

Jorge Silva Melo, 2004

MEMORANDUM NOW FOR AN UNKNOWN HOUSE

"Idle, the shadows pursue gestures and forms.

Fiama Hasse Pais Brandão, *Epístolas e Memorandos*

No, these are not ghosts nor shadows, traces, echoes, not at all, such things are all too common and everyone has already noticed them; these are intercrossing right angles, a generator of reflections, a prism of glances that meet and repeat themselves, ever da capo, a Romanesque network of imaginings invaded and intruded upon by our itinerary, no, these are not wistful memories, glances towards the past, nostalgia, the emptiness that characterises the house, time stops and starts again as we move across the space Ana Vieira's "Casa Desabitada" {Vacant House} offers us, a stage of woven, chiselled gazes, exchanged gazes, surprised ears, incitements, enticements, suggestions guided, surprised, led by sound, Scylla and Charybdis drawing ever closer to them the libidinous seafarer, tripper, onlooker, me. Imperilled seafarer, suspended if alone, for we sail around this opaque and transparent house (where does the house begin? where did its new inhabitation begin? what was left of it so that the glimpsed dance step may always recommence?), through doors left ajar, crevices, holes that reveal by means of precise angles, of their circular refusal of totality.

Nietzsche told us to stand mid-slope in order to find the best point of view on matter, and Ana Vieira holds us mid-door at every turn of this vicious circle, in which danger lurks, light comes not from the deep, nothing is seen through God's crevices; as in Dreyer's grey houses, every door hides a romance, a dance that recommences and never stops, as the windows that once James Stewart spied with a telescope. There is probably a meaning in this, a detective novel whose end we do not see, the presence of projections, reflections, mirages, lights, even the sad and incandescent neon lighting glares at us as we, suspicious and indicted, pass by.

After the stoical memento against death that were her capes with mirrored lining (those "Pronomes" {"Pronouns"} I saw one November 2001 night at the Franco Steggink Gallery, São Miguel island, Azores), after the white curtain fluttering in the breeze, monotonous, hanging and echoing the wait, the leave-taking, the heart-breaking absence ("Antecâmara" {"Antichamber"}, Giefarte Gallery, 2002), one finds in this itinerary through danger and circumspection, silences and sounds, installed by Ana Vieira in an unusual downtown Lisbon 3rd floor, a sarcasm, an irony, a disinterest, a ferocity, a tragic sense in these ever-recommencing gestures, a dance, hands, a body dressing itself, a leg that appears and vanishes, a hand cutting vegetables, who needs knives anyway, anywhere, what opaqueness is this, what story are we telling, what incitement does it convey to us, who expels us from the property, from the inner life, what private house, what unfamiliar house is this, what dreams set in these walls pierce them, of what mordacity are we speaking of?

The houses of Ana Vieira, who so often inscribes herself in them from the outside, on the outside, by gathering their blue shades on fabric, overlapping the Inside and the outside through painting, concealing, revealing, evoking the passing of the bodies, empty shadows in time, no longer a place for waiting or reminiscing, the houses are wounded, there are slashes of desire, of transfigured sexual connotation, the coldness of the memorandum contains an analytical scalpel, Hitchcock's sharp blade is near, we could hear the birds attacking, a spellbound, disenchanting, remembered, imagined, dreamed house, a dream of the eye, a stain, a scar.

Ana Vieira has always dealt with this scar of the houses, this hideout or reflection, this inner scar, this table that can be a theatre. And this geometric device she now introduces, so airy and discreet (where did it begin?), starting from each angle to a different refraction, reflection, projection or reduction, is a razor that slices our gaze, a neon light that burns us in the back room, in the back of what, what itinerary are we following?

What slash in two houses is this? Are they bleeding?

The walls are feverish - and there may be a laughter, a disinterest about what we, imperilled, evading light, unseen, have lived here once, as the phantasmagoric visitors of an evening, whom a smile - dark with darkest darkness brings to life again."

Catalogue *Casa Desabitada*. Ana Vieira. Lisbon: Artistas Unidos, 2004

Catalogue *Ana Vieira: Muros de Abrigo / Shelter Walls*; Ponta Delgada [Azores], Museu Carlos Machado, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2010, pp. 237-238 (org. Paulo Pires do Vale)
