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alex
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■ Alex Flemming (46) dobio je Fulbrightovu stipendiju u New Yorku za razdoblje između 1981. i 1983. godine. Tijekom osamdesetih godina taj je umjetnik sudjelovao na izložbama u većem broju galerija i muzeja u Brazilu, Europi i Americi. Nakon izložbe/instalacije u kolovozu 1990. godine u *Umjetničkom muzeju* u São Paulu (naslovljenoj *MASP-Tauromaquia: Ex-Touros*) pozvan je da sudjeluje na *21. međunarodnom bijenalu* u São Paulu (1991.). No, odselio je u Njemačku prije završetka *Bijenala*. Nakon što je nekoliko mjeseci boravio u Dresdenu, naposljetku se nastanio u Berlinu, gdje živi i danas. Flemming sam sebe opisuje kao slikara, osobito od 1990. godine. Osim što slika na platnu, on istražuje i različite slikarske tehnike na netradicionalnim podlogama. Redovito slika u ciklusima i rado istražuje trodimenzionalnu plastičnost predmeta kao što su preparirane životinje, namještaj i odjeća, pri čemu ih prekriva monokromatskim slojem boje te im pridružuje druge predmete da bi proizveo konačno umjetničko djelo.

■ ■ Uvijek kažete da je osnova vašeg cjelokupnog rada u razgovoru sa Smrću. Ipak, velika većina vaših slika naslikana je živim i vedrim bojama. Kako povezujete boju i značenje u svojoj umjetnosti?

Boja u mojoj umjetnosti nema doslovce nikakvo značenje. Upotrebljavam je kao kompoziciju. Što se tiče Smrti, mogu reći da je ona moja omiljena tema te da je trajno prisutna, u istoj onoj mjeri u kojoj možemo reći da su groblja ogledala svijeta. Smrt mi donosi duhovnost koja mi je prijeko potrebna da bih razumio i podnio nedostatak sjaja i neugodnosti na ovome svijetu. Što se tiče kromatske vrijednosti boja koje koristim, mogu reći da su uglavnom metalizirane, ili još bolje, da snažno reflektiraju izvorni pigment. Smatram da je u kontekstu brazilske povijesti moj duh blizak baroknome, ne samo u pogledu intenziteta i obilja boja, već i konceptualno, po plastičnosti "opće zagonetke", spoja koji upija i stapa.

■ ■ Biste li mogli malo pojasniti taj odnos?

Barok nije sramežljiv. On je velik, pretjeran, pa čak i groteskan. On se ne boji postojati, blistati i biti agresivan ako je to potrebno. Barok ima logičan tijek razvoja koji ne slijedi nužno pravila i zato dopušta evoluciju misli. Krajnje je fleksibilan i stoga duhovit. Super-suvremenost posjeduje

● Alex Flemming (46) won the Fulbright scholarship in New York for the period between 1981 and 1983. During the 80's, the artist participated in exhibitions in various galleries and museums in Brazil, Europe, and USA. After his exhibition/installation in August, 1990 in the Art Museum of São Paulo (entitled: MASP-Tauromaquia: Ex-Touros), he was invited to participate at 21st International Biennial Art Festival of São Paulo (1991). Before the end of it, however, he moved to Germany. Having lived in Dresden for several months, the artist eventually settled down in Berlin, where he still lives today. Flemming defines himself as painter, especially since 1990. Besides painting on canvas, he also explores painting techniques on non-traditional surfaces. He always paints in cycles and likes exploring the three-dimensional plasticity of objects such as stuffed animals, furniture, and clothes, whereby he covers them with a monochromatic layer of paint and adds other objects in order to produce the final work of art.

● ● You always say that the basis of all your craftsmanship is conversation with Death. However, the great majority of your paintings are effected in vibrant and cheerful colours. How do you relate colour and meaning in your art?

Colour has literally no meaning in my art. I use it as composition. As for Death, I can say that it is my favourite subject and also constantly present one, in the same measure in which we can say that cemeteries are the mirror of the world. Death supplies me with the spirituality that I am in great need of in order to understand and to accept the lack of glitter and embarrassment in this world. As for the chromatic value of the colours that I am using, I can say that they are generally metallic, or rather, that they strongly reverberate the original pigment. In the context of Brazilian history, I believe that my mind approaches the Baroque, not only in the sense of the intensity and the exuberancy of colour, but also conceptually, for the plasticity of the "general puzzle", blender that absorbs and agglutinates.

