

SECRETIVE OBJECTS

Now José Spañiol introduces objects that sleep. Trivial ones such as a ladder, chairs, a table, a bed, in real scale, and a miniature version of them in addition to a series of photographs, in which all of them are shown turned upside down, projecting images upwards as though rebelling against the conventional manner in which we see everyday objects. J.S. is not the first to perceive that objects rest, that they possibly dream and that in a way, the continued intimacy makes us bluster. Not going back too far, it suffices to remember the importance of objects, receptacles of secrets, in the poetics of surrealist extraction, or even in texts such as those written by Clarice Lispector, as in the one in which Ana, name/palindrome in the proper order of things, at nightfall, sees herself threatened by objects and their elongated shade, the very same objects that return in the morning docile and full of dust, as

though repentant. What do objects aspire? One knows little, although it is possible to conjecture that they dream of becoming other things, of assuming other configurations, of maybe leading a busier life or at least one that is free from us.

Before continuing, it is convenient to explain that this animist fantasy is pertinent. After all, objects are made by us and for us. They hold our measurements, the curvature of our body, they adapt to the size of our feet, to the height of our sitting bodies. They adapt to a point in which, in the best case scenario, they blend into us.

Is it not so? Do we not react with vexation when someone wants us to leave the comfort of our bed, the exact notch of our head on our pillow?

This complicity, this understanding of the configuration or our bodies by an object



proves that there is a relationship based on reciprocity: we are in the objects as they are in ourselves.

Consider, why not some of the emotions and sentiments? Or are there no ill meaning knives and scissors, protective armchairs, solitary tables? There exists a discordant and uninterrupted symphony of crackles, squeaks, thumps, screeches, besides the deafening and disquieting tic-tac of the clock and the rasping sound of metal grating when the key turns in the lock.

Everything exists in a house and in all houses and surroundings that we visit.

In addition, it is possible that objects get tired of all this. For aside from the servitude that justifies and sanctions objects, the one we call "useful", there is the simple and disguised function which is equally efficient in blocking our steps, creating obstacles, that which V.F. called the "perfidy of objects". They are everywhere, reminding us, from encounters which happen or are avoided, of our existence as well as of theirs. It is common to fall abruptly from our reveries with a dull thud as a result of an object, such as a banging door which we kick, when we are estranged from reality. Ah, the power of objects... but the objects of J. S. are not fanciful.

There are no vestiges in them of deformation or of an unusual array, such as objects in Dalí's paintings, or as in Meret Oppenheim's hairy cup .

R.M., a master in changing the most ordinary naturalistic imagery, is probably the closest to this tradition. One can say that objects are literally suspended, deep in sleep, and in this condition, as quotes João de Cabral de Melo Neto, we "dive into a well in which we are absent".

Absent although our semi inert bodies still lie flat in bed. Is is as though objects when left alone in the midst of the night, when candlelight swells out our bedsheets, could finally rest. Abandoned in sleep, as still quotes João Cabral, "made of sounds that seem to extend into the dark", objects stretch soothingly upwards, freeing the force of gravity, and nevertheless, along the way, without any interruption, as though there were an invisible mirror that sucked the images inwards, objects change location, invert and continue now upside down.

José Spaniol's objects, in particular those made of wood and four meters high, maintain the tameness of appearances while simultaneously connecting the sky to the floor. Thus behaving, establishing contact with this secretive space, an event that probably occurs nightly, they renew their mystery, the same mystery that leads us at times for no apparent reason, to look at objects in a suspicious manner, fearful due to the certainty that shadows inhabit them.

Sarrafas, 1986 [41,8 x 51,2 cm], madeira

