

Delenguaamano-Collective

Pinacoteca de São Paulo

Every monument has a front, and with that *front* a direction in which we are going, and with that *going* a whole that is not singular but plural. In sum, a first person plural characterized by a future that is as shared as it is certain. The monument to Ramos de Zepeda erected in 1934 in front of the Pinacoteca de São Paulo was a clear example of this. With large dimensions and long-lived materials—granite, bronze—it attempted to establish a point for the city that would raise not as much the past, supported on Doric columns, but its future, represented by an advancing arm. However, it didn't last long: in 1967, due to the construction of the city's subway system, the monument had to be dismantled, then dumped, and finally re-erected away from its original site.

During the months of March, April, and May of this year, at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, the Delenguaamano collective—comprised of Gilberto Mariotti, Néstor Gutiérrez, and Santiago Reyes—took it upon itself, in its temporary shoe *Monumetría*, to once again raise that monument in a *here*—the original location given to it—and a *now*—our own times.

The problem was that very little was left of the monument's *here*, and the same goes for that *now*, our own times: only unconnected pieces that do not indicate a destiny, mismatched, incapable of organizing a path of any kind. And it is precisely there, on that dislocated *here and now*, that Delenguaamano set the basis of the monument.

Monumetría was a single work/intervention divided into four parts: *Perspectiva y proyección*, a transparency; *Mnemocine*: a museum fragment; *Trabajo y reproducción*: a printing of postcards; and *Reconstitución*, a bronze casting. Four parts that feed on each other through two concrete actions: pointing to fragments and inventing coordinates.

The first section, the transparency projection, comprises a small image of the sculpture arranged on a glass door. The door, which today opens to a small balcony, was once the Pinacoteca's main entrance and overlooked the square where the monument was located and met it from the back, since under no circumstance could they—building and monument—have been conceived front to front. Which is logical, since both had to

be directed in a single and common direction: towards the future.

Delenguaamano's reinstallation didn't follow the original plan; on the contrary, the sculpture ends up turning towards the building, so that they now stand face to face. This is arranged in a simple way: thanks to its small size—this is to say, by virtue of a classic trick of perspective—the image of the monument moves away, leaving the building, establishing a distance, in order to return to its place yet not in its original orientation, but in a 180-degree turn. And with this turn the work's extended arm ends up simply pointing to the viewer, whose feet are on the ground of the building's former entrance—its entrance from a time when the building still had a front, a trajectory, and a monument.

And there is something else. The glass door that supports the projection is one of those doors with sensors, so that as soon as one comes sufficiently close, it opens, the image dissolves, and the projector's beam continues on its way to nowhere.

What follows, or what I have determined follows, because there is no route here, is *Mnemocine*, a fragment of an exhibition. A temporary wall with artworks arranged as they would be in a history museum, not in a Twentieth Century arts institution. Firstly, because there are too many: over 130 in a twenty-by-four meter area; secondly, because these artworks are not claiming a private, isolated, or autonomous space, but rather intertwine with each other without any trouble. The viewer remains there, in front of these elements, recognizing some, being surprised by others. And it is in that interval that some tensions start to appear, due to the combination of very different subject matters: original works; original works that are copies of other original works—Millet's *The Gleaners* in Anita Malfatti's version; photographs; fragments of photographs; artworks and their photographic reproduction; sculptures and objects.

In this way, a fracture begins to emerge under a harmonious and even decorative arrangement, a fracture that resides on the incompatibility of genres, in the impossibility of establishing a common denominator for that series of elements. And it is on that fracture where the 130 artworks will remain, unable in all cases to form a whole. In sum, the whole here is as frayed as the route.

But despite this, a constant is woven through the objects on exhibit, something that is not genre-related, formal, or con-



Delenguaamano. *Monument to Ramos Azevedo before the inauguration, decade of 1930.* São Paulo. Photo: Hugo Zanella. Archive: Bronzes Artísticos Rebellato Ltda.

The same artist who created red waves near Puerto Rican beaches, amazing celestial bodies full of lyricism and mystery in France, South Korea, and China; yellow waterfalls stemming from rock mountains; secret maps filled with "coins"/"urns" to lose ourselves in sweet adventures; "angels" dancing beautiful rites of seduction; this time wants us to know the work he has created during his 52 years of age. In his previous exhibition at the Biaggi-Faure Gallery in San Juan entitled *Mapa Cósmico* (Cosmic Map), this multifaceted artist presented an impressive and seductive show of the "adventures/cosmogonies that entice him as an artist, and as a man whose sexuality is still questioned. This time, Heriberto Nieves has decided to share with the public pieces ranging from mobile sculptures, defined by their poetic balances, to "paintings" framed in metal "boxes" that attempt to capture – from an organic/symbolic/spiritual point of view – both the Caribbean nature and the Cosmos; from a hallucinating triptych that may be appreciated as the landscape observed in a cosmic voyage, to a pendulum with which Foucault would have been happy (or the other way around...).