● ● Could you explain this relationship a little better?

The Baroque is not shy. It is big, it is exaggerated, even grotesque, it does not fear to exist, to shine and to be aggressive if



barokne značajke koje smatram bitnima za razumijevanje raznolikosti svijeta.

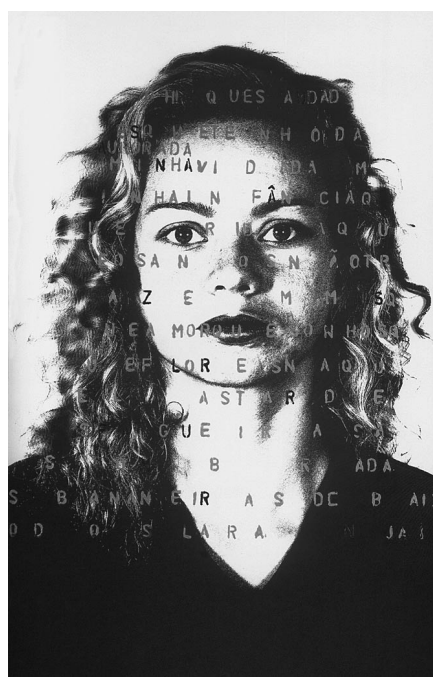
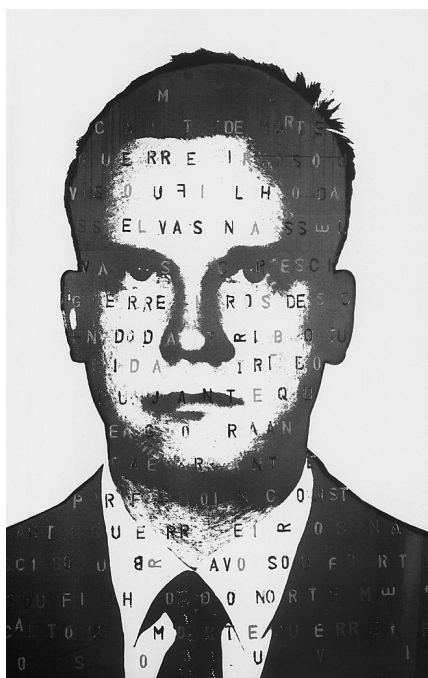
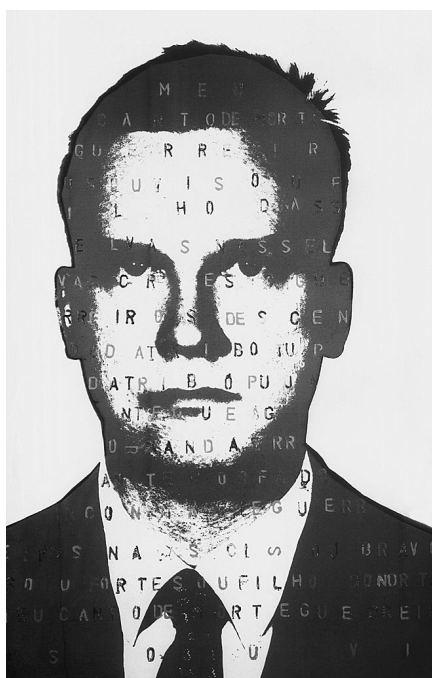
■ ■ Kako ste dospjeli do toga da se odreknete svetinje platna na okviru i da je zamijenite netradicionalnim površinama?

Nakon što sam čitavo desetljeće radio s dvodimenzionalnošću, zasitio sam je se. No, želim naglasiti da dvodimenzionalno slikarstvo ne smatram mrtvim i da bih to dokazao, s vremena na vrijeme se poslužim platnom. Moja umjetnost predstavlja kulminaciju raznovrsnih iskustava, a ne samo osobnih, kao što je to slučaj kod drugih umjetnika. Moje me osobno iskustvo navelo da napustim platno na okviru i posvetim se istraživanju monokromatskog slikanja na

necessary. The Baroque has a logical process, which does not entirely follow the rules and therefore allows for the evolution of thought. It is extremely flexible and therefore laughable. The super-contemporary has baroque features that I consider essential in order to understand a multiform world.

● ● How did you arrive to the idea of abandoning the sanctum of the canvas-screen and replacing it with non-traditional surfaces?

After one decade of working with two-dimensionality, I was fed up with it. However, I wish to point out that I do not consider the two-dimensional painting



prepariranim volovima za izložbu u *Umjetničkom muzeju* u São Paulu (MASP) 1990. godine - kao i na majmunima, krokodilima i štakorima za *Bijenale* u São Paulu 1991. godine, na vlastitoj odjeći za berlinsku galeriju *Tammen & Busch* 1994., na starom namještaju u instalaciji za *Bijenale* u Havani 1997. ili na fotografijama za galeriju *Blickensdorff* ovdje u Berlinu 1999. godine. Želio sam proširiti koncept slikarstva na taj način da konture predmeta više ne budu aprioristički shvaćene kao oslonac. Želim uvesti te predmete u svijet slikarstva, želim proširiti njegove geometrijske standarde, proširiti plastični simbolizam slikarstva koji bi uzeo oblik

dead, and in order to prove it, I choose to use the canvas once in a while. My art represents an accumulation of various experiences, not only personal ones like it is the case with other artists. My personal experience made me abandon the screen on the frame in order to explore monochromatic painting on stuffed oxen for my exhibition at the *São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP)* in 1990 - as well as on monkeys, alligators, and rats for the *São Paulo Biennial Art Festival* in 1991, on my own clothes for the *Tammen & Busch Gallery* at Berlin in 1994, on used furniture in an installation at the *Havana Biennial Art Festival* in 1997, or on photographs for the *Blickensdorff*

idealiziran za druge svrhe. Želim proširiti taj koncept.

■ ■ Tijekom 1990. i 1991., dok ste živjeli u Brazilu, sve su životinje koje ste oslikali bile iste boje (metalno-plave) i spojene industrijskim predmetima premazanim srebrnom bojom. To je uistinu djelovalo vrlo hladno za jednu tropsku zemlju kao što je Brazil. Otkada ste preselili u Njemačku životinje su poprimile razne druge boje, a spajate ih najrazličitijim vrstama predmeta. Čime objašnjavate tu promjenu?

Moje je djelo i dalje monokromatsko. Bolje rečeno, osnova je monokromatska, kakva je oduvijek i bila: gornji sloj može čak sadržavati obilje boja, ali to je obrnut

Gallery here, in Berlin, in 1999. I wanted to expand the concept of painting in such a way that the contours of the object would cease to be aprioristically conceived as a support. My aim is to appropriate these objects for the world of painting, I want to expand its geometrical standards, to extend the plastic symbolism of painting that would appropriate a form idealized for other uses. I want to extend the concept.

● ● During the years of 1990 and 1991, when you still lived in Brazil, all the animals that you painted were of the same color (blue metallic) coupled with silver-plated industrial objects. It was really of unique coldness for a tropical country like



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palimpsest. Tijekom osamdesetih sam se u Brazilu služio metalno-plavom bojom iz kemijskih razloga. Budući da sam se uvijek brinuo za trajnost materijala koje sam upotrebljavao, a istodobno je bilo nemoguće uvoziti boju, da i ne spominjemo neodgovornost (ili bismo to možda prije trebali nazvati neznanjem) brazilske industrije boje, naručivao sam vlastitu tintu iz tvornice u gradu Sorocabi. Koristio sam plavi ftalocijanin budući da je to jedan od najzaštićenijih i najtrajnijih pigmenata koji postoje, a dakako, ima i dodatnu kvalitetu da se od njega može dobiti spektar boja kakav sam želio. Kada sam početkom devedesetih stigao u Europu, postala mi je dostupna

Brazil. Since you moved to Germany, the animals have acquired the most various colours and have been coupled with the most versatile types of objects. How do you account for this change?

My work continues to be monochromatic. It is perhaps better to say that the basis is monochromatic and has always been: on the top layer there can even be profusion of colors, but this represents an inverted palimpsesto. During the 80's in Brazil, I used metallic blue for chemical reasons. As I was always worried about the durability of the materials I was using, and at that time it was impossible to import paint, not to mention the irresponsibility of

sl.2: A. Flemming, iz serije 44 Works on Glass / From the 44 Works on Glass series, 1998.



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bogata paleta švicarskih metalik-boja, koje se svakom profesionalcu čine čudesnima. Različiti predmeti koje sam dodao prepariranim životinjama doista predstavljaju promjenu u mom radu, neprekidnu i prirodnu evoluciju mojih plastičnih ideja. Ne želim se vezati uz jednu ideju; oduvijek sam bio protiv toga.

■ ■ Tijekom osamdesetih ste proizveli niz slika kojima su polazišna točka bile mumije i obelisci. U kakvoj su vezi mumije i životinje?

Dok sam slikao mumije i obeliske, želio sam misliti na Povijest, Smrt i Smrt Povijesti. Da bih stvorio te slike, spasio sam nekoliko realističkih i informativnih bakroreza iz 16. i 17. stoljeća koji su se odnosili

the paint industry in Brazil (or perhaps we could rather call it lack of knowledge), I ordered my own ink from a factory in the city of Sorocaba. I used the blue phthalocyanine because it is one of the most impregnate and durable pigments in existence, moreover, it possesses the quality of providing the spectrum of colours that I wanted. When I arrived to Europe in the beginning of the 90's, I gained access to a rich variety of metallic paints from Switzerland that would seem a miracle to any professional. The different objects that have been attached to the stuffed animals really represent a change in my work, a current and natural evolution of my plastic ideas. I do not want to bind myself to a plastic formula, I have always been against that.

na tu temu. Ti su bakrorezi uistinu bili "mrtvi" i bačeni na otpad Znanosti, jer danas, ako želimo proučavati mumije, možemo gledati fotografije ili otići u Egipat. Nakon što sam učinio skok iz dvodimenzionalnoga u trodimenzionalno, također mi je bio potreban leš koji će biti jednako tako odbačen kao i ti bakrorezi, koji će biti svjedok Povijesti, da bih ga mogao ponovno oživjeti na plastičan način. Pronašao sam ga u obliku glave prepariranog vola - tog primitivnog i modernog predmeta koji klaonice prodaju kao otpadni proizvod pečenjarama uz autocestu. Drugim riječima, te su glave, nakon što su proživjele svoj prvi život na ranču stoke, a drugi na nekome zidu, dospjele u ruke meni, koji sam ih transformirao, plastično i konceptualno, i tako im udahnio treći život, ovaj put u Svijetu Umjetnosti. Prvi rezultat tog novog puta bila je instalacija *Tauromaquia: Ex-Touros* na stepeništu *Umjetničkog muzeja* u São Paulu 1990. godine.

Nakon toga mi je omogućeno da posjetim skladišta *Prirodoslovnog muzeja* u São Paulu, koji je u to vrijeme bio zatvoren za javnost. Nakon što sam s dosta teškoća uspio objasniti svoj projekt, naposljetku su mi dali nekoliko prepariranih životinja koje su namjeravali kremirati budući da su se počele raspadati, a nisu imale ni znanstvenu vrijednost. Pomoću tog otpada Znanosti složio sam svoj prilog za *21. međunarodni bijenale* u São Paulu.

■ ■ 1993. i 1994. napravili ste slike na platnu na koje ste pričvrstili preparirane životinje, nakit, drago kamenje, pa čak i predmete za svakodnevnu upotrebu kao što je četkica za zube. Ti su predmeti naprosto izbijali iz površine platna. Je li to bila bitka između dvodimenzionalnoga i trodimenzionalnoga?

Nije to bitka, to je odnos. Već sam u osamdesetima lijepio industrijske predmete na platno. Inače, moram reći da sam veliki ljubitelj tih industrijskih metafora našeg života. Industrijski predmet gotovo je uvijek napravljen da bi nam služio ili nas oponašao i tako se stvara parodija našega društva, naših ideja i navika. A što se tiče činjenice da upotrebljavam dvodimenzionalne površine, doista moram naglasiti da je to stoga što ne vjerujem da je Slikarstvo mrtvo.

■ ■ Naslikali ste ciklus slika na temu oglasa za seksualne partnere. Kako ste došli na tu ideju?

● ● During the 80's, you produced a cycle of paintings that had mummies and obelisks as its starting point. How do you relate the mummies and the animals?

When I painted the mummies and the obelisks, I wanted to think about History, Death, and the Death of History. In order to produce these paintings, I rescued some realistic and informative engravings from the 16th and 17th centuries that referred to this subject. These engravings were literally "dead" in the trash of Science, for nowadays, if we wish to study mummies, we can look at the photos or even go to Egypt. When I made a leap out of the two-dimensional and into the three-dimensional, I also needed to find a corpse that would be just as abandoned as those engravings, a witness of History, in order to be able to resurrect it in a plastic way. I found it in the form of the head of a stuffed ox, a rudimentary and modern object sold by slaughter houses as a by-product for the highway barbecue-restaurants. In other words, after they had had their first life on a cattle range, and their second on a wall, I caught these figureheads, transformed them plastically and conceptually, and thus gave a third life to them, now within the World of Art. The first result of this new path was the installation *Tauromaquia: Ex-Touros* on the staircase of the *Art Museum of São Paulo* in 1990.

