in an instant and agile way.



Figure 12. *Inside walls* (2005). Bricks and glass shards. Variables. View of the Work at the 27th São Paulo Biennial: How to Live Together. Biennial Pavilion, São Paulo. 2006. Photo Ding Musa.

FS:

What was the context for creation of *Eles não sabem o que fazem, mas, ainda assim, o fazem* [They don't Know What They Do, but They Still do it, 2012] and *Anulação por Adição* [Annulment by Addition, 2012]?

MC:

Anulação por Adição may be a reappropriation of one of my works, *Intramuros*, in which I bring glass shards into the white cube and determine a territory with them, which would be the area of painting. It's the Renaissance's romantic idea of idealizing painting as the very extension of the window and that this window needs to be protected by a frame. So I try to deconstruct this idea of protecting space, of the window, towards aggressiveness to the viewer who is watching that window. A territory is demarcated that would be the frame, which is a rectangle, and the glass shard poses that violence of protection as an aggression to the viewer. There is a reversal of points, between the urban or public level and the private level. *Eles Não Sabem o que Fazem, Mas, Ainda Assim*,

o Fazem is related to the drawing of Niemeyer's broken window. This came from a story I read in the newspaper, when two fighter jets flew low over Brasília and destroyed all the windows of one of the Congress buildings, which had exactly Niemeyer's standard design, which in turn is exactly the same in São Paulo Biennial. And this chance or error created this situation in which the glasses broke and crumbled, showing the fragility of the modern and utopian system. My intention was precisely to reproduce or convey a timeless form to this temporal situation, questioning this visibility and transparency of power. I'm interested in showing that fragility, you know?

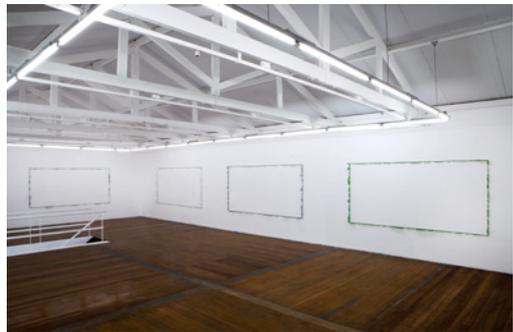


Figure 13 and 14. *Addition by Subtraction* (2012). Glass shards. Photo by Rafael Cañas.

FS:

I think your work doesn't leave much room for thinking that the future will bring something good. Present and the future – these two modes of time – preserve a very strong relationship of confrontation between subject and institution, or between subject and ideology, or between subject and the State. Therefore, they are not gentle and soft works, they don't relate in a very face-to-face manner with formalist aspects in art history because you are not inventing a new place for painting or sculpture... They are the results of public space,

of a way of thinking that is being contaminated, for example, by the 2013 demonstrations [in Brazil]. They also reflect that. When I speak of dystopia, I'm referring directly to the aspect of ruin in your work, and failure, at their most different levels: failure of the State, failure of the subject, what we understand as contemporaneity, failure of art, failure of art institutions and the viewer, and finally, the artist's failure.

MC:

Yes, there is this aspect of failure. My work emerges from the perception of a problem, which may be social, museographic, cultural. Based on that problem, I'm interested in enhancing it in a challenging way, as everyone's problem and which therefore should be perceived in its most general form. The ideas of ruin and failure don't start from an idealized or romantic view but from the idea that we are destroying nature. And ruin, from the point of view of Brazilian circumstances, is very close to the concept of anti-ruin, of the unfinished, of a developing society that has stopped halfway in its construction – from the World Cup stadiums, the cleaning up of the Guanabara Bay – and a progressive process that we have never achieved... I think our society is under construction and remains in a limbo between completing this continuity and looking back to the past. So we kept skidding on this territory, at this construction site, trying to build our identity based on improvisation. Our society is completely failed. We live under expectation of progress or that we will improve. We have to live this reality by assuming that poverty and misery exist. Assuming that a corrupt state is governed by vested powers and that we live in a failed State. I think my work has a reality shock and I care to see that and make those circumstances clearer and clearer.

Galleria Continua, San Gemignano (2015), and *Somewhere, Elsewhere, Anywhere, Nowhere*, Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco (2014).

Felipe Scovino: is a professor at the School of Fine Arts (UFRJ) and currently coordinates its Graduate Program in Visual Arts. He also works as an art critic and curator. His works as curator include: *O lugar da linha* (Paço das Artes, São Paulo, MAC, Niterói, 2010) and, in collaboration with Paulo Sérgio Duarte, *Lygia Clark: uma retrospectiva* (Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, 2012).

(*)This text was submitted in October 2017.

Marcelo Cidade: holds a degree in Visual Arts from Armando Álvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP), based in São Paulo, where he lives and works. Cidade creates works that express complex social conflicts and bring signs and situations from the streets to spaces dedicated to art. One of his particular interests is the public space of urban areas and the technological flow of our surveillance society. Among the recent solo exhibitions are *Nulo ou em Branco*, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo (2016), *(Un)Monument* for V. Tatlin,