

Presentation of the individual exposition: Drawings Encontro Art Gallery, Brasilia, 1968

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*“L’artiste ne traduit pas, il invente. Nous sommes
dans le domaine des réalités imaginaires”.*
(Pierre Francastel)

The entire misconception surrounding the comprehension of contemporary art originates in moral prejudices and the guilt complex, which were used to combat and later defend the first industrial revolution, from the appeal to the craftsmanship of the past up to the conviction of purely industrial art. A century later, the problem still exists. The preponderant solution – which is, the transformation of manual art into an industrial project – despite its undeniable truths, remains mainly as a theoretical and only partial answer. Some of the more revolutionary works of art of our time were actually made by hand and by only one artist. The period of dissolution is already later in coming than expected. A total objectivity (which dispenses with man, creator of forms) has evidently never been attained. It is easy to find a subjacent soul even in the works of Malevich or Mondrian. Thanks to the growing acceleration of historical time and new means of communication, in a world increasingly diminished to a single cultural city, on the contrary, a subjectivity of compulsory innovation according to the systems of fashion peaked in the foreground. And aesthetic value continued to be the object of critical reflection and cultural anthropology. The new areas of action on material, the new distances and velocities, and the new cosmic and microscopic images appeared in the diverse and emotional touch of the artists that elaborated them, each one in their own way, and an indispensable figurative mutation to the New Vision.

By setting aside the moral, technical or figurative prejudices that accompany every artistic movement, one can seriously consider seeing and evaluating a work of contemporary art. I think about the drawings by Athos Bulcão as an excellent example. His drawing technique, traces and themes, spaces and fullness, all that constitutes the basic vocabulary of his graphic language is used here to give life to a reinvented space, a surprising vision of a fantastic and perturbing interior world. It is as if everything had emerged from a (conscious) environment of forms from an internal sea whose unfathomable topology contained unconscious contents and meanings, innumerable and latent life systems waiting to incarnate. If it were possible to give a general name to these drawings, I would like to call them ‘apparitions’. The curious idea that art, condemned to the avant-garde, has to be made on the eve of the event and surpassed on the following day, can only increase our esteem and our astonishment before those who, like Athos Bulcão, bring a transformed vision of life and of certain sentimental values necessary for the comprehension and construction of our world in their individual work.