

VIDEO WINDOW @ FUSO 2024

Dias & Riedweg: *From Rio de Janeiro into Amazonia and beyond*

SAT 31 August 2024, 22:00, Palácio Galveias, Lisbon

Synopses

Funk Staden, 2007

Video HD, colour, sound, P, 13:38 min.

Funk Staden was conceived as a video installation for documenta12. It is based on the famous report *Wahrhaftige Historia* (1557) by the military servant Hans Staden from Kassel, who stood in the service of the Portuguese crown. The book tells the story of his shipwreck off Brazil during a colonial expedition, the subsequent captivity among the Tupinambá and his lucky escape. It contributed significantly to the formation of the European myth of the brutal savages in the tropics with anthropophagous practices, which was used to legitimise colonisation.

The artists transpose the story to a favela not far from the Sugarloaf Mountain. They work with funkeiros to ritualistically re-enact the images of nine woodcuts from the book, dancing to the hard rhythms of the local baile funk. The work exposes the classical clichés and deconstructs the myth.

O Espelho e a Tarde (The Mirror and the Dusk), 2011

Video HD, colour, sound, 8:42 min.

The protagonist is a young man with a mirror under his arm. In the late afternoon, he climbs a hill in the *Complexo do Alemão*, a notorious favela conglomerate in the north of Rio de Janeiro. At the end, he then disappears into the light of the streetlights.

The simple narration accompanied by a poetic minimal piano music invites us to contemplate and reflect. Crossing the busy favela on narrow streets, through alleyways and up and down stairs becomes a journey of discovery in an area that is difficult to access and considered as a so called dangerous non-go area.

The work is based on an experimental tripe projection. One projection is replaