

A Path In Transit

Over the course of my artistic career, I had not focused on a single medium; I was a painter, engraver, video and multimedia artist, went on to make books, objects and installations. Recently I have produced graphic interventions in interior spaces and on façades, video animations and graffiti alongside urban projections. In terms of the poetic and technical operations involved in the work, all this activity has always oscillated between hand-made and low-tech methods. My interest in different mediums and the recurrent use of new means of image production goes back to the 1970s. However, I have never been intensely engaged with any of the more radical trends that heavily rely on the use of technology.

Since my productions from the 1970s, my everlasting task has been to balance my constant curiosity for new material with an awareness that the medium cannot take over my ideas. My overriding goal has always been the search for meaning in any medium, with more emphasis on the politics of representation than on the means of production.

Shifts and complexities aside, over the last two decades my work has gradually developed a close relationship between architecture, its surrounding space, and its public dimension. This has paralleled my gradual migration from artisanal to digital productions, a natural step in light of the geometric operations that were cornerstones in my previous work.

Perspective drawings on graph paper have been a key stage when generating installations such as *In Absentia M.D.* (1983) and *Vortex* (1994), two large-format works that were entirely drawn on-site and painted by hand. This category of installations, based on enlarged perspective drawings, also includes the original version of *Paradoxo do Santo* [Saint's Paradox], realized in the project room of Museo del Barrio, New York in 1994. *Gone Wild* done in 1996 was the first commission I received to occupy a specific space in the interior of a museum, in this case, the entrance hall of the Museum of

Contemporary Art of San Diego, which had been recently remodeled by architect Robert Venturi.

The following decade, these same works and their different iterations—including *Paradoxo do Santo* in a vinyl version (2001), *Tropel Reversed* (2009), *Abyssal* (2010) and *Gone Wild Reversed* (2011)—were made based on plans generated with computer software. This enabled interesting transformations in my work, such as: substituting ephemerality for permanence, increased control over the scale of a project, greater flexibility for altering configurations and adapting them to different spaces, and broadened possibilities to create site-specific installations, both in Brazil and around the world.

The conditions that led me to use these new digital resources originally began with *Encuentro* (1991), a graphic work first conceived as a large-scale billboard, and produced using an industrial silkscreen process. The linearity and the outlines of the central image required a degree of precision that was only possible through the use of drawing software to ensure the rigorous sharpness I envisioned for that image. This could not have been achieved through hand-drawn enlargements.

Escada Inexplicável (1998) was among the first experiments during my transition from drawing into digital territories. This piece was followed by a more technologically driven work: the interactive video animation *Descendo a Escada* (2004). Both works are emblematic of how my previous explorations in projective spatiality grew to include larger possibilities and deeper meanings that were only possible by relying on more complex technical operations that always aimed to be poetically analogous.

Recently, I have produced works that rely on graphic patterns and images to cover the interiors and façades of various buildings and even commuter buses. My current production is marked by a growing interest in public spaces and in the development of ephemeral or permanent works, as projects that can exist outside the confines of art spaces. The long and complex

negotiation process that is inevitably involved in these projects does not make them less stimulating—on the contrary, they enhance my interest, because they engage different audiences and invite an exchange of ideas between a significant number of collaborators and studio assistants, enabling partnerships with people from different fields.

Paradoxically, the production of many of these projects, even if planned digitally, has involved an even more intense use of artisanal techniques that requires the participation of different teams and a collective and concerted effort. Two of the most recent works I have done under this organizational structure have been *Paraler* (2015), installed permanently on the sidewalk of the Biblioteca Mario de Andrade in São Paulo, and *Phantasmata* (2015), a project done for the 12 Bienal de la Havana, Cuba that included images painted directly on the pavement in the tradition of street graffiti using large stencils. *Paraler* is a huge, handmade mosaic, that required the placement by hand of nearly two million small pieces, along a length of sidewalk in 4 5 keeping with the size of the building and the large urban scale of the city's downtown district. *Phantasmata*, the extensive ephemeral painting made in a public area of Havana is even more artisanal in nature since the final image resulted from digital traces that were printed as outlines of cars, war tanks, and insects that were made using stencils and spray paint.

My current practice is quite different from the future that I once envisioned for myself decades ago. Back when I first began to work on large scale work, after all that time spent clambering around on scaffolding to detail those giant and ephemeral paintings. I imagined that after many years of this intense labor I would be inclined to focus on something comfortable like drawing or making watercolors on fine papers, in a protected environment, to the tune of good background music. Decades later, unlike that future I imagined, I continue to be increasingly engaged in many sorts of projects that outsize my own individual capacity to the point where I have become the artist collective that I am today.

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