

Imaginary bridges and structures

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English version: Steve Berg

This is unlike any of Ana Holck's previous exhibitions. The others featured a radical experiment with space in which our bodies and the work were fused to a certain degree (Transitante [In Transit] at Rio de Janeiro State University's Candido Portinari Gallery; and Elevados [Elevated] at the Paço Imperial) or definitely produced an otherness I might prosaically designate as "here" and "there" by virtue of the very impossibility of access to the space occupied by the work (Impedimento [Impediment] at the Parque Lage School of Visual Arts). All the works were site specific; including the one at the Centro Cultural São Paulo in which the relationship to location was somewhat more elastic due to features imposed by the difficult architecture of the place. It should be remembered that those installations bore no new narrative or anecdotal content, and maintained an explicit dialogue between a contemporary attitude and the constructivist variety of its finest local modern past as well as with Anglo-Saxon minimalism. Amid the current chaotic vortex of images and meanings cast every which way in webs of subjectivities, Ana Holck's installations are ferociously clear – tough and disciplined – and impose themselves no longer as a reality but as reality itself.

In this exhibition, we find ourselves before objects that could be mistaken for models of possible installations. Like the previous works, they derive from the artist's educational background in architecture, from her reflection on structures and their transformation into poetic language. Seen on this other scale within which, in order to enjoy them, I must return to a contemplative stance, I am able to observe the whole with greater interest. In the installations, when I am inside the

work and am a part of it, that observation is impossible; I gain in the direct experience of my body with the space generated by the work, but I lose the possibility of organizing all of its articulations at a single glance. Now I reflect quietly on the imaginary structures contained in the transparent micro-spaces made up by the acrylic boxes that house the “bridges”.

The first thing these works reminded me of was an article by Annette Michelson that I read in the early 1970s. She narrated her experience of reading an advertisement for an illustrated edition of the Critique of Pure Reason. She recalled her inferences between the reading of the ad and her walk to a bookstore to consult the new edition, envisioning something similar to Lévi Strauss’s schematic illustrations for *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* while plotting some way to materialize those abstract relationships in a drawing. As I observe the boxes of space created by Ana Holck, I believe them to be quite close to something like imaginary illustrations of Kantian relationships. This is no exaggeration. The boxes are Euclidean and do not evoke any imaginary geometry; they are fully contained in one of the a priori categories of pure intuition; all the structures are Newtonian; and there are no topological torsions. We are inside delicate poetic exercises of mechanics and graphostatics.

They are hypotheses of possible spatial spectacles that might take on generous dimensions yet simultaneously situate themselves at the extreme opposite of the brutality of scale exploited in the frequently narcissistic manifestations of contemporary art. Transposed from small boxes to large rooms, they manage to remain subtle and delicate by virtue of the rational economy explored in their language – and this language is its own idea. This is not a concept but an Idea of structure as language that reverberates in each one of Ana Holck’s “bridges”.

A “museum of calculation” would present rationales and blueprints for bridges and exhibit the conceptual variations of bridge structures. By pursuing the function

of existing as “poetic bridges”, and not as a set of real bridges, Ana Holck’s collection of imaginary structures transcends the utilitarian side of the structure and, by pursuing the function of existing as a set of “poetic bridges” rather than as real bridges, it transcends the utilitarian side of the structure and presents itself as the Idea of the structure itself and the history of its reasoning, precisely because it does not pursue the inventory of consummated structures but seeks their fulfillment in the poetic field of the virtual relations among themselves. Enveloped by the space of the transparent boxes, these structures further empower an evocative function rather than a connotative one, just as Charles Rosen presents the difference between Idea and concept in Benjamin.ⁱ

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ⁱ ROSEN, Charles. The Ruins of Walter Benjamin. In: _____. Romantic Poets, Critics, and Other Madmen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.