



Footnote 15: A Prototype

Ana Cardoso, Union Gaucha Productions
(Karin Schneider and Nicolás Guagnini),
Eileen Quinlan, Jorge Pinheiro, Igor Krenz,
Józef Robakowski, Monika Sosnowska,
Tomás Cunha Ferreira

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Free entrance

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A prototype is an early form given to a material. The prototype can be understood as a model subject to modification – it can be developed, or it can remain undeveloped. *Footnote 15* aims to explore the prototypical in the works of Portuguese, Polish, Brazilian, Argentinian and North American artists of different generations, whose practice shares the avant-garde languages of modular systems and geometric abstraction.

This project is an ongoing collaboration between Ana Cardoso, Portuguese artist based in Lisbon and New York, and Barbara Piwowska, a Polish curator based in Porto where she works at Casa São Roque. The conversation between the two started in 2020 at Ana Cardoso's studio. Cardoso showed Piwowska a prototypical idea for a group exhibition, in which hers and other contemporary paintings would dialogue with abstract works by the Polish-Russian sculptor Katarzyna Kobro whose practice pivoted between Constructivism and Unism. Coincidentally, Kobro was also Piwowska's point of departure for her ongoing "footnote project" that commenced in 2010 in Warsaw. As a project on the margins of history and the avant-gardes, it explored the extraordinary and lesser-known reception of Kobro's work, both in South and North America in the 1990's and early 2000's. Kobro had developed her abstract compositions in the 1920–30's in relation to the viewer's body, unifying time-space, upholding the rhythm of human life, and in discussion with the Constructivist legacy, Neo-Plasticism, and Concrete Art.

Cardoso's practice revolves around painting's objective structure made modular. Her paintings can be re-installed and performed, and for the past decade her system became activated in space and time in various ways and in dialogue with the history of American abstraction. Her first module, a square that effortlessly fits the length of her open arms (112 x 112 cm), was subsequently divided, resulting in four triangles. For Cardoso, such anthropometric forms can be moved around, be easily stacked, and provide for a better economy. They adapt to various contexts and propose installations and images in flux. Her paintings and modules continue to mutate, subdivide, and populate an ongoing score. In 2015 some triangles travelled with Cardoso and were temporarily placed as interventive sketches in various locations, both at historical institutions and within nature landscapes. Participation and openness in Cardoso's compositions dialogue with the never completed work of Katarzyna Kobro (interrupted in 1951 by her death), but also with analogous, independently developed works by Lygia Clark, Lygia Pape, and Hélio Oiticica from the Brazilian Neo-Concrete movement of the 1960's. For *Footnote 15: A Prototype*, Cardoso contributes an installation of several panels completed in 2022. By the entrance, she invites the public to activate a set of canvases on a plinth (*Protótipo*), and touch the work, feel its materiality, and to experiment with its various possible formations.

Kobro's sculptures from 1922–1933 are present in the exhibition through the experimental documentary by Józef Robakowski entitled *Kompozycja przestrzenne Katarzyny Kobro (Spatial Compositions by Katarzyna Kobro)*, 1971. In the film we can also hear her words and part of the treatise *Composition of Space: Calculating Time-Space Rhythm* that she co-authored and published with her husband Władysław Strzemiński in 1931. There Kobro stated: "The task of the spatial composition is to shape the forms that are going to be introduced into life. Spatial composition is a laboratorial investigation that decides on the architecture of future cities. Becoming architecture, it organizes the rhythm of motions of the human being in space. Its rhythm becomes then the rhythm of the crowd and of the individual." Kobro's work is also present in the video installation by Igor Krenz, *Correction of Tilt* (2007), which, presented on a skewed monitor depicts the Neo-Plasticist room of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź designed by Strzemiński in 1948 to display the collection of the "a.r." group. On the selected frame appears a guarding lady, an employee of the museum, next to *Kompozycja przestrzenna 3* (1928) by Kobro, a *Composition* (1931) painting by Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and *Counter-composition XV* (1925) by Theo van Doesburg. In addition to this legacy, Monika Sosnowska presents a sketch for a sculpture and a very small model for the large-scale installation *Bon Voyage* from 2000, resembling Kobro's spatial compositions or De Stijl's and van Doesburg's architectural models. Prepared in her studio at Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, the prototype was dedicated to being placed inside the large "final" structure, on the floor, to introduce the aspect of scale. The large-scale work was a hybrid composition "inviting to immerse into the spatial colorful painting", says Sosnowska.

