

gustavo speridião: sobre poesia

23.11.2022 – 21.01.2023

Keep The Buzz Alive [short version]

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Two years ago, Gustavo Speridião painted *A MARCHA SEM FIM DOS POETAS REBELDES* (THE ENDLESS MARCH OF REBEL POETS, 2020), a diptych that would later give rise to the installation *MARCHA SEM FIM POESIA REBELDE (ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY)*, now on display at the solo show *Sobre poesia*.

Within this time span, the artist has suppressed the title's articles and prepositions ("a" and "dos", "the" and "of", respectively), as well as changed the wording emphasis, now less focused on the protagonism of its authors, "the poets", than on the agency of poetry itself.

The surgically precise cuts on the phrasing conducted by Speridião remove his semi-axiom from the catchphrase realm to fleetingly inscribe it within the domains of poetry. Dispensing with any connective function between nouns from the artworks titles, the artist creates a semantic gutter¹ that surely makes his previous motto seem like a kind of *haikai*.

It's no accident that, following up on the linguistic studies that have lead the artist to produce the shows *sobre desenho (on drawing, 2007)*, *sobre fotografia e filme (on photography and film, 2013)* and *sobre pintura (on painting, 2021)* as well as the current exhibition, *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY* refers to poetics, a language form traditionally characterized by *caesura*.

Being a concept Freud would employ to describe the relation of concurrent continuity and rupture that takes place at birth, caesura is, however, a concept that stems from poetry. It refers to an intentional pause in a verse: a both rhythmic and signic cut.

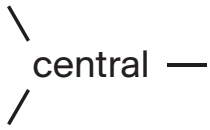
Originating from its causal version – in which linearly assembled words suggest exclusivist belongingness relationships, i.e., of ownership ("the march" is, after all, "of poets") –, as caesuraed offspring of the 2020 artwork, *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY* also investigates the poetic cut in space, comprising six equally consecutive and discontinuous sides.

What breaks free from the incarceration of unidirectional senses is the very space irruption going across its painting-wording: a doubly metric pause that is, after all, an escape plan from – or the deconstruction of – the rule of meanings, corporealities, politics and depictions.

ENDLESS

As a trotskyst, Speridião not only wagers on, but most of all envisions the "permanent revolution". His passion for the impermanence of clouds and the challenges of depiction there implied surely have vast and deep political roots: the ethical commitment not to bring to an end or take the achievements of all the struggle as *ex nihilo*, since he's aware of the necessity of continuing the revolution in view of the countless social urgencies and the recognition of the impossibility of precisising exactly when the struggle has started, considering it's beyond us.

¹ In 2020, Speridião painted *GUTTER*. While in comic books the term "gutter" stands for the frames dividing the narrative – the gaps that structure the grid of a comic book page, for example – within the artist's poetics, the gutter takes center stage, at times stretching to the point of becoming even larger than the area it's supposed to outline.



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To this effect, there are many circumstances in which Gustavo has produced continuity throughout his proficuous body of work, as is the case here in *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY*, whose circular dimension makes the poem unending, like the march and the rebellion he invokes.

Within a circular juxtaposition, the installation makes the poem reading multi directionally reversible. Once the caesura is spiraled, in addition to being read forwards or backwards it can also be reassembled by the movement of our bodies, which may go back or ricochet itself and the words, producing poems such as “REBELDE MARCHA POESIA SEM FIM” (“REBEL MARCHES ENDLESS POETRY”), “FIM REBELDE SEM POESIA MARCHA” (REBEL END POETRYLESS MARCHES”), “POESIA SEM MARCHA FIM REBELDE” (MARCHLESS POETRY REBEL END”), among countless other possibilities that can transmutate nouns into verbs or adjectives, and back again.

MARCH

The installation now on display in *sobre poesia* not only invites us to walk around it and across it, but it's also been produced in motion.

Laid on the floor for days, the now towering vertical presence of the canvases have been previously trampled. With no performative intention from the artist, this walkabout nonetheless comprises the artwork aesthetic design: the uncentered aspect of the poem and the spatiality of the installation in *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY* also takes place in the multiple directions and intensities of its strokes, blotches and scripts.

As he walked in circles over the canvases, the charcoal, paint and varnish pervaded the paintings through the action of feet and other body parts as well as the ravages of time – debunking the canonical protagonism of the “artist’s hand” – which has brought its contribution as dust, wind and sedimentation.

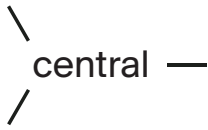
The refined artifice scheme and compositional devices employed by the artist announces the feeling of being faced with a small mass of incidents, presences and subjectivities.

MASS

Under the title *Como Me Tornei Bípede ou Os Problemas Políticos de Ser Bípede (How I Became a Biped or The Political Issues of Being a Biped, 2007)*, Speridião master’s thesis stemmed from the two-leg-support theme to take us on a journey through one of his main aesthetic strategies, entirely alike the Marxist-Trotskyist permanent revolution maxim – the “permanent fragmentation”: “As much as I play the role of dozens of authors who contradict each other and themselves, the Biped has also been a constant multiplication, thus we may say there are Twelve Bipedes, all unsure and hesitant, all mutually adversarial”².

Since legs act conjointly, their singular conformation in human bodies can make us experience the multiple dimensions inherent to unity. It’s a socio-political interest to which is added

² Excerpt from the artist’s thesis. At: <http://serbipede.blogspot.com/>.



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Speridião's aesthetical fascination with the *kouroi*: Greek statuary tradition which, through its monumentalized depiction of male bodies, props them on a pair of legs distinctively positioned, one foot in front of the other, like a step halted by the very depiction that freezes it right between coming and going, that is, in the liminal condition of passing by.

Producing difference within inherence itself, just like caesura in a verse, is a contribution from art in the realm of political form. As an author, Speridião seeks to do this by incorporating dialectics into his own work, forestalling, during the creative process, the usually further confrontation with difference. An intrinsic dialectic proceeding which thus becomes a constructive strategy.

To this end, in addition to provoking and highlighting cuts, caesuras and gutters, Biped-Gustavo – a “fragmenter” of his own self – have performed various aesthetic projects within the same artwork, intentionally making some of his paintings both geometrical and gestural, expressive and conceptual, planned and accidental.

At times, the voluptuous coexistence between varied aesthetic inclinations within the same artwork triggers the feeling of being faced with an artwork created by two or more authors, evoking disparate presences that do not coexist in equilibrium, but on the move.

It sure is the case of *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY*, whose multiple directional walkabout has produced messy blots to the point of fictionalizing the existence of a mass of feet, hands and bodies. A perspective that is reinforced by the heterotopic physicality of the six paintings standing around us, as if we were part of a dance or pogo circle, embracing us with its equally threatening performativity.

From Speridião's perspective, revolution either stems from the masses or there's no revolution whatsoever.

REBELLION

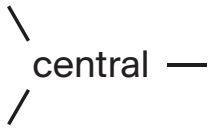
Gustavo Speridião is a socialist activist who sees the streets as one of his most important art schools. He considers self-defense and demonstration methods not as just struggle strategies, but as an aesthetic formulation.

The relevance of the barricade idea has gained in his body of work, of which *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY* is a clear example, comes from popular struggle experience, since it makes use of *do-it-yourself* constructive solutions to get this installation-trench out there.

Like a rebellion eulogy, the piece is itself a memory recall exercise and one of fabulation of popular confrontation tactics and insurrectionist knowledge such as the march, the banner, the poster, the circle, the graffiti or the barricade, to name only a few methods deployed in his creative process.

Heavily inspired by the self-defense of Pinheirinho's residents (in São Paulo) against the violent eviction through which that community has gone in 2012, Speridião's work seems to commit to something that, as a reminder, evokes an inconspicuous note from one of his many notebooks: “keep the buzz alive.”

Permanent revolution asks, after all, for endless rebellion.



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POETRY

The theology of order that identifies the modern concept of State is also constructed through language, this remarkably expressive and representational ability which, albeit undeterred to communication, has been continuously harassed by capitalism, whose production-oriented efficiency has not spared it.

Poetry, on the other hand, is a form of language whose enunciation strategies allow for and even foster the creative and critical disengagement to the theology of order. As highlighted by Speridião, making poetry means to imagine and to experiment with other forms of organization which are, from their senses to their forms, also social and political.

Learning to use gutters, caesuras and other cuts is, therefore, a weapon against the fanciful discursive power structure which, by fictionalizing social and political order, wishes us to believe there's no more loophole, crevice or void to be occupied or taken as a gateway to the implosion of the very structure that produces them and keeps them obscured.

GRAY

Despite its monumentality, *ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY*, this kind of poetic pedagogy towards a permanent political rebellion, does not take place stridently or spectacularly. The economic gravity of its "objetual massiveness"³ is less than seductive; it holds none of the luminous clarity of the gallant digital world.

Unlike a luminosity made of pure brightness, the light that shines across and comprises the installation is greatly absorbed by its own self, turning all six paintings into light bouncers through which it shines within an opaque self-contained atmosphere, like the black and white that tints the work's gestural intensity.

ENDLESS MARCH REBEL POETRY is, for this reason, eminently gray as a heavy cloud, seized by a liminal status of becoming rain and, perhaps, storm. Like the clouds, its grayness is not pigment-like, yet it belongs to the gradient resulting from the charcoal undoing, whose extremely trampled blackness became gray.

Chromatically downgraded, the installation is, as described by the artist himself, a "melancholic epic." It's less than triumphal in its revolutionary verve, but sufficiently rebellious to become poetry and, through it, keep itself from being beaten by the bleak mourning of lost battles.

As affectionately argued in *Amor Cinza's* verses, by Matheus Aleluia – whose deep hypnotic voice Gustavo Speridião was listening to while walking and painting his *ENDLESS MARCH...* – "na linha do horizonte tem um fundo cinza (...) / não aceito quando dizem / que o fim é cinza / eu vejo o cinza / como um início em cor / (...) vamos festejar o cinza com amor ("there's a gray background in the skyline (...) / I don't agree when they say / the end is gray / I see gray / as a beginning in color / (...) let's celebrate gray with love."

3 Guilherme Bueno in *Escaramuças pictóricas* (2011). Critical essay of the exhibition *Fora do plano tudo é ilusão*, held at Anita Schwartz, in Rio de Janeiro.