



c. l. salvaro

before sinking, it floats

Collapse is awaiting us at every standpoint. Amidst the spots of mildew on the white walls, the plants grow, constructing an intermediary plane between floor and ceiling. Walking through the space of the installation by C. L. Salvaro is like crossing a river against the current. It will be hard to reach the other shore.

It is necessary to bend over, to find the openings that allow us to breathe, to contemplate the whole. From the combination of building rubble, in an erratic symbiosis with the periphery of the constructions, a sort of anti-lookout is born. In it, the maximum height that one reaches is the height of one's own body.

Like shipwrecked castaways, we are alone in front of a map that does not have points of departure or arrival. The installation obstructs our movement. Planes of galvanized wire netting are interposed among the walls of the old living room of a two-story house in the district of Jardim Paulistano, projecting a sort of aerial swamp on top of which a rooted garden vies for primacy.

Here, nature rebels against landscaping, submitting the architecture to the roots that sprout rhizomatically and place us before an unstable balance. They dance on thin wires and, with any movement we make, remind us that everything is ready to plunge downward.

We are in a house occupied by the silence of plant life and the debris of the present. In this nature fabricated by the erosion of daily life there is no space for ruins. This would require some "longing for an alternative future," as observed by Andreas Huyssen. Something unthinkable in Brazil nowadays.

A fragment of history, the ruin presentifies the living in death, wrote Walter Benjamin, expanding in a temporal arc that includes its before and after. The ruin therefore feeds on an essential ambivalence: despite being nostalgic, it manifests the potential of imagining other things to come (even if based on a past that never took place).

But the web woven by Salvaro does not have an afterwards. There is only the imminence of an entropic situation where everything moves, even though all action has been suppressed.

Not by chance, when I asked the artist about his references, he cited various films. For me, Salvaro brings to mind the concept of the time-based arts, which refer to arts, such as film and video, whose raw material is time. This is what his work is about.

There is a strong scent of Compulsive Beauty in the air. It is different from the state of convulsion, which André Breton describes in the poem "Nadja" (1928), imprinting the force of unplanned outburst onto the tension between nature and culture.

Here I think about surrealism not with Breton's eyes, but through the reading of Hal Foster, comprehending the convulsive surrealist beauty through the key of compulsion, as a tendency toward inertia, repetition, the presence of the death wish.

Compulsive Beauty.

Will there now be a definition more precise than ours?

But this compulsion also has an air of resistance. By announcing its own collapse, Salvaro's paradoxical entropic guardian indicates that, before sinking, everything floats.

It is necessary to grasp onto this escape route. To become inebriated with the hiatus that the artist suggests. This can restore a forgotten breeze between the dystopias that are among us. We float.