

ENGLISH

GALLERIA CONTINUA

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# ANA MARIA TAVARES

## SORTIR DU SILENCE : AU-DELÀ DE LA MODERNITÉ

GALLERIA CONTINUA | Paris - From April 14, 2023

GALLERIA CONTINUA is delighted to present in its Parisian space the first major solo exhibition dedicated to the Brazilian artist and major figure of the international contemporary scene Ana Maria Tavares in France, from 14 April to 14 June 2023. Conceived as a new iteration of major works, *Sortir du silence : au-delà de la modernité* (*Unsilencing: Beyond Modernity*) reflects on the diverse political, economic and social implications of the modernist movement in Brazil, and highlights the duality between nature and artifice in a permanent contrast characteristic of the artist's work.

Born in 1958 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, Ana Maria Tavares lives and works in São Paulo, where she has been a professor and researcher in art since 1982. Her production questions the modernist movement born almost a century after her country's independence, characteristic of the major projects of the Brazilian capital, as an ideological construction with unexpected effects. Her works confront industrial techniques with handicraft, thereby reintroducing ornament - an element eliminated from Brazilian architecture since the 1920s - in order to question gender, origin and otherness, themes generally ignored by the modernist movement.

Tavares develops stagings that suspend time and invite the viewer to pay greater attention to the works of art that surround them. By immersing themselves in an alternative artistic reality, the viewer can truly question the essence of

the works and go beyond a purely aesthetic understanding of them. This essential need for the artist to eliminate chronology, found both in her undated works and in her installations that place the viewer in another atemporal reality, traces its roots in her challenging the permanent control experienced in our modern societies, which distances people from the present moment. In *Inventory Control II*, Tavares seeks to unsettle the viewer as they walk past sixteen curved mirrors hung on the wall, similar to surveillance devices used in shops, on which is inscribed the mantra "knowing what you've got, knowing what you need, knowing what you can do without, that's inventory control".

The artist has been interested in tropical nature since the 1990s. Entirely crocheted by artisans in Ceará, northeast Brazil, using traditional skills, *Garden for Burle Marx* (2013) offers an alternative to the modern trend of straight, clean lines and the demonisation of nature. The work, which was created through patient observation and analysis, is a translation of the garden which landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx designed for Brazil's first modernist building, the Palácio Capanema (1943). By using the crochet technique, Tavares puts into perspective the relentless harshness of modern thinking, which has dismissed the craft of embroidery as a superficial element, just like architectural ornaments, thereby renouncing an ancient traditional practice. While in an early version of the work, the Ceará artisans had used colour, the rest of the creative process led the artist to apply a total erasure of the

original colourful hues. In so doing, she makes a statement centred not on a celebration of tropical exuberance, but on denouncing the demonised representation of nature as impure and contaminated by the modernists.

Central to the artist's work, architecture is questioned as an ideological construct by comparing the work of modernist figures such as Adolf Loos (1870–1933), Le Corbusier (1887–1965), Oscar Niemeyer (1907–2012) with architects who moved away from this model, such as Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992). The artist explores the link between tropical nature and modernist architecture in *Deviant Topographies from Paxton to Burle Marx II and III* (2015), which includes a series of glass supports containing prints from the video *Deviating Utopias*, and handmade artificial water lilies, *Victorias Regias*, a giant aquatic plant typical of the Amazon region, a symbol of local vegetation representing the role played by indigenous flora in the construction of the modern world.

The work *Desviantes* (2011) is a re-reading of the architecture of the emblematic *Oca Building* built in 1951 in São Paulo by Oscar Niemeyer, inspired by the strip windows – long and horizontal – conceptualised by Le Corbusier in his manifesto *Five Points of a New Architecture* (1927). Tropical nature only becomes visible through Le Corbusier's panoramic windows or reflected in Oscar Niemeyer's mirrors, as if kept at a distance by modern thinking. For this work, Tavares first constructed a digital reproduction of the *Oca Building* to which she added mirrors to radically distort the image of the referent, creating a utopian and plungingly profound vision. Printed on metal panels, this digital architectural installation is structured by sliding panels that can be modulated in various ways, creating a multitude of landscapes. The work is named after "love motels" – spaces reserved for deviance from the rules – symbolising the unprecedented, disorder and the pleasure that results from it, in total opposition to the banality that contaminates modernist logic according to the artist. The *Oca Building* is also critiqued in a new work by the artist, a miniature representation of the building that creates a play of reflections evoking the principle of the sundial while blurring spatiotemporal reference points.

Since her first solo exhibition "Objects and Interferences" in 1982 at the Pinacoteca de São Paulo, the artist

has participated in four editions of the São Paulo Biennial (1983, 1987, 1991 and 2000), the VII Havana Biennial (2000), the Pontevedra Biennial (2000), the Istanbul Biennial (2001) and the Singapore Biennial (2006). She has had major solo exhibitions in Brazil and around the world: "Porto Pampulha" (1997) at MAP Museu de Arte da Pampulha; "Relax'ó'vision" (1998) at MuBE Museum of Brazil Sculpture; "Enigmas de uma Noite" (2004) at Instituto Tomie Ohtake; "Crystal Waters" (The Netherlands, 2008); "Tautorama" (2013) at Paço das Artes; "Natural-Natural: Paisagem e Artifício" (2013) at the Dragão do Mar Art and Culture Center; "Deviating Utopias" at the Frist Center for the Arts, (USA, 2013); "Two Voices Prisons: Piranesi and Ana Maria Tavares" at Lasar Segall Museum (2015); "In the Place Itself: an Anthology of Ana Maria Tavares", at Pinacoteca de São Paulo (2016), which received the São Paulo Critic's Association Prize of Best Retrospective of the year. In 2021, Tavares made an *in-situ* production entitled "Fractured Filed, SOS" for the Wall project at the MAM - Sao Paulo. In 2022, she presented "Fachadas Insanas", her first solo exhibition in the new space of the Continua Gallery in Pacaembu, São Paulo.

Ana Maria Tavares has participated in numerous international group exhibitions, such as: "Modernidade, Brazilian Art of the XX Century" at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (France, 1987); "Ultramodern: The Art of Contemporary Brazil" at the National Museum for Women in the Arts, (USA, 1993); "Side by Side, Contemporary Art of Brazil", CAPC Musée d'art contemporain, (France, 2001); "The Straight or Crooked Way", Royal College of Art (England, 2003); "When Lives Become Form: Creative Power from Brazil", Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art and Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art (Japan, 2009); "Spots, Dots, Pips, Tiles: An Exhibition About Dominoes", Perez Museum (Miami, 2017). "Against Abstraction, Works from the CGD Collection", (Portugal, in 2018).

Works by the artist are held in major public and private collections, such as the Kröller Müller Museum, Netherlands; FRAC-Haute Normandie (Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain), France; Serralves Foundation, Portugal; Culturgest, Portugal; Arco Foundation, Spain; Houston Museum of Fine Arts, USA; Pinacoteca de São Paulo; São Paulo Museum of Modern Art; Brasilia Museum of Art; Pampulha Museum of Art; São Paulo City Art Collection at Centro Cultural São Paulo.