

## **What I didn't do becomes a dream**

**Daniela Name**

**2017**

And the parallels of tires in the water of the streets  
They are two bare roads  
In which you flee from what is yours  
Belchior, Parallels, 1977

The title of this text lived right next door. Forgotten on a lamppost, the small poster hovered, frozen, beside the constant turning of the *Monument Project*. A stick? A stone? No one knows what happened to the car that Adriano Guimarães, Ismael Monticelli and Fernando Guimarães found in a junkyard of Brasília. But it had reached the end of a path. Interrupted, it was displayed, like a product highlighted in a showcase, the latest thing. The highlight in a store which advertises faults, or defects. During the exhibition at Funarte's marquee, it was subject to wind, to blistering sun, to the waters of March that close the summer. And to mud, to mud, to mud.

The red earth of the *cerrado* first covered the car and then was partially washed away by rain. The action of time – the meteorological, the chronological, the subjective – amplified the sculptural heft of work. Not in the formal aspect, but in the symbolic. The material of which this *Monument Project* is made is memory, or rather, memories, in the plural. An amalgamation of memories of the city, of its inhabitants, of a nation that projected utopias from the inauguration of Brasília. A car-that-is-no-more becomes a termination of the super-accelerated dream of the capital ("50 years in 5", promised Juscelino Kubitschek).

In the intervention that arose from the partnership between the three artists, the car was always in movement, all the while without leaving its place. It recalled the laps from the car races that were all the rage with the youth of a newly inaugurated Brasília, as well as the swarm from a coup that, shortly after the inauguration of the federal capital, regurgitated the country's leaders to exile or to death. The car, covered in dirt, a vestige of the tractors that opened roads, like an update of the country's pioneers,

heading west. The wrecked car like the twisted bowels of the city; the reverse of a monument; an inventory of ruins.

"Total loss," the accident report must have read. But the backdrop of Funarte's marquee gave me a counterpoint to that evaluation – a word with a welcome double-entendre. There was a pole right there, next to the piece, that held the poster. The right side was a bit ripped, the letter "t" from the word "that" and the letter "d" from the verb "did" were partially mutilated, but not enough to disrupt the message. "What I didn't do becomes a dream," the beaten car is the exhumation of a body that still pulsates, even beyond all losses. A sleeping ember on ashes, an incandescent fossil enunciated by Warburg.

The strength of the Warburgian *Leitfossil* lies in its ability to connect. The *Monument Project* features a car that seems to have come from within the earth, as a vestige from another time that dreamt of the future, but which also holds in itself a great capacity of being itself, an archaeologist. Since before the opening, the social media pages created by the artists of the Monument – in my opinion, an inseparable act from the project – have been creating an inventory of artistic works that used cars as a starting (and ending) point. From Christo to Milton Marques; from Jarbas Lopes to Arman – the insistence on these images, without further explanations or theories, was another gesture of the resilience of the project, creating enigmas that are also clots for the incessant flow of our increasingly virtual existence.

Speed was a goal and a banner of the Futurist Manifesto. Marinetti and Balla used the car as a driver of performance and image. The vanguards of the early twentieth century were crossed by dispersion and, as early as the early nineteenth century, the deflected looks of Manet's women point to the impact of the plurality of sensory stimuli coming from an increasingly fast, electric, and insomniac society. Two great wars, a holocaust, and an atomic bomb later, the angel of history sung by Benjamin asked to sign his check of disenchantment. Contemporary art today has at its disposal a kind of museum of lost illusions, and the feeling that the "new" – so coveted by its predecessors – is an impossible horizon.

Hyper stimulation proceeds. So much so that the *Monument Project* was conceived while there was a fierce discussion about the suspension of the speed limit in the largest Brazilian metropolis. São Paulo refuses to slow down in its Marginal highways. And it may not sound exaggerated to say that ever-speeding Sao Paulo does

not even notice what is on the side-lines. Maria Cristina Franco Ferraz shows how the invention of Teflon coating for pans and other kitchen utensils could be a metaphor for our times. We live sliding about, with no source of friction to force us to get a grip. A world without bonds and without the erosion caused by shocks or inclement weather – a world, therefore, that flows incessantly without being aware of its own transformations and, moreover, without creating the time necessary to absorb them. The massive speed we have imposed on ourselves leads to an ever-deeper paralysis – we are tediously cynical and, with no time or space for experimentation, we are engulfed by *dejà vu* and by the violent eruptions of the discussions on Facebook.

Violent, but fleeting. We live a world of ephemeral flags. Perhaps that is why it is so symptomatic that the *Monument Project* started with a flag stuck in the car – the car itself occupying the place of departure and arrival; the car itself as the frontier to be conquered. With the wind blowing and the floods that washed Brasilia, the flag swayed, shifting from the vertical to the horizontal and turning into a type of spear. Marilia Panitz, my traveling companion in this work, beautifully saw the appearance of a Don Quixote in this action of chance – the car and its invented mills. I'll add another image to this one – that of Saint George fused to his dragon. The dream of reason creating monsters and needing to face them in the devastated lunar terrain, as empty and melancholic as Brasilia.

"What I didn't do becomes a dream", I have repeated as a stone looking for mud since the beginning of this story. Not-doing has also been a form of resistance in the autonomous trajectories of the artists who decided to assemble at the *Monument Project*. Ismael Monticelli, who makes work that resides at the frontier between visual arts and literature, has pursued a certain invisibility. It arises from opacity, from translucency and from minimal gestures and objects that demand of the observer not only complicity, but a certain effort of contemplation. With a long history in theatre, the brothers Adriano and Fernando Guimarães also create visual and performance pieces whose overlapping layers – physical or temporal – induce a re-examination on the part of the observer. This can be done using a pupil dilator, which does in fact alter vision, or even through materials such as water and glass, filters and lenses for objects and bodies long before the invention of Instagram. All three have an insistence on a state of suspension in common. The *Monument Project* also centres on the frontier: it is a garden and at the same time a ruin; it is the reverse of architecture and at the same

time extends, in an intentionally broken and damaged way, the line of the marquee of Funarte. The space "between" is paused. And it is in that pause, in which we did not do, that lies our capacity to imagine and to dream.

The previous projects that Monticelli and the Guimarães brothers have done in partnership also have deep relationships with the *Monument Project*. In *Rumor*, from 2012, the visitor was invited to contemplate an installation made of empty glass, collected from the house of an accumulator of objects, and a mute piano. Immersed in the twilight, on the frontier between what one sees and what one does not see, this landscape was traversed by texts of Samuel Beckett, presented in a choppy fashion. The intersection – of light, of the word – as the great engine of the work. The gap as the space and time required for the imagination. In *Noise*, a theatrical micro-piece presented in 2016 in a room at the Castelinho in Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro, a text full of silences and things-not-said reinforces the artists' choice of the narratives in parentheses, marked by interruptions from hiccups, sighs or stuttering. A speech that creates obstacles for itself, causing pauses in discourse and listening. The set of the play showed a tub covered with dirt and a string of small lamps, reminding one of parties in the countryside and possibly of shoddy electrical work. The earth in the tub as a kind of grave or hourglass. Earth-time, grain to grain.

Earth as red as the Monument Project, a memory of the *cerrado* that seems to charge Brasilia for what the city has taken away, that insists on colouring its neutral concrete, tarnishing its purity as imagined by modern men- the city winning the project. Earth that is a reminder – that no matter how fast we go, nor how much we insist on going in circles: we come from dust, and to dust we will return.

[Text originally published in the catalogue of the *Monumento* exhibition, held at the Marquise da Funarte, Brasília/Brazil, 2017.]