After that I was allowed to visit the deposits of the *São Paulo Museum of Natural History*, which was at that time closed to the public, and after I tried really hard to explain my project, they finally supplied me with some stuffed animals that were to be incinerated because they had already deteriorated and were of no scientific value. With this trash of Science I assembled my contribution to the *21st International Biennial Art Festival of São Paulo*.

● ● In 1993 and 1994, you produced paintings on canvas upon which you fixed stuffed animals, jewelry, precious stones, and even objects of everyday use such as a toothbrush. Those objects simply sprouted out of the canvas plane. Was this a battle between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional?

It was not a battle, but a relationship. I had already glued industrial objects on canvas since the 80's. By the way, I have true passion for these industrial metaphors of our lives. The industrial object is almost



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sl.4: A. Flemming, Zorn, 1998.

sl.5: A. Flemming, Empáfia, 1997.

Kada sam preselio u Njemačku, bio sam zapanjen količinom seksualnih oglasa u svim vrstama njemačkih časopisa, čak i u onim najozbiljnijima i najkonzervativnijima. U to vrijeme takvi oglasi još nisu postojali u Brazilu. Smatram da sam taj ciklus naslikao i kao rezultat svoje njemačke usamljenosti. Uvijek je teško ponovo započeti život u novoj i stranoj zemlji. Ono što sam u tim oglasima zamijetio bila je opet Smrt, smrt pojedinca. Ljudi nisu tražili druge ljude ili osjećaje, tražili su samo ispušni ventil u arhetipski hladnom i bezosjećajnom društvu. U principu znamo da se iza tih nerazrješivih šifri skrivaju ljudi, a ipak, oni mole za najinfantilnije i najintimnije moguće stvari. U društvu u kojem su čak i zagrljaj ili stisak ruke suzdržani, sve što podsjeća na osjećaje tumači se kao slabost. Tu ljudi eksplodiraju iznutra, šalju milijune oglasa u časopise tražeći nešto što nisu uspjeli naći u svojim obiteljima, s prijateljima ili u ljubavnim vezama. U Brazilu je drukčije, ondje ljudi čitaju takve oglase s mnogo humora i nitko ih ne shvaća ozbiljno. Ovdje nije tako, sve je vrlo luteransko. To je morbidna, čak bih rekao bolesna strana Njemačke. Krenuvši od te informacije, odlučio sam proizvesti nešto plastično, umjetnički, na tu temu.

■ ■ U ciklusu slika na temu oglasa upotrijebili ste slike koje u povijesti umjetnosti imaju gotovo značenje ikone. Tko su vaši omiljeni umjetnici i koji su među njima utjecali na vaše djelo?

U ciklusu na temu seksualnih oglasa služio sam se slikama njemačke slikarske škole kojoj pripadaju Dürer i Cranach, slika-ma koje arhetipski izražavaju nešto poput "njemačke duše", a zatim sam preko tih slika ispisao tekstove iz oglasa kao neku vrstu video-teksta u kojemu se te ličnosti, već odavno mrtve, vraćaju da bi progovorile i zamolile za nježnost, poljupce, zagrljaje, osjećaje.

Umjetnici kojima se divim su brojni, a još je veći broj onih koji su na mene izvršili utjecaj. Nabrojat ću tek neke od njih: Böcklin, De Chirico, Picabia, Schwitters, Warhol, Boltanski. Uz to još i Brazilac Alfredo Volpi.

■ ■ Od osamdesetih godina u svom se radu služite fotografijama. Kako ih povezu-jete sa slikarstvom?

Fotografijama u slikarstvu služim se kao sredstvom da nešto predstavim na hiperrealistički način, a bez akademskih pre-

always made to serve us or to imitate us, thus creating a parody of our society, our ideas and habits. And the fact that I use two-dimensional surfaces, I really must insist upon that, is because I do not believe that the Painting is dead.

● ● You have made a cycle of paintings on sexual announcements. How did the idea arise?

When I moved to Germany, I was surprised with the amount of these announcements in all types of German periodicals, even the most serious and conservative ones. At that time, such announcements still did not exist in Brazil. But I think that I also made the cycle as a consequence of my loneliness here. It is always difficult to re-start your life in a new and strange country. What I noticed in those announcements was again Death, the death of the individual. People weren't looking for other people or for feelings, they were only looking for an escape-valve in an archetypically cold and affectionless society. Basically we know that there are people hidden behind the indecipherable mail-box codes, but still they ask for the most infantile and private things possible. In a society where even a hug or a hand-shake are restrained, anything even slightly reminiscent of affection is interpreted as weakness. There people explode from the inside, and they place millions of announcements in periodicals looking for what they were not able to find in their family, with their friends or in relationships. It is not like that in Brazil, where such announcements are read with much humor and nobody takes them seriously. Here it is different, everything is very Lutheran. This is the morbid, I might even say the sick side of Germany. Starting from this information, I wanted to produce something plastic (artistic) on the subject.

● ● In the cycle on announcements you used pictures that are almost icons in art history. Who are your favourite artists, and which artists have influenced your work?

In the cycle on sexual announcements I used pictures of the German school of painting of Dürer and Cranach, pictures that archetypically express something like the "German soul", and over those pictures I painted the texts from the announcements as a sort of video-text in which those personalities, though long deceased, come back to speak and to ask for tenderness, kisses, hugs, affection.



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tenzija ili dvojenih bravura. Za mene je važno da vidim stvarnost onakvu kakva jest i da je prevedem na jezik umjetnosti koji može biti poetski ili politički - jezik denuncijacije. Ipak, smatram da moja strast prema fotografiji izvire iz zrnâ i njihova umnožavanja, iz zone pročišćena pepela u kojoj se stvara crno-bijela boja, jer ondje se stvarnost preoblikuje.

■ ■ Serija Visine, koju ste započeli 1989., a izložili u MASP-u 1996. godine, predstavlja vrlo osoban i originalan način portretiranja neke osobe. Smatrate li to doprinosom ili inovacijom u tradiciji portretnog slikarstva?

Oduvijek sam bio veliki ljubitelj povijesti umjetnosti i smatram da je važno u povijesti tražiti reference. Ništa nije tabu tema, čak ni tradicija. A dobro znamo da je svrha povijesti da nas pouči i učini otvorenijima za buduće opcije. Pa eto, u povijesti umjetnosti portret predstavlja jedan od najkonstantnijih plastičnih oblika izražavanja, jedan od najbitnijih načina da se nešto iskaže na plastičan način. U 20. stoljeću, osobito nakon Drugog svjetskog rata, portret je postao manje uobičajen, pao je, takoreći, u gotovo potpuni zaborav. Želio sam oživjeti "ideju portreta", ali na nov način koji još nikada nije primijenjen. Želio

Artists whom I admire are many, and the number of those that exercised influence upon me is still greater. I will just mention some of them: Böcklin, De Chirico, Picabia, Schwitters, Warhol, Boltanski. And Brazilian Alfredo Volpi.

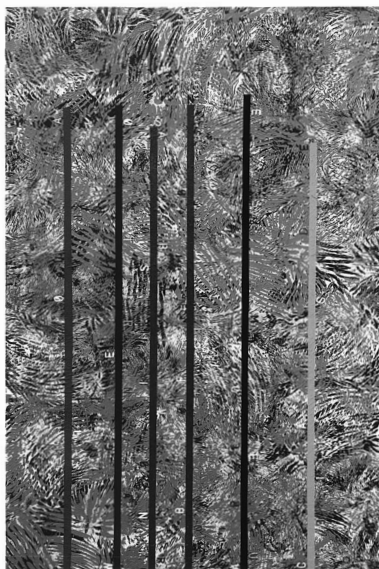
● ● Since the 80's, you use photographs in your work. How do you relate that to the painting?

I use photographs as a means of hyperrealistic representation in painting, without attempting an academic stroke or doubtful virtuosity. For me it is important to see the reality as it is and to translate it into the language of art, which can be poetical or political - that of denunciation. But I think that my passion for photograph comes from the grain and the multiplication of grains, where the reality transforms itself, of the zone of leached ashes that white-and-black colour comes from.

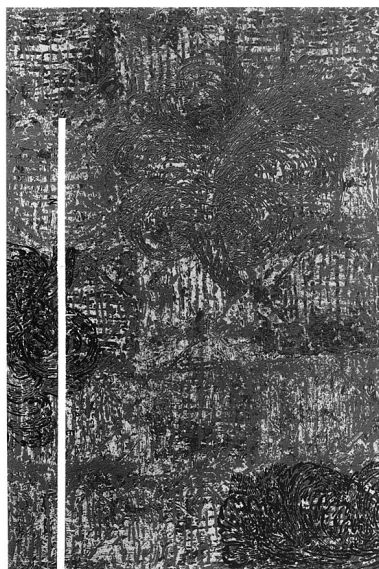
● ● The cycle Heights, that was begun in 1989 and displayed at MASP in 1996, presents a very personal and original way of portraying a person. Do you consider this a contribution or innovation to the portraiture tradition?

I have always had a great liking for art history and I believe that it is important to turn to the past for references. Nothing is

sl.6: A. Flemming, Instalacija / exhibition set-up, Havana Biennal Art Festival, 1997.



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sam napraviti portret koji bi bio sasvim konceptualan, ali istodobno stvaran i konkretan. Želio sam nešto što bi odražavalo samu suštinu naslikane osobe. Taj sam ciklus posvetio - odnosno posvećujem ga, jer još radim na njemu ovdje, u Berlinu - ličnostima iz Kulture kojima se divim, onima koji su napravili neko djelo ili učinili nešto što bih volio da sam ja učinio. Da nabrojim samo neke od osoba koje sam portretirao: Zé Celso Martinez Correa, Decio Pignatari, Cristiano Mascaro, Dudi Maia Rosa, Bruno Ganz, Paulo Moura, Rosa von Praunheim, Leon Ferrari, Tomie Ohtake, Regina Silveira, Eduardo Galeano, Michael Nyman, Marianne Sägebrecht...

Kako to činim? Pozovem osobe kojima se divim u svoj atelijer - to je konceptualno od presudnog značenja; ta fizička prisutnost te osobe u mom atelijeru. Zatim ih zamolim da skinu cipele i stanu pred pripremljeno platno na kojemu izmjerim njihovu konkretnu visinu slikajući je kao monokromatsku vertikalnu crtu. Oko te crte, te linije života, napišem ime portretirane osobe u obliku kriptograma.

■ ■ Recite još nešto o ciklusu Visine: tu ste prvi put slovima ispisali imena portretiranih osoba. Ta su slova u početku djelovala sramežljivo, ali stekla su veće značenje i veću prisutnost u vašem sadašnjem radu. Slova su vas dovela bliže Bibliji, seksualnim oglasima, novinarstvu, književnosti i poeziji. Kako birate tekstove i kako ih dovodite u odnos prema slikama?

taboo, not even the tradition. And we know very well that history is meant to give us lessons and to make us more open to future options. Well, in art history portrait represents one of the most constant plastic modes of expression, one of the most important ways of stating something in a plastic way. In the 20th century, mainly after the Second World War, portrait fell in disuse, not to say in almost total oblivion. I wanted to revive the "idea of the portrait", but in a new way, one that has never been used before. I wanted to make a full conceptual portrait, which would at the same time be real and concrete. Something that was quintessentially the portrayed person. I have dedicated this cycle, or better, I dedicate it, since I continue to produce it here in Berlin, to the people of the Culture that I admire, to those who have done some work or action that I would like to have done. Among the many people whom I have portrayed are: Zé Celso Martinez Correa, Decio Pignatari, Cristiano Mascaro, Dudi Maia Rosa, Bruno Ganz, Paulo Moura, Rosa von Praunheim, Leon Ferrari, Tomie Ohtake, Regina Silveira, Eduardo Galeano, Michael Nyman, Marianne Sägebrecht...

How do I do it? I invite those people whom I admire to my atelier - it is of basic conceptual importance, that is, the physical presence of the person in my atelier - and then I ask them to take off their shoes and to stand in front of an already prepared canvas, on which I measure their proper height, painting it as a monochromatic vertical bar. Around this bar, this line-of-life, I write the name of the portrayed person as a cryptogram.

● ● A few more words about the cycle Heights: It was there that you first used letters in order to write the names of the portrayed persons. Those letters looked shy in the beginning, but they have acquired greater meaning and greater presence in your current work. The letters have brought you closer to the Bible, to the sexual announcements, to journalism, literature and poetry. How do you select the texts and how do you relate them to the images?

