

Ministry of Culture, Bienal and Itaú present

32nd BIENAL DE SÃO PAULO
INCERTEZA VIVA

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CATALOGUE



bienal são paulo

Ana Mazzei's work is motivated by her search for other worlds and imaginary universes and by a need to tell and re-signify stories. She is interested in the eternal and diverse relations between man and history: landscapes, architectures, fictions, theories and archives. Everything is part of a large narrative construction of man in this world. Her artworks are like pieces and fragments of myths, lives and fictions that are represented in drawings, videos, sculptures and installations. At other times, her works function as observation devices framing this vast repertoire from a specific point of view. Focusing on a widely experimental practice, the artist appropriates different sensorial materials, such as felt and concrete, connecting to the environments in which she works.

The relationship between the body and space is recurrent in her oeuvre. In recent years Mazzei has created many installation-objects, some with a performative nature and others participative, such as **Avistador de Pássaros [Birdwatcher]** (2014/2015) and **Garabandal** (2015). In the first piece, the spectator is invited to go up some steps to a viewing point or pulpit located at the top of a building and check out the view, perhaps to see a bird in a furtive flight? In the second piece, she invites the viewer to try a seat where the body takes on what the artist calls a "position of ecstasy": bent knees, open arms and head up – a position in which we are forced to look up whilst our body is off balance. This composition, which is recurrent in the history of painting, also appears in early psychiatric studies, and is associated with psychic decontrol. In **Garabandal**, the positioning of the viewer's body provides a displacement of points of view, a change of place that triggers other world visions and, consequently, different perspectives and references.

In **Espetáculo [Spectacle]** (2016), a new commission presented at the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo, Mazzei also explores positions and points of view, but this time her approach is via a more direct relationship between the place of the spectator and the place of the observed object. In this spectacle, it is uncertain what is the stage and what is the audience, or even what is being exhibited. If the stage delimits a field of action, or a territory for acting where the body moves in a world that represents other worlds, then it constitutes the field of all possible things. The set of objects we see, positioned as protagonists, in the ambiguity of being both observers and objects being observed, also seem to originate from some medieval astrology treatise or from an obsolete lab. They are like remains of machines, geometric clocks, compasses, pendulums, fragments of furniture, measuring devices... all forgotten stories. Nevertheless, their verticality makes them look like they are reaching for the sky. Their position represents a point in the universe from which the world can be observed and imagined. If the spectacle can be defined as something which is presented to us and catches our attention, or as something exceptional, then it works here as evidence of our existence in the world.

— Camila Bechelany





From the series *Êxtase, ascensão e morte* [Ecstasy, Ascension and Death], 2016. Wood, metal and felt.
Installation view at Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil (2016).
Sketches for *Êxtase, ascensão e morte*.

