

## THE DISCOVERY OF POROSITY

"Porosity is the inexhaustible law of that life, to be rediscovered."

Walter Benjamin

In 1924, Walter Benjamin visits Naples and discovers an architecture porous like the rocks. Double porosity: of space, where every private attitude is "inundated by currents of communal life," the balconies, windows, gates and roofs "are at the same time stage and box"; and the porosity of time, for "there time, for "there is a grain of Sunday in every day of the week." In Pedregulho, Luiza Baldan rediscovered one of her laws. If she leaves the apartment door open, it is because she is in the mood to talk with the children and to participate in the barbecue with the neighbors. The opposite is to show signs of loneliness - and this, probably, is not something to be done.

There are no extraneous interiors in Luiza's photographs. Only this one, the apartment where Dona Leda lived with her porcelain dogs. The biggest of them all, a plush one, peeks at the bedroom door to await the arrival of the new resident. A The green light takes over the room: "You may enter. The arrival is delicate. The first porosity of the photograph: the absence that it makes present, the disappearance that makes it recent. The pink plastic curtain, translucent, reminds us of this particular permeability, capable of impregnating with experience even the most kitschy of scene objects. The photograph is this vase of sunflowers, equally plastic: an ever-living still life. Luiza writes in her blog: "the objects still warm, porcelain dogs barking quietly on the bookshelf". Miniatures and ghosts have something in common. They are beings of the crossing, porous by nature. Just as ghosts inhabit the threshold between the living and the dead, miniatures walk the thin line between childhood and adulthood. "Aunt" Luiza follows the children who open the paths of Pedregulho to her.

Second porosity of the photograph: playfulness and magic. Power to transform the small into big, the sad into comic. Everything now is exchange, transformation. The camera changes hands, the children change faces. They exchange images, places, Juquinha candies. Portraits are exchanged for self-portraits.

[All this movement of exchange is ironically mediated by a Lubitel camera: the old Soviet technology rediscovering the lines of international-modernism in a tropical tropical working-class neighborhood].

There is an ongoing inquiry in the ways of Pedregulho, a question that how can a place become its own? Any place and this place in particular? The artist realizes that in this building this question is even. There is the barber's chair that has always been here, there is the corner of the Christmas tree that is only there at this time, there is a piece of ground where now there is nothing more.

Third porosity of the photograph: restitution. For there were, in fact, two residences: Luiza's in apartment 613, and the images in the latencies of film and memory. When the portraits return from their photochemical exile, the Place finally reappears. Pedregulho rediscovered by itself in its forgotten beauty, porous stone diluted in inhabitation. The photograph, which returns as object, is the membrane-cobogó that restores the here and now of distance paradox that only affection can fill and sustain.

[Now everybody wants to take a picture: "How beautiful is the building! The residents rediscover themselves as neo-politans, inhabitants of a city to come]

Porosity is the technique of cities. The image is its theory.

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