Indeed, letters have, to my great surprise, taken a prominent place in my work. I use them as plastic features beyond the possible message, therefore I generally write my texts in languages different from those which are spoken in the places where the works are shown. This leads to the sec-

Doista, slova su na moje veliko iznenađenje zauzela vodeće mjesto u mom umjetničkom radu. Koristim ih kao plastične oblike iza moguće poruke i stoga u pravilu pišem svoje tekstove na jezicima različitim od onih koji se govore ondje gdje su slike izložene. To dovodi do druge razine interpretacije; to, na primjer, odražava neznanje Nijemaca koji nisu u stanju dešifrirati Harolda de Camposa na portugalskom ili pak obrnuto - Brazilaca koji ni ne znaju da stoje pred tekstom Heinricha Heinea. Znanje je dobra stvar, a ne šteti ni zdravlju. Što ga je više, to bolje. Kada radim s tekstovima, svjestan sam toga da postoje dvije važne razine sklada unutar djela. Prva je plastična, kada jezik na kojem je tekst napisan nije izgovoren. Druga je kriptografska i ona pretvara poruku u nešto što je vrlo teško pročitati. Na primjer, ponekad razdijelim slogove na pravopisno pogrešan način. Upotrebljavam najrazličitije tekstove, i to uglavnom u ciklusima. Za ciklus na obojenom namještaju odabrao sam tekstove iz novina, dok sam se u političkom ciklusu o *body-builderima* poslužio isječcima iz Starog zavjeta koji potiču na ratovanje i istrebljenje drugih. Kao što sam već rekao, umjetnički rad može biti poezija ili pak denuncijacija.

■ ■ Svoj ste slikarski ciklus na odjeći započeli pišući uvijek iznova, i to samo na svom materinskom jeziku, "usamljeno ja". Je li to autobiografski ciklus?

Valja imati na umu da oslikavam vlastitu odjeću, a ne neku koju kupujem u tu svrhu. Tim ciklusom oslikane odjeće stvaram osobni inventar svojih osjećaja i stoga, nakon što sam komad odjeće uronio u akrilne pigmente i tako ga pretvorio u neku vrstu oklopa, na njemu ispišem neki osjećaj. Na primjer, umjesto HUGO BOSS napišem PEINLICHKEITSPOTENTIAL (potencijal neugodnosti). To je autobiografski ciklus i govori o mojoj samoći; ono na čemu je naslikan je moja vlastita odjeća, ili bolje rečeno, to je sam umjetnik. Sve je to odjeća u kojoj sam se znojio, u kojoj mi je lupalo srce, u kojoj su pulsirale vene, u kojoj sam bio napaljen. Kad smo već kod toga, već je Otto Dix rekao: "Alles was man malt ist Selbstdarstellung." (Sve što se slika prikaz je vlastitoga ja.) ■

prijevod / translation: Goran Vujasinović

and interpretation level, for example, reflects the ignorance of Germans who are not able to decipher Haroldo de Campos in Portuguese or vice versa, of Brazilians not knowing that they are standing in front of a text of Heinrich Heine. Knowledge is a good thing, and it is not harmful to health. The more, the better. When I work with texts, I know that there are two important levels of agreement within the work. The first one is plastic, when the language in which the text is written is not spoken. The second is cryptographic and it turns the message into something very difficult to read. For example, I cut the syllables in a way that is orthographically incorrect. I use the most varied texts, and generally in cycles. In the cycle on painted furniture I preferred the texts from newspapers, in the political cycle on body-builders I used those texts from the old Testament that incite to the war and to the extermination of others. As I have already said, art can be poetical or denunciatory.

● ● You start your cycle of painting on clothes by writing over and over again, and only in your mother tongue, "the lonely self". Is this an autobiographic cycle?

It is important to remember that I paint my own clothes, and not any that I would have bought for the purpose. With this cycle of painted clothes I am producing a personal inventory of my feelings, therefore, after drenching my own clothes in acrylic pigments and converting them into a sort of armour, I write a feeling on it. For example, instead of HUGO BOSS, I write PEINLICHKEITSPOTENTIAL (potential of embarrassment). It is an autobiographic cycle and it is about my solitude, what is being painted are my own clothes, or rather, the artist himself. All of them are clothes in which I sweated, in which my heart was beating, my veins pulsating, in which I felt horny. By the way, Otto Dix has already said: "Alles was man malt ist Selbstdarstellung" (Everything that is being painted is self-representation). ●

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