

**DELUDED  
DETACHMENT**

**LUCAS SIMÕES**

**Demolition of Pruitt-Igoe or the Nostalgia of the Impossible**

María Iñigo Clavo

Lucas Simões' work is pervaded by a desire to show the reverse side of the images, an impulse to discuss representations of power/knowledge in history. The first operation is to reveal its materiality, showing how its apparent two-dimensional nature is full of holes, corners, layers and gaps. To reveal all this he unfolds these representations into a new invented three-dimensionality, a material perspective filled with shadows, reflections, empty spaces, with a rhythm and cadence. He opens a three-dimensional representation, hiding and oppressing the two-dimensional at the same time – as he hides, he reveals.

The artist focuses on disrupt Western knowledge units par excellence, the book and the map. The face, as in "desretratos/un-portraits" (2010-2013) serves as material, since the expression, after a disciplinary process, is also socially constructed as a political element. "Certain power devices need to produce a face." <sup>1</sup>. As Deleuze and Guattari insist on their beautiful text about "the faciality" - a face is a blank space in which holes were opened and it is through them that the subjective experience becomes possible, which appears "as consciousness or passion, a camera, or the third eye". Sometimes, Simões' maps hides a portrait, or vice versa. For Deleuze and Guattari, the foreground in cinema is used to show the shadows "to sink it in the darkness" and also to reflect the light. So, it is no coincidence that his interventions are filled with mirrors - facing a power device, after a speech, our own subjectivity shapes automatically into a distorted relationship. "Subjective whiteness, capturing hole, the face".

SOLO PROJECT  
ARCO MADRID 2014

GALERIA  
EMMA THOMAS  
STAND 7SP11



nuevos barrios residenciales, 2010



não-dito, 2013



el piso, el tempo, 2013



dimensão encerrada, 2012  
pivô - edício COPAN

Works such as “Displacement” (2008), “Verse” (2008), or “Nuevos Barrios Residenciales” (2010), decode these instruments of control and power to neutralize them in a new poetic function. When the representation strategy is replaced by presentation, there is an urge of a historical consciousness about the role that images occupy in our time. In his works there is something to be discovered that we cannot access, it gets clear in “unsaid” (2013), concrete structures with familiar concrete shapes that contains sheets of paper. These heavy and rigid structures seem to have an outlet to release the paper sheets, but they are always broken promises, insinuations that make visible the frustrated desire to meet the representations contained. What is not said? Damn blind spots.

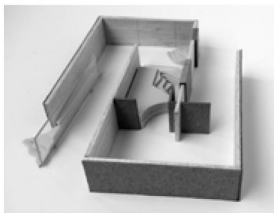
These pieces are part of the research presented by the artist in the Gallery Emma Thomas in 2013, entitled “the weight, the time”, where the materials generate a dialogue of weight, position, density, thickness and especially, of gravity. The cement is a very heavy element used for structure and construction and it makes impossible any smooth movement. It sustains. However, in “Bebadosamba” (2014) is placed in a position to be sustained: several glasses shape the cement in its interior. The light, soft and ethereal material enforces the crystal shape and models the concrete, apparently more aggressive and primary. In this way, an extremely precarious balance is generated and the dangerous of an imminent rupture.

The demi-abandoned room spaces of Pivo gave him the opportunity to think about certain “archeology of a modern disuse”, as Simões says. The room is located in Copan, one of São Paulo’s most paradigmatic buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer. The proposal was necessarily labyrinthine evoking not only the experience of the building, but also a loss of *orientation*. This refers directly to Brazilian modern design, whose narrative has the architectural Modernism as one of its main pillars, crucial element of ideological discourse that accompanied the development project of Brazil. For this, it was necessary to educate the public, to discipline bodies at any cost or even whiten them if necessary. As Fabiola Durán López<sup>2</sup> has been shown in studies of Le Corbusier, his aspirations to purity in architecture accompanied his interest for racist pseudoscience as eugenics.

Therefore, it is not by chance that Simões has an interest in projects like Pruitt-Igoe to the work “Deluded Detachment” (2014) which features at ARCO. This project was launched as a new model of social housing, far away from the city of St. Louis. At first, the black and white populations were distributed in different buildings. Pruitt is the name of an African-American fighter pilot and Igoe a former Congressman White. When segregation was banned in the U.S.A., white population preferred to leave the buildings than to live on equal terms with the black inhabitants. Once it came to social housing, the Government restricted the rights of the inhabitants by putting impossible standards to comply, pointing to poverty as an *uncivil society*<sup>3</sup>, without any possibility of autonomy or empowerment. The progressive vandalism grew until the deterioration of buildings and its demolition, twenty years after its celebrated construction with the purpose of eliminating a crime outbreak. The architectural project was found guilty for being impossible to be maintained due to low income of its inhabitants; in addition, the State abandoned the enclosure to the luck of the draw. There are other Pruitt-Igoes that has been part of this research, since the Poblado de absorción Fuencarral B in Madrid to the urbanization of the City of God, in Rio de Janeiro, or Robin Hood Gardens, in London or the Edifício São Vito - São Paulo.



provável horizonte, 2013



deluded detachment, 2013



engessados, 2013



bebedosamba, 2014

Simões does not work only with the plant of the small apartments, but also with the images of its demolition. For many, the date of the fall of Pruitt-Igoe, July 15, 1972, marked the beginning of postmodernism as the clear result of the price of modernity. It's hard not to contrast it with the fall of the Twin Towers, a project of the same architect, Minoru Yamasaki. Although he regretted the extent of human evil, it would be better to speak of lives hobbled, as pointed out by Adorno in *Minima Moralia*, one of the references of the artist in the process of developing "Deluded Detachment" (2014). Adorno wanted to rethink history in order to abandon the triumphalist speeches, a symptom of the crisis of a teleological narrative model after World War II. This would help to understand the present as a consequence of that has been dragging of the past, "is foolish and sentimental willing to maintain the clean slate of the dirt of this"<sup>4</sup>. As said some of the first nation's ideologues, Ernest Renan, in 1882, the oblivion "-including the historical error"- is one of the most important elements for the creation of a nation, so historians can only be seen as a threat.

The reflection of Simões about the architecture has to do with the way that the major ideologies conceive its designs with its back to the people and their needs. Behind these projects, inhumanism is revealed. The Brazilian architectural modernism became luxury and a sign of social status more than an alternative to the population. This disconnection or detachment of "Deluded Detachment" has to do with the large unfulfilled promises of Modernism through the work of the artist, the same issues that were part of the discussions that led authors such as Habermas to argue that the modernity is an incomplete project.

This is not the "unsaid" of those famous concrete works that accompanied the development on the fifties. Which also appears in Lucas reflections about "os bichos" of Lygia Clark in his work "Plastered" (2013). In it, performing parts of Clark which became international paradigms of brazilianness were covered with concrete, getting paralyzed and fossilized, muted, no longer allowing any intervention on the part of the viewer, that mirage of art for the people is frustrated. There are also fossilized objects in "Deluded Detachment", signs of a past life, traces of a ghost town. The viewer can walk around, but cannot cross it. There is a tension between history and memory of a human movement that dwelt. Just like, the glasses of "Bebadosamba" are silenced, there will be no toasts. Bebedosamba is the name of a song by Paulinho da Viola, in which the musician invokes the name of Samba Brazilian classic musicians to help him creating his own samba. The national rhetoric only helps to display the melancholy of its own unfulfilled promises. In "Bebadosamba", the modern celebration has become the burden of the past, a precarious history balance, a dense, slow, heavy party that shows us the urgent need to reveal their "secret documents" (2013).

- 1 . Deleuze y Guattari. *Mil mesetas*. Barcelona. Pre-textos, 2002. P. 174
- 2 . Gisela Heffes (ed.) *Utopías urbanas. Geopolíticas del deseo en América Latina* Madrid y Fráncfort del Meno: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2013.
3. De Sousa Santos, Boaventura. *Poderia o direito ser emancipatorio?*. *Revista Crítica de ciências Sociais*, 65, Maio 2003
4. Adorno, Theodor. *Minima Moralia*, Madrid, Taurus, 1987, p167

[www.lucassimoes.com.br](http://www.lucassimoes.com.br)