

JOSÉ
DAMAS
CENO

CENO
DAMAS
JOSE



*O presságio seguinte
(experiência sobre a
visibilidade de uma substância
dinâmica), 1997 (detail)*
[The Following Omen
(Experiment about the Visibility
of a Dynamic Substance)]

REALITY, OR WHAT IS KNOWN AS SUCH, HAS AN ENDLESS NUMBER OF STRATA, LAYERS, DIMENSIONS, DENSITIES, CONDITIONS, TYPES OF POROSITY, AND CHANNELS.

UN ALTRO ATTIMO

We might imagine the flowing of sap through every plant, the same flowing everywhere, at this very moment; or we might also imagine human blood circulating, as it does all over the world, over a period of scarcely three hours; we might accompany a coin, chosen at random, along its course through countless interchanges, and find, perhaps, as a result of this pursuit, an uncommon design. We might relate the movement of motor vehicles with the exact time the house lights are turned on, sensing the route and the presence of the electricity needed and that of fuel traveling back and forth between the engines and their gear mechanisms. We might contemplate all those telephone connections, now, those financial transactions, all those computers connected together, people working, talking, arguing, laughing, different languages, different codes. In this same way we might recognize the movements of all the different types of fish and aquatic creatures found in the oceans and their depths.

Reality, or what is known as such, has an endless number of strata, layers, dimensions, densities, conditions, types of porosity, channels, with an unimaginable, structural complexity which moves, grows and

changes by the second in another immense universe of different viewpoints. For some reason, I think of the existence of a multitude of images which live and survive in each one of us, and in this way, our own image, for instance, would be contained in "several" versions in the imagination and the memory of those who know us; a multitude of different versions of our own selves. If we multiply this reality by all the people who surround us, and we keep on doing so taking into consideration not only people, but also objects, laws, procedures, houses, cities, streets, roads and paths, and, in addition to all this, memories, loves, stories, behavior patterns, then perhaps we would come closer to a kind of impressive imaginary reality. This would lead us to take for granted the possibility that we can walk through this subtle area which, yes, appears to be volatile, but which has an extremely concrete presence; an area dense in its image-generating viscosity.

A habitat constituted by infinite worlds which interpenetrate in a curious intertwining, surfaces that bend and touch each other in perpetual and consecutive twisting movements which in reality are psychic rivers, tributaries, fountains and springs which run and flow incessantly into spiritual oceans with their strong currents, tides, calm seas, waves, storms. One can get a sudden glimpse of this landscape while strolling through a



O presságio seguinte (experiência sobre a visibilidade de uma substância dinâmica), 1997
[The Following Omen (Experiment about the Visibility of a Dynamic Substance)]
Mannequin, cloth, and thread
Approx. 660 cm length, ø 170 cm

populated neighborhood of any large city. Each apartment, building or block shelters thousands of lives, passion-filled stories, dreams and ideas, along with poverty, tragedy, hate and happiness. Thoughts and acts are organized into a complex living chaos filled, as a last resort, with desire, feeling, and movement. I think that it is absolutely fascinating to travel to these places and to discover the association of absurd elements which draw nearer to each other in a strange way. We might become aware of the opportunity to pour out our identity, and dissolve it in the cosmos. We might endeavor to affirm and observe the contradictions, inconsistencies, and the conflicts which form part of us in this world, or we might simply delight in the radical occurrence that we are immersed in a totally hallucinatory and marvelous circumstance, a substance called life, our contact with which some people call art.

José Damasceno

First published in *El final del eclipse. El arte de América Latina en la transición al siglo XXI*. Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, 2001.

Born in 1968 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Lives and works in Rio de Janeiro.