



bienal



Pavilion of Brazil at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

Commissioner: Heitor Martins, President of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo

Curators: Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos

Artist: Artur Barrio

Title of the exhibition:

ARTUR BARRIO: REGISTROS + (EX)TENSÕES Y PONTOS [RECORDS + (EX) TENSIONS Y POINTS]

Location: Pavilion of Brazil

Address:

Giardini Castello

Padiglione Brasile

30122 Venice, Italy

Dates: from June 3th through November 27th, 2011 (public)

Visit the official website of the brazilian national representation at the 54^a Venice Biennale:

www.54bienalvенеza.org.br

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Press release

The oldest of the great international art shows, the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia offers a large collective exhibition and dozens of national pavilions every two years. The Pavilion of Brazil, built in 1964 in the most prestigious space of the Italian event, the *Giardini*, is the place where the country itself chooses and exhibits artists to represent it at every edition.

Fundação Bienal de São Paulo

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Since 1995, the Brazilian government has bestowed the responsibility for this choice on the Bienal de São Paulo, recognizing the institution's great importance – the second oldest of its kind in the world – for the country's visual arts. The Fundação Bienal de São Paulo invited Agnaldo Farias and Moacir dos Anjos, responsible for the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, to curate the Pavilion of Brazil of the 54th International Art Exhibition. And the artist chosen by the curators to occupy the Pavilion of Brazil in this edition is Artur Barrio.

Artur Barrio was born in Portugal in 1945 and has lived in Brazil since he was ten years old. Since the end of the 1960s, he has weaved together one of the most original bodies of work in the experimental field of Brazilian contemporary art. It is work that challenges the arbitrary limits to which art is usually confined, and escapes easy cataloging. While Artur Barrio works with the most diverse techniques and procedures, the conceptual nucleus of his trajectory are the *Situações* [Situations] he creates in a variety of environments, in which bodies and things placed in movement modify a place and an instant in an ephemeral way. In one of the most well known *Situações*, realized during the Brazilian military dictatorship, Artur Barrio left bloody bundles close to a stream in the city of Belo Horizonte, confusing passers-by and the police for some time and evoking the state of exception then in force.

Situações originate from the notes, drawings and collages with which Artur Barrio fills what he calls *CadernosLivros*, better known to the public through the *Registros-fotos* [Record-photos], *Registros-filmes* [Record-films] or *Registros-livros* [Record-books] the artist keeps of each. *CadernosLivros* and *Records* are not to be confused with the *Situações* themselves, as they are always beyond any form of registration and refuse to be imprisoned in image, text or object. It is in this field of the inapprehensible that Artur Barrio constructs his singular trajectory.

Artur Barrio also does works that question the sanctity of art institutions through the use of perishable materials, such as salt, meat, wood, fish, bread or ground coffee, brought together in large installations that shuffle the public's sensory coordinates. They are works that, like *Situações*, affirm the insufficiency of any and all documentation for capturing the artistic gesture and propose the transient experience engraved in the memory of the senses as a form of emancipation.

The selection of Artur Barrio as representative of Brazil in the 54th International Art Exhibition is due to at least two reasons. The first and most fundamental is to affirm the relevance and originality of his work, be it in the context of Brazilian art or the scope of international production. The second reason of this curatorial choice is to broaden, through the privileged exhibition platform of the International Art Exhibition, the understanding that the experimental tradition of Brazilian art is more diverse than the simplified visions that circulate in shows and publications abroad. Though anchored in fundamental creations of Brazilian culture, like neoconcretismo, bossa nova and modern architecture produced in the country, such readings almost always exclude the traces of incompleteness, of the symbolic attrition and noise that are also crucial to the formation of contemporary Brazil. Traces, nevertheless, that impose themselves as an inventive force in Artur Barrio's work.

The choice of Artur Barrio as the only artist to occupy the Pavilion of Brazil in the next edition of the 54th International Art Exhibition also breaks away from a practice of many years: of inviting a different artist for each of the two exhibition rooms of the pavilion. By privileging the exhibition of only one artist, the curators propose immersion in the work of a single creator and his vision of the world. Instead of restricting the public's experience, this strategy aims for the contrary: to make truly pulsating what, when seen in a divided space, is only delayed promise and power.

The Pavilion of Brazil of the 54th International Art Exhibition will be occupied by the work of Artur Barrio in two distinct and articulated ways. In the first room, several *Records* of previous works will be presented in photographs, videos and texts, so that his procedures and strategies are approachable even for visitors without previous knowledge of his work. In the second room a new installation will be created by the artist especially for the occasion of his participation in the 54th International Art Exhibition. Articulated, the two rooms will offer yet more proof, contained in the rigorous and radical presence of the work of Artur Barrio, of the diversity that bolsters and projects artistic production made in Brazil.

Biographies

Artur Barrio

Born in Oporto, Portugal, 1945.
Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Artur Barrio, born in Portugal in 1945 but living in Brazil, creates *Situações* [Situations] in situ. The creation process in such an ephemeral installation is much more important than the final result. His aversion towards the institute of the museum resulted to expositions in the public space: streets, gutters, rubbish dump etc. When he does expose in museums later on, it is rather to attack the institute, in some cases even by chopping literally holes in its walls.

Not only the installation itself is temporary, so also the materials Barrio chooses are granted only a short life. Coffee grit, bread, wine, urine, blood etc. are not only chosen for the sake of transitoriness but also because they are cheap, "Brazilian" or Third World materials. More expensive materials belong to the rich elite to who Barrio resists. It's in no way his meaning to aestheticize the poor object. Barrio is against art as an aesthetic or contemplative experience.

A walk through a *Situation* is a sensory experience: our eyes need to get used to the weak light, we smell and feel the coffee etc. This kind of installations has almost a psychological effect on the spectator. Barrio calls this formless work and calls himself an anti-formalist and anti-modernist. His installations are by the way not works of art but works and he is not an artist but an author. Categories, styles, criteria, programs and models are not his concern, nor are museums, galleries, salons and Biennales, prize distribution and juries, art critics and curators. In spite of the fact that Barrio writes and talks a lot about his work, he denies any form of extern discourse or interpretation.

Heitor Martins

Born in Marília, Brazil, 1967.
Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Heitor Martins was elected in 2009 as president of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, the institution that has produced the Bienal de São Paulo for 60 years – as well as the Brazilian representation at the Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte from 1950 to 1968 and from 1995 to present day. An art collector, Martins is director of McKinsey & Company of the city where he was born, São Paulo. The success of the 29th Bienal de São Paulo, produced during his first term, won him re-election in early 2011.

Moacir dos Anjos

Born in Recife, Brazil, 1967.

Lives and works in Recife, Brazil.

Moacir dos Anjos is a researcher at Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, since 1990. He was director of the Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (Mamam), also in Recife (2001-2006), and a member of the curatorial team of the Rumos Itaú Cultural Artes Visuais program, São Paulo (2001-2003). Mr. Dos Anjos was co-curator of the *Bienal do Mercosul* (2007), Porto Alegre, and of the *10+1. Geração da Virada* exhibition (2006), at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo. He also curated the exhibitions *Contraditório - Panorama da Arte Brasileira* (2007), at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo; *Rosângela Rennó* (2006), at Mamam; *Babel – Cildo Meireles* (2006), at Estação Pinacoteca, São Paulo; *Ernesto Neto/Rivane Neuenschwander* (2003) and *Adoração – Nelson Leirner* (2002), both at Mamam. He has published extensively on contemporary art and artists, both in Brazil and abroad. Among his most recent essays are “Where All Places Are”, in *Cildo Meireles* (London: Tate, 2008) and “Inventing Politics”, in *Plegaria Muda – Doris Salcedo* (Lisboa: Centro de Arte Moderna, 2011). He is the author of *Local/Global: arte em trânsito* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2005) and *ArteBra Crítica. Moacir dos Anjos* (Rio de Janeiro: Automática, 2010). Moacir dos Anjos was curator of the *29th Bienal de São Paulo* (2010).

Agnaldo Farias

Born in Itajubá, Brazil, 1955.

Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Agnaldo Farias is an art critic and curator at the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo. He was chief curator at the Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (1998/2000), and director of temporary exhibitions at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea at the University of São Paulo (1990/1993). Mr. Farias holds a master's degree in Social History from the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) and a PhD degree from the College of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo, where he currently teaches. He has written essays published in Brazil and abroad. Some of the exhibitions he curated include: *Bienal Brasil Século XX*, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo (1994); Brazilian representations at the *1st Johannesburg Biennial* (1995) and the *46th Venice Biennale* (1995), both with Nelson Aguilar; adjunct curator at the *23th Bienal de São Paulo* (1996), with Nelson Aguilar; Brazilian representation at the *25th Bienal de São Paulo* (2002); *Faxinal das Artes* (Residence Program in Faxinal do Céu, Paraná, Brazil) (2002); *Ordenação e Vertigem* (2003), Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo; *Nelson Leirner 1994+10* (2004), Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba and Instituto Tomie Ohtake. Agnaldo Farias was curator of the *29th Bienal de São Paulo* (2010).

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