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LEAVING, ARRIVING

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“We have left, but we have not yet arrived”: Ana Maria Tavares likes to repeat this sentence. Her practice as an artist, her poetics, deals directly with ‘displacement’: we are always in movement, in the sense of being captured by an inescapable dynamics, the truly sign of our – modern and post-modern – times. She seems to state that the condition of being an artist implies necessarily the acceptance of such mobility, bringing it to the foreground and turning it into a site (space-time) for continuous intervention. Ana Maria Tavares’ particular inflection on the art

field, however, indicates that she embraces movement as a non-static 'suspension': a possibility of taking the viewer out of his or her daily condition (departure) to keep their bodies immersed in a set of sculptural and audiovisual devices that lead nowhere but to a carefully articulated region of seductive games of otherness and novelty. In the end, we are anesthetized: not anymore possessed of the familiar patterns from where we came from, but surrounded by the promise of developing some sort of impersonal body that will bring us the reward of a new condition – we are plunged into a game, ready for the next phase. In the project 'Enigmas de uma Noite com Midnight Daydreams (from the Dream Station series)', 2004, although confronted by very dynamic cinematic images, the viewer is invited to lay still, the body isolated from the sensorial diversity of life – it is through the achievement of the suspensive state that the spectator 'takes off', with no arrival previewed.

When the work is offered as a walkway for effective displacement of the public over a Park in the city, the emphasis goes to the operation of 'suspension': to cut a few of the ties that link the body to the 'natural' floor and conduct it beyond the ground. The mind-body apparatus (in fact, each new viewer) is taken in an unusual performance, invited to experience things differently: there is a feeling of security and protection, that offers 'new experience' without risk – as a result, the individual vanishes into the proposed game, invited to re-design him or herself according to the new environmental presence. Ana Maria Tavares creates platforms for controlled experiences, where the participants are set in motion: there is no origin (it doesn't matter where they come from); the end is an open structure – clearly, she proposes a maze. But in fact, as contemporary artworks, Ana Maria Tavares's interventions intend to provide access to certain topics from the real and turn them into 'sensorial problems' – that is, making them available through the mind-body. We depart, and it is during the displacement that the work involves us with its intensity – resonance and vibration are key words here: at this point, it's not possible anymore to provide the guarantee of protection. What happens then when it's time to come back to the previous, so-called real world? Will it be time to arrive or should the traveling continue under a new stage?