

“Figures in the landscape”

Initially, the observer must decide between the image of an imposing bicycle, austere, borgean in the sense of it's apparent infinitude, accompanied by a narration of excerpts of Saint Augustine, Macedonio Fernandes and Fernando Pessoa, and the beach's everydayness, popular, sunny, followed by dialogues of it's goers associated to a narration of excerpts of Italo Calvino and Ruben Braga. Between the Real Gabinete Portugues de Leitura and Ipanema Beach, the installation « Figures in the Landscape», by André Parente invites the observer into a unique experience, a journey through the digital panorama of his latest art piece.

The installation “Figures in the Landscape” is integrated to the panoramic device Visorama, created from a technology developed by André Parente in partnership with Luiz Velho (Pure and Applied Mathematics Institute – IMPA) to build a multimedia virtual reality system. It's an immersive device that provides navigation between high-resolution panoramic images. The purpose is to create the illusion that the observer is seeing, the reality that surrounds him, through stereoscopic binoculars. This technology enables the observer's interaction with photo-realist virtual environments, video graphic images and sounds.

The piece is inserted in a contemporary art installation context in which the device becomes an articulation strategy between technology, the spectator and a certain system of beliefs, whose goal is to trigger new experience modalities with images. Historically, the variations in the audiovisual devices imply variations in the spectator regime of each time, sometimes accentuating the belief in the realism of *mimesis* and verisimilitude, inserting the observer in the image, and others promoting the detachment, the strangeness before representation. Today, the images hybridization potentiated by new technologies have been questioning our traditional vision of reality and reinventing the observer's role, due, once more, to the relations between devices and images.

At the entrance, the first observed image is the exhibition space, itself, quiet, empty, still. The binoculars, equipment that allows the stereoscopic vision of the photographic and video graphic images present in the piece, are hanging in the center of the room, suggesting a reality beyond eye limits. The installation becomes an invitation to voyeurism. In this initial state, it is necessary to wander the entire panorama, from one side to another, to find the passages that lead to the other landscapes. Pressing one of the device's buttons, we initiate an approach, a zoom on the image, and enter the library or the beach.

The landscapes are built from the miscegenation of several images, photographic and video graphic, and the narration of texts that refer to the reader and observer's situation. Along the chosen path, the piece offers the observer a dialogue between the image's and sound's layers, between image and literature, and to see and to say. In one of the options, the observer may enter the library's reading room, initially empty, and listen to the narration of the text "silent reading", written by Saint Augustine, where the author describes his admiration before the act his master Ambrósio's silent reading of, a wonderful spectacle, the symbol of freedom that must be reached by thought. In a paradoxical way, the text's narration aloud lectures about silence double the observer's situation that sees what can't be said and hears what cannot be seen.

In another path, the beach, the observer may, among other options, encounter the videographic image of a man swimming while he hears the narration of "Man at sea", text in which Rubem Braga describes a scene in which an observer watches a man that swims at sea. Getting carried away by the narration, the observer admires the swimmer's rhythm and effort at each stroke, creating a complicity with the man and his image. Once more, the narration calls upon the observer to rethink his own observation condition, while conducting it's film's narrative. The scene indicates an intimacy relation between those who see and those who see from what they hear, suggesting a reflexivity of these functions, leading the observer to see himself seeing and hear himself hearing.

When before the landscapes built by André Parente, the observer is summoned to initiate a path through the image that leads him to visually travel the panoramas through the choices that abstract their own body movements. By performing a "blind" dance, with firm hands and eyes on the binoculars, the observer builds his own audiovisual narrative from what he chooses to see or not, hear or not. Here, the device confuses itself with the installation, suggesting a "device-piece", that transforms the observer in a creator from a relation established with the piece.

While carrying out his "performing-creative" action, the observer is also an object of observation to other visitors, that stay in the exhibition room and follow the whole narrative through a panoramic screen. The screen placed in front of the binoculars, allows everyone - the public and the binoculars' operator - to simultaneously watch the same images. The art piece is designed in a way that the experience is not a privilege reserved to he that operates the device, but a shared experience with the audience, that reacts to the images and choices of the operator. The screen is an invitation not only to observation, but also to the audience's participation. Each time there's a stimulating or rejecting reaction, the audience eventually interferes in the observer's choices, that cannot ignore his spectators. The piece is designed as a power net that produces individual and collective experience, where the observer's, the audience's and the artist's roles reinvent themselves constantly.

In a dialogue with cinema's history, the artist creates the appropriate conditions for an experience that recovers and reinvents other audiovisual devices at the same time. From the first photographic panoramas, to the first movie theaters, without neglecting classic cinema, modern experimentalisms, and video art, André Parente dialogues with the technologies and with the art and observation regimes of each time. While resuming the operation of a historically known, in a game of approach and withdrawal, they flee from pre-

defined models. The

The image's modes of appearance and disappearance, the narrative's fragility and instability, its presentation as a stream, and the different roles for observers reconfigure the technical image's place in contemporaneity.

Contemporary art has been creating devices that increasingly favor the image as a place of experience, where the observer is asked to participate in order to highlight that no work is independent from experience. The work takes place in a creative established relations performance between spectators and devices, and integrates a system of variations and durations offering an uncertain universe to be negotiated. André Parente's installation highlights the device's function, as it introduces us to a path, a strength game, a process and not an object destined to contemplation.

"Figures in the Landscape" is "device-piece" that makes us waver between predefined representation system's speeches and it's possible detours, and aims the creation of an intermediate place that allows us to be between the thing and the representation, between belief and suspicion, between image and language. It's not about believing in the images, but understanding the device's acting strength's, which indicate new ways to experience it. New established relations between devices, observers and images appear in a displacement of the device's original functions, in the fracture of the lines that structure and determine the experiences in a long known and interiorized device.