Piwowska met Karin Schneider (Brazilian born in Rio de Janeiro, of Portuguese origins from the Azores) and Nicolás Guagnini (Argentinian born in Buenos Aires, of Jewish-Portuguese origins) through R.H. Quayman, while collaborating with their collectively run project space Orchard in New York in 2005/6, and thus discovering their deep insight into the work of Kobro and Strzemiński. In the 1990's Schneider and Guagnini founded an artistic duo and experimental film company Union Gaucha Productions. In their early film *Phantom Limb* (1998) they included footage of Kobro's pieces being manipulated by themselves on a rotating stool in the storage of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź in 1997 (with permission from Kobro's daughter Nika Strzemińska whom they met accidentally in a parking lot in front of the museum) and juxtaposed it with footage of Lygia Clark's *Bichos* being manipulated and touched by the collector and gallerist Luisa Strina. The film was premiered at Galeria Luisa Strina and Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo, in 1998. *Phantom Limb* is the first such discovery presenting indirect relations between the work of Kobro and Clark. As a fictional documentary, featuring also work by Raul Lozza and Oiticica, the film establishes a dialogue between the peripheral avant-gardes (in Union Gaucha's words: "concrete-baroque"), non-canonical concrete legacy and marginal modernisms in Argentina, Brazil and Poland that in the 1990's were not yet present in the permanent collection displays of international museums.

Through this contribution, recognized a decade later, they inspired the program of Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, where Jarosław Suchan organized the exhibition *Katarzyna Kobro / Lygia Clark* in 2008. The *Phantom Limb* film was first based on a series of hundreds of polaroids that functioned as a visual script and the footage was described as “in trans” by Cláudio Dacosta in 1998 and interpreted as a phantom limb of an absent body: “form as process”.

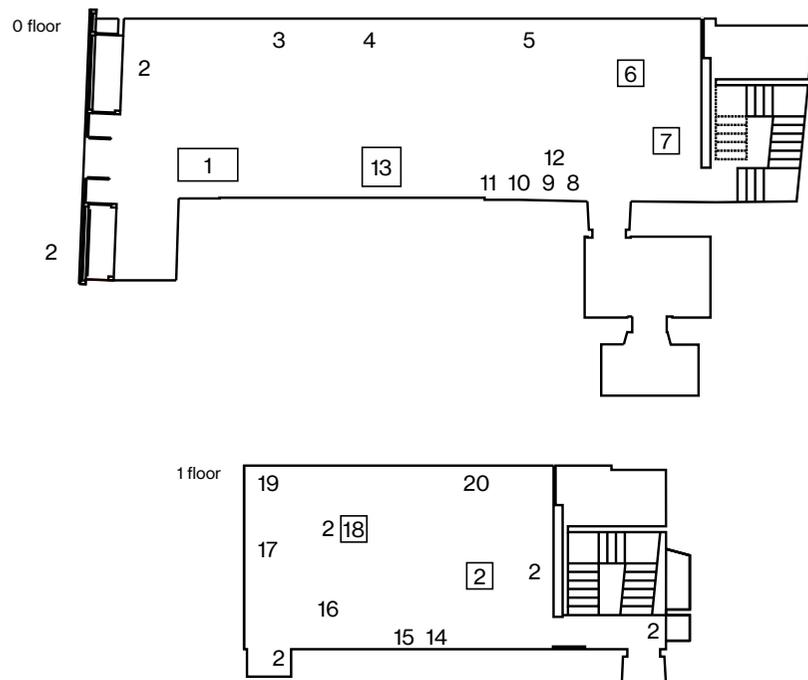
For the *Footnote 15* exhibition, the New York artist Eileen Quinlan produced five groups of 24 polaroids, commenting on a process of seriality and manipulative potentiality of modular systems of Magna-Tiles toys, played with and by her children. Two groups, *First Things First* (2022) and *Gravity Fails* (2022) follow her previous polaroids known as *Play Time* (2014). They reveal technical imperfections and errors of the polaroid impermanent prints in which simple plastic mass-produced Magna-Tiles appear as colorful glass, shaped in a way they could be prototypes for sculptures. They offer a playful contrast to the custom made, metal, solid *Bichos* by Clark. They also dialogue with the nearby *Périplo, Protótipo* (2022) or *Pendente* (2022) by Cardoso, but especially with the pink untitled Plexiglas sculpture by Jorge Pinheiro from 1970, consisting of folded squares and rectangles made of industrial acrylic, and painted manually to achieve a pinkish color.

For Jorge Pinheiro “um objecto é sempre projecto de novo objecto” (“an object is always a project for a new object”). He started to make abstract works in 1966 after his stay in Amsterdam and while visiting the Stedelijk Museum. Soon after, in 1968 he co-founded the short-lived Os Quatro Vintes (The Four Twenties) group together with Ângelo de Sousa, José Rodrigues, and Armando Alves, that was focused on abstraction and related to the Escola de Belas-Artes do Porto. Unexpectedly, his work has two interesting analogies to Katarzyna Kobro’s practice. First is the parallel existence of figuration and abstraction throughout their oeuvre, second is the composition and calculation of space by applying Fibonacci sequences and sections, sometimes resulting in almost pure “fibonagrams”, like in Pinheiro’s 1970 drawings shown in *Footnote 15: A Prototype*. There is one more work included, taken from the shelf in his studio in São João do Estoril. *A Prototype for Madame Butterfly* is an illusionistic model for one of the iterations of the blue plexiglass sculptures dated 1970/2010.

For some years, Lisbon-based artist Tomás Cunha Ferreira has been defining his work within the notion of prototype: “It combines various supports, in a cross-border and open circuit practice – they function as prototypes, which can take on various stages and states – as reading scores, notations, visual poems, patterns, paintings, murals”. Each work results in a condensed hybrid figure, whose reading is in constant transition between visual and rhythmic elements. They can be something between an object and an image: “quasi-object”, “quasi-image”, or “quasi-painting”, “quasi-mutant object”, that might assume various combinatory positions, or at least the possibility of a shift in position, shaping

relationships with the surrounding environment. Cunha Ferreira lived in Brazil for many years. In São Paulo he learnt about Concrete poetry from meeting Augusto de Campos and Haroldo de Campos. In Rio de Janeiro, through his family members, he grew up close to Anna Mariani and to João José Costa from the Neo-Concrete movement, co-founding member of the Grupo Frente established around 1954 by Ivan Serpa, Lygia Pape, Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, among others. He also shares a long-term artistic dialogue with Ana Cardoso, especially visible in their gesture of sewing colorful fabrics and activating their surfaces. Cunha Ferreira was invited to conclude *Footnote 15* with his site-specific intervention *Murmur* (2022), consisting of small objects installed during the last stage of the exhibition’s assembly.

Footnote is an ongoing project employing a “methodology of margins”, referencing existing institutions, situations and concepts in the format of exhibitions and interventions. Past iterations organized between 2010–2021 included: *Footnote 1: Phantom Limb* (CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw); *Footnote 2: Correction* (Silberkuppe, Berlin); *Footnote 3: Andrea Fraser* (Foksal Gallery, Warsaw); *Footnote 5: Screening Space* (MUMOK, Vienna); *Footnote 6: As Model* (Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York); *Footnote 10: Museum of the Unknown* (Centre Pompidou, Paris); *Footnote 11: Volodymirskyi Market* (Kiev Art Week, Kiev); *Footnote 12: No Medium* (Academy of Fine Arts / Exhibitions Bureau, Warsaw); and *Footnote 14: Angel of History* (Casa São Roque, Porto).



1
Ana Cardoso
Protótipo, 2022
 Acrylic on linen and cotton
 Courtesy of the artist

2
Tomás Cunha Ferreira
Murmur, 2022
 Installation, mixed media
 Courtesy of the artist

3
Ana Cardoso
Pendente, 2022
 Acrylic on sewn linen and cotton
 Courtesy of the artist

4
Ana Cardoso
Participante, 2022
 Oil and acrylic on sewn linen and cotton
 Courtesy of the artist

5
Jorge Pinheiro
Prototype for Madame Butterfly, undated
 Three-dimensional drawing (model for the plexiglass sculpture) [1970/2010]
 Paper, watercolor, ecoline, ink, wood, iron
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Miguel Nabinho

6
Union Gaucha Productions (Karin Schneider and Nicolas Guagnini)
Phantom Limb, 1998
 Digitalized 16 mm film, looped, 21'35"
 Courtesy Union Gaucha Productions

7
Igor Krenz
Correction of Tilt (Prostowanie skrzywienia), 2007/2022
 Video installation, 21'55", looped, no sound, monitor, wooden cube
 Courtesy of the artist

8
Eileen Quinlan
Gravity Falls, 2022
 7 polaroids
 Courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery

9
Eileen Quinlan
We Don't Talk, 2022
 6 polaroids
 Courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery

10
Eileen Quinlan
The Hollow, 2022
 6 polaroids
 Courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery

11
Eileen Quinlan
First Things First, 2022
 2 polaroids
 Courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery

12
Eileen Quinlan
Creeping Crystal, 2022
 3 polaroids
 Courtesy of the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery

13
Jorge Pinheiro
Untitled, 1970
 Plexiglas and iron
 Collection Rui Victorino

14
Jorge Pinheiro
Untitled, 1970
 Indian ink and ecoline on paper
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Miguel Nabinho

15
Jorge Pinheiro
Untitled, 1970
 Indian ink and ecoline on paper
 Collection Pedro Cabrita Reis

16
Józef Robakowski
Spacial Compositions of Katarzyna Kobro (Kompozycje przestrzenne Katarzyny Kobro), 1971
 Digitalized 35 mm film, 10', sound
 Courtesy of National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute (FINA), Warsaw

17
Monika Sosnowska
Bon Voyage, 2003
 Pencil on paper
 Collection Peter Meeker (Pedro Álvares Ribeiro) / Casa São Roque, Porto

18
Monika Sosnowska
Bon Voyage, 2000
 Plywood, oil paint
 Model for the large scale installation at Rijksakademie, Amsterdam
 Collection Peter Meeker (Pedro Álvares Ribeiro) / Casa São Roque, Porto

19
Ana Cardoso
Périplo, 2021
 Acrylic on sewn cotton
 Courtesy of the artist

20
Ana Cardoso
Preâmbulo, 2021/2022
 Acrylic on sewn linen
 Courtesy of the artist