

# PAC brazil. knife in the flesh

# 4.7—9.9.2018

Curated by **Jacopo Crivelli Visconti and Diego Sileo**

Press conference on  
**Tuesday, July 4, 2018 at 11:30 a.m.**  
opening at 7 p.m.

## Performance

July 3, 2018 at 7 p.m. Ana Mazzei and Regina Parra  
July 4, 2018 at 11 a.m. Berna Reale  
July 5-19, 2018 Maurício Ianês

**Artists in the exhibition:** Maria Thereza Alves, Sofia Borges, Paloma Bosquê, Jonathas de Andrade, Iole de Freitas, Daniel de Paula, Deyson Gilbert, Fernanda Gomes, Ivan Grilo, Carmela Gross, Tamar Guimarães, Maurício Ianês, Clara Ianni, Francesco João, André Komatsu, Runo Lagomarsino, Leonilson, Ícaro Lira, Cinthia Marcelle, Ana Mazzei, Letícia Parente, Regina Parra, Vijai Patchineelam, Berna Reale, Celso Renato, Mauro Restiffe, Luiz Roque, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, Tunga, Carlos Zilio.

From July 4 to September 9 PAC in Milan continues exploring the continents through contemporary art and presents the exhibition “BRAZIL. Knife in the Flesh”, a selection of 30 Brazilian artists spanning several generations, active from the 1970s onwards.

Promoted by the Municipality of Milan – Secretary of Culture and produced by PAC and Silvana Editoriale, under the Patronage of the Consulate General of Brazil in Milan, this exhibition is curated by Jacopo Crivelli Visconti and Diego Sileo and will take place thanks to the support of TOD’S, which sponsors PAC’s annual activities, with contributions by Alcantara and Cairo Editore and the support of Vulcano.

*Knife in the Flesh* (Navalha na Carne) is the title of a play by Brazilian playwright Plínio Marcos, who was particularly active during the military dictatorship years. The exhibition was created precisely on the crossroads, where theatre, politics, literature, activism and art meet, intermingle, and declare themselves in the conflict, as the title indicates. This conflict which many of the artists invited by PAC refer to in their works has no beginning or end. It is difficult to summarize in a few words, and it rarely translates into physical fights or battles. It is not a conventional battle, a war it is of a social nature and, above all, symbolic.

In more than 50 pieces, including installations, photographs, videos, and performances, this project brings together a series of works produced in Brazil over the last forty years, without claiming to be a portrait of the country or its art scene, but rather a reflection of its conflicts: the clashes, the violence, and the political, social, racial, environmental, and cultural abuse. In a direct language that is seemingly naive, albeit loaded with messages, the exhibition tells the story of crushed dreams and frustrated expectations, but also of a people that knows how to remain amazingly optimistic and keep a strong belief in the future.

Breaking with conventions and clichés, these works tell the story of Brazil from distant points of view, which are in some cases anti-theatrical, and that is exactly why they can help us understand the complexities of this country and its endless contradictions.

PAC continues to follow its exhibition strategy of offering new ways to understand reality by configuring other possible worlds and designing exhibitions as common spaces, a crossroads of exchanges and connections, where national limits and individual categories are overcome.

Following this concept, **André Komatsu** proposes a site-specific installation made of cement that is designed to crumble throughout the course of the exhibition, as if falling apart like the Brazilian utopia of recent years; **Runo Lagomarsino** uses his works to recall the trauma of colonization, of the fusion between modern European tradition and popular Latin American culture; and **Celso Renato**

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(1919–1992) used his poetic, abstract minimalism to perfectly embody this significant interaction between the two souls of a country that is too-often torn by internal contradictions.

The exhibition invites us to observe the works while doing down two parallel roads: on the first one, which is more purely political thus essential for understanding what is happening in the cultural, artistic, and social arena within the country the exhibit consistently shows a more aesthetic and formal reading that stimulates visitors to overcome formal matters, in some cases, or even be more engaged to the point of almost becoming militant.

For example, the poor materials used in **Icaro Lira's** *Campo Geral* [General Field] (2015) installation narrate, in a poetic way, the story of concentration camps created in the early 20th century to accommodate people fleeing from the drought in northeastern Brazil. The nature of these materials is functional to the story, but the act of going through the “general field” of misery is what gives them value as art objects.

Likewise, we also find works in the exhibition whose parameters we can recognize as traditional representations, while we'll perceive others as symbolic and conceptual. The denouncing works by **Leticia Parente** (1930–1991) and the poetic works by **Leonilson** (1957–1993) go in this direction and tell the story of a Brazilian production that is more intimate and personal. However, it is artists like **Cinthia Marcelle** special mention at the 2017 Venice Biennale for “an installation that creates an enigmatic and unstable space within which you cannot feel safe” who are up to the task of challenging social paradigms and raising questions. In her installations, **Fernanda Gomes** uses the scraps, remnants, and debris of daily life, which are brought together by the anonymous, trivial materials they are made of, but also by the immediacy, spontaneity, and above all the poetry that pervades her creations.

In this process, it is fundamental to see how these artists blend different visual cultures, a characteristic that is typical of Brazilian art unlike other experiences in Latin America without banning the culture of their conquerors, but rather absorbing it. Thus these works become a meeting point where the artists, especially those of the most recent generation, develop new perspectives and a critical analysis of reality to overcome the limitations imposed by traditional disciplines.

**Clara Ianni's** *Do Figurativismo ao Abstracionismo* [From Figurativism to Abstractionism], for example, reflects on conflict between institutionalized discourses and counter-narratives, questioning the infrastructure of power, history, culture, and aesthetics. **Daniel de Paula** takes over the PAC parterre space with *Testemunho* [Witness] (2015): his many samples of rocks and stones were collected from large construction sites in São Paulo to allude to the political and economic logic of power in Brazil.

**Paloma Bosquê** draws upon the physical presence of organic matters as a point of departure for an unfathomable challenge: she confronts a certain geometry to a lack of order within reality. And it is for this reason that a work like **Jonathas de Andrade's** *Educação para adultos* [Education for Adults] (2010) which takes a literacy method for adults created by Paulo Freire in the 1970s is so important in the general economy of exhibition: on the one hand, it recalls a historical episode; on the other, it indicates the ever so strong need to reformulate of pedagogical processes in whose expanded field all cultural events will find their place.

## PERFORMANCES

It is through processes of historical and social changes just like the ones we're experiencing today in Brazil after the administration of Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva that aesthetic events appear as moments for deep investigation of human being and, in the proliferating wave of cognitive impulse, the body asserts itself as a privileged terrain for the search of identity. Hence, once again, as it's been consolidated in PAC's, a large exhibition space is dedicated to performative events that will make opening day even more lively:

– **Tuesday, July 3, Ana Mazzei and Regina Parra** revisit *Ophelia* by taking Shakespearean's character and revealing how dependent the young woman was on male figures with quotes that evoke, at the same time, resistance and protest, alienation and subjugation, thus enacting them at PAC with a procession that is similar to a demonstration;

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– **Wednesday, July 4, Berna Reale** presents, for the first time ever, her *Camouflage* performance, which will leave from the PAC and take the streets of the city. Pulling a wagon full of sheets used to cover victims of violent deaths in the streets of Brazil, the artist denounces the increasing forms of violence in our city;

– **On July 5 through 19, Maurício Ianês** will present *Untitled (Dispossession)*, a performance that took place for the first time at the 2008 São Paulo Biennale; this time, he'll take over the PAC space, where he'll live and rely solely on the help of visitors in order to survive.

A rich **public program** will introduce adults and families to Brazilian culture and art: free guided tours every Thursday and Sunday; tours with the curators and special guests for a reading of multidisciplinary works; family lab and experimental workshops where visitors can use the techniques proposed by the artists and become familiar with Brazilian traditions by practicing, among the works exhibited, the art of capoeira.

On July 17 through 29, thanks to the cooperation **Agenda of Brazil: International Brazilian Movie Festival**, curated by Associazione Vagaluna and hosted by Spazio Oberdan. By keeping the ticket stub after seeing our exhibition, visitors will have access to all screenings of the film series with discounted admission (€ 5 instead of € 6.50).

The exhibition catalogue, curated by Jacopo Crivelli Visconti and Diego Sileo, is published by Silvana Editoriale.

Digital printing folder and images <https://goo.gl/qCtkyh>

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