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## ANA MARIA TAVARES

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The work of Ana Maria Tavares is strongly influenced by Oscar Niemeyer and other utopian modernist Brazilian architects. Her sculpture is made of metallic material taken from building interiors and product design, sliding along the border between design and fine art. Airports and departure lounges are a recurrent theme in her work, places that symbolize exit from everyday life, getting ready to depart, floating, meditating, and de co-existence of the real and the virtual. *Strategies for Enchantment* (2001), which was created by placing a piano, mirror and seats in a glass-walled room, and *Middelburg Airport Lounge with Parede Niemeyer* (2001), in which Tavares used mirrors and video projection to transform *De Vleeshal* in the Netherlands into a futuristic airport lounge, are examples of how she has transformed sites while making the most of their features.

For the installation *Exit II (Rotterdam Lounge) with Parede Niemeyer* (2001), a 14.5 x 4.5 metre mirror was installed on the stage in the *Hagia Eirene Church* in Istanbul so that it reflected almost the entire interior of the church. Installed roughly at the centre of the stage was a set of silver steps of the type one might use when boarding an aircraft. Visitors took turn to climb this staircase to the little platform at the top, where they put on headphones and looked at themselves reflect in the centre of the mirror. Through the headphones they could hear traffic information broadcast from a helicopter flying above São Paulo. At first issued one after the other, these bulletins gradually started to overlap, becoming a jumble of noise. In the background passionless easy-listening music played. The viewer's own standpoint became lost in this excess of 'useful' information, exacerbated by the figurative anticipation of boarding a plane and flying, the view of one's self and the vast space surrounding it reflected before one's eyes. Tavares illustrates with dazzling sharpness the loss of self amid the activity and information that are the symbols of globalism.

Numinosum (2002) is a cool, minimalist installation that allegorically express a capitalistic scene. An octagonal 'spring', made of mirror-like stainless steel is surrounded by four fences. These seem to be devices against which on can lean one's body, or inside which one can peer or lose oneself. The surrounding white walls are imprinted with silver works representing devices created to allow us to escape from the stress of everyday life: 'sparkling water', 'credit card', 'Relax'ó'visions'. Additionally, a soundtrack broadcasts dizzying stock-exchange dealings symbolizing a future world. Tavares has said that the origin of this work lies in the acknowledgement that is shared by both the art world and the system that fuels the capitalist world is the notion of the abstract, along with projections and speculation about the future.

Tavares' use of sound, reflective surfaces and other elements that can be interpreted in multiple ways as appropriations from reality, draws the viewer into a poetic meditation while at the same time reflecting the realities of our society, institutions and systems.

