

Marepe

Entre o céu e o inverno (Between Heaven and Winter)

The Franco Noero Gallery is happy to announce **Entre o céu e o inverno (Between Heaven and Winter)**, the first solo exhibition of the Brazilian artist Marepe in Italy, set up in Turin in the Via Mottalciata gallery. The exhibition brings together a wide range of works that cover a time span of the artist's career and his expressive research over the past fifteen years, works that touch some of the themes that are dearest to him, up to his most recent research. The exhibition is therefore in perfect harmony with the great retrospective that last year the Pinacoteca di San Paolo in Brazil dedicated to the artist, entitled 'Estranhamente comum' (Oddly Common).

Marepe's artistic practice is firmly linked to its origins and the events that characterized his daily life. Living and working in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus in northern Brazil, Marepe's poetics are permeated by a rich mix of themes that make clear reference to the typical traits of the territory from which it originates, the Bahia region, manufacturing and trade of the place, the popular traditions of the Recôncavo Baiano, as well as personal, family and childhood memories, probably due to the many hours spent in the hardware owned by his father or the time spent observing the ingenuity of the Bahia street vendors.

A founding and recurring element in Marepe's works is linked to the appropriation of everyday objects, those that are available in the markets or shops that sell useful and functional things, which are systematically decontextualized, reinvented and assembled into compositions that express completely personal and unexpected associations, so as to redefine their nature, form and meaning.

Although influenced by the Dadaist current, the use of *ready-made* is rooted in many other needs for Marepe. In fact, the artist refers to his sculptural compositions defining the objects that compose them as *necessidades* (necessities) rather than *ready-mades*, capturing and exploiting the characteristics that identify the strong social and economic relevance that they represent for the Brazilian rural territory and, in particular, for the Bahia region. The memory, the forms, the peculiar simplicity and spontaneity of the materials and the chromatic compositions are therefore the basic structure on which the artist relies to conceive his works. In this way, Marepe encourages a method of observation and study of objects familiar to us that reveal qualities that would normally be hidden or unnoticed by most people.

And so it is that the *Radiadors*, simple radiators for the operation of air conditioners, become bare canvases on which to sketch landscapes, animals and figures attributable to his childhood; as in *Os três*, a large canvas painted with acrylic colors that depicts a familiar scene in which a boy dressed in bright colors, presumably the artist, is intent on playing with a small wooden car. The playful and carefree aspect of the radiators is also present in *Simulador de caminhada*, in which tools normally used for exercise are adorned with wicker balls, crystals, bustiers and broom bristles almost to touch the ceiling, and in *Aquecimento Corporal da Seleção de Santo Antonio de Jesus*, the only video on display, in which a Brazilian football team, in order to warm up for the start of a game, transmits a sense of spontaneity and joy through the choreographed song of the athletes.

In *Abrigo*, literally 'refuge' in Portuguese, a wooden slatted base is the basis for a precarious construction consisting of deck cushions, an overlay for eternit roofs, an aluminum lined blanket and four clay jugs crowned with hats of straw commonly used in the Tropic regions to protect themselves from the scorching sun. The structure, although pleasant at first glance, is a direct reference of the artist to the state of crisis of the thousands of homeless people in the main Brazilian cities.

In *Carro de Bandeirolas*, a wooden toy car replicates the size of a real car. The traditional steel bodywork is in this case replaced by a multitude of colored aluminum flags depicting the national currency of Brazil, the real. Wood is also the main element of *As Cabras* - work composed of two sculptures with elementary features like those of a child's drawing - depicting two goats clearly disproportionate to their real size. The two sculptures are simultaneously a precise reference and an exaltation of the social and economic importance that this species holds in the north-east of Brazil and an allusion to the artisan production and in small numbers of modernist furnishings in Brazil between the 1950s and the 70s.

Concha Acústica is the installation placed in the central space of the gallery and is made up of eight elements that appear as loudspeakers or instrument cases made up of improvised elements, large plastic

basins coupled and resting on wooden stools arranged in a circle. allusion perhaps to a chamber orchestra or band. The colors, shapes and composition recall one of the most evocative and historical places in the city of Salvador di Bahia, the famous *Concha Acústica* of the Castro Alves Theater, a cultural center with more than 50 years of activity and very dear to the artist.

also refers to one of Marepe's most emblematic works, *Cabeça Acústica* (1996), a real 'acoustic head' composed of two concave galvanized metal elements that act as a casing and a slot in which the spectator is invited to insert the head. By inserting the head inside the instrument, the observer activates the performative object by isolating itself from all external sounds and thus becoming one with the work of art itself.

Marepe (Santo Antônio de Jesus, 1970) lives and works in Santo Antônio de Jesus, Bahia, Brazil. His work has been the subject of personal exhibitions at international public and private institutions, including: Estação Pinacoteca, San Paolo, Brazil (2019); Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom (2007); Center Pompidou, Paris, France (2005). He has participated in numerous collective exhibitions in international institutions, including: Sesc Belenzinho, San Paolo, Brazil (2019); 'MASP, São Paulo, Brazil (2018); Museu de Arte Contemporânea from Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2017); Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, USA (2017); Today Art Museum, Beijing, China (2016); MAM São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2014); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA (2012); Itaú Cultural, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011); Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, Japan (2009); MoMA PS1, New York, USA (2008); Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2007); ICA - Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, United Kingdom (2006); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA (2005); Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA (2004). Between biennials and international group exhibitions, we would like to mention the participation in: TRIO Bienal - Rio Three-Dimensional Biennial, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2015); 50th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2003); 25th Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2002); 26th Biennale of Pontevedra, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2000); Guarene Arte 99, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Foundation, Turin, Italy (1999); Gravura Biennial, Curitiba, Brazil (1998); Biennial of Recôncavo, Centro Cultural Dannemann, São Felix, Brazil (1995; 1993; 1991).

A text by the artist accompanies the exhibition:

"The exhibition unites recent and unpublished works with some of the past, all reflecting the harshness of some moments of my journey, but at the same time they are always permeated by a sense of faith. This is the word that best explains my insistence on proceeding. Brazilian singer Gilberto Gil wrote: 'Mesmo a quem não tem fé, a fé costuma acompanhar, pelo sim, pelo não' (Faith follows even those who do not have it, in any case). In times of extreme uncertainty, in which distorted values alter and jeopardize the stability of acquired rights, faith is the only recurring reason for giving meaning to life. Never before have I seen so many people walking the streets with the word faith printed on their shirts. While in Brazil the summer season is experienced, in Italy it is mid-winter. Two opposite hemispheres therefore, which is why the exhibition is entitled Entre o céu e o inverno (Between Heaven and Winter). Through this title I wanted to express the desire to remind visitors that my place of origin is the Tropics, as in the title of the documentary produced by Elisa Gomes dedicated to the Brazilian artist Maria Martins: 'Maria, Não Esqueça que Eu Venho dos Trópicos (Maria, don't forget that I come from the Tropics). Maria Martins was one of Marchel Duchamp's great loves that I could not fail to mention, as the creator of the artistic ready-made. This exhibition constantly reminds me of Fellini's film The Nights of Cabiria, when the actress Giulietta Masina exclaims: 'what strange lights'. Maybe this exhibition has the same light. "

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