Manuel Álvarez Lezama

ceptual, but thematic: the work itself. The fragments refer to people working, to hands holding tools, works of art as allegories of toil, photographs of those laborers who physically produced the tribute to Ramos de Azevedo. Labor becomes the communicating thread for the selection of objects. A rather singular thread for being a theme-related one, precisely that which a good part of Twentieth-Century art fled as soon as it said goodbye to monuments.

From there we move to the show's third and fourth sections: *Trabajo y reproducción* and *Reconstrucción*, which is to say, to the postcards and the bronze casting. The postcards show passages of the construction of the monument, devoted to the laborers: the postcard's size matches the size of the original photograph, yet the only thing we see of the latter is the portion where the laborer is. This results in a contrast between the printed space and the white space, between what is shown—in this case, the laborer rather than the result of his labor—and what remains hidden.

And finally, the bronze casting. Delenguamaano re-melted a fragment of the monument, specifically the hand of one of the allegories that supported its base. This hand is holding a hammer. The fragment, however, is not presented as a final product; on the contrary, the whole process of its manufacture is on display, as the molds and overmolds required to build it are shown. A five-step process, a lesson in bronze-casting, and, at the same time, a parenthesis in time: these steps inhabit a same segment of time. These steps are not steps: they are going nowhere. They retrace themselves, without any established path. In the same way the monument to Ramos de Azevedo—also called the Tribute to Progress—doubled back on itself and ended up there, perplexed, looking towards the Pinacoteca and noticing that it had also turned.

Julia Buenaventura

Damián Ortega

Galería Fortes Vilaça

Materialista (Materialist) was both the name and the connecting thread of the most recent exhibit by Damián Ortega (Mexico City, 1967) that was held at the new experimental shed of the Fortes Vilaça Gallery from March 7 through 17. It consisted of a

monumental site-specific installation that became alive and accumulated spatial potency and meaning at the locus that housed it. The first literal approximation to the work, presented by its title, tells us that *Materialista* refers to those who transport construction materials in a truck. And precisely, upon entering the exhibition space, this first impression is conveyed by the sculptural monumentality of an enormous truck suspended by steel cables fixed to the ceiling. The sculptural assemblage by Ortega decompresses the weight of gravity. Its structures, composed of materials that have lost their functionality *a priori*, are the result of experimentation and invention. Each discursive proposal by Ortega contains an unforeseen component randomly connected to the search for a fortuitous logic. This piece is associated with very specific aspects of the so-called "neo-sculpture," and has a distant relationship with the work by Richard Serra, who for a long time has been working with the space, weights, and topology of a place. I will quickly make reference, in a key citation to two of Serra's pieces: *One Ton Trop (House of Cards)* of 1969, made of four Cor-ten steel plates, and *5:30*, also created that same year by the San Francisco-born artist.

To a certain extent, Ortega points here to the elementary re-utilization of the force of gravity as the constructive principle of *Materialista*. In suspending a dismantled truck, the artist is conveying profoundly to the spectators that they are observing a work with "no weight," in which the forces are equilibrated, and the void existing in each objectual module contributes to reinforcing such anti-gravitational weightlessness. From the void to the space, from the space to the site's specificity, this work negates – due to its precariousness bordering on instability – the notion of a transportable object, its self-referentiality and practical permanence as such. *Materialista* is a work in its purest form, in which the ponderability of the singular space creates a new level of entropy. It is in effect an animation of the suspended enclave; therefore, it does not represent a calculable truth such as geometry, although its *dispositio* is orthogonal. But the piece does convey the feeling of a real presence in an isolated and frozen time. By manipulating several materials and their weight, this Mexican artist breaks apart the traditional sculpture to re-formulate concepts such as mass,



Damian Ortega. *Materialistic*, 2008. Site specific installation. Chromed truck pieces hung with steel cable. 189 x 330 ½ x 110 in. (480 x 840 x 280 cm). Photos: Studio Eduardo Ortega.

equilibrium, verticality, horizontality, space, and intervened site. From this perspective, Ortega questions the principles of the axiomatic construction of sculpture and objects in the expanded field, as well as the idea of sculpture-installation. Let us consider the dimensions of the work: 800 x 500 x 270 cm. It is noteworthy that this is not the first motor vehicle that Ortega deconstructs and meticulously dismembers. In 2002, in his work *Cosmic Thing*, he did the same with a Fusca model Volkswagen, a sort of personification of late modernity for Latin America, which is in the same tenor as *Fiat 600*. Another important element in the individual exhibit by Damián Ortega is that the color of the material used and that of the work are the same. The artist is not interested in beautifying or "aesthetizing" the surface of his works by painting or polishing them. Here the no-color is self-significant and corresponds to the intrinsic qualities of the material employed. If, for instance, the steel is painted, then its natural process of oxidation, an essential and inherent property of the material itself, is impeded. On the verge of disequilibrium, this installation draws a new space; it outlines it, it "marks" it. It is conceived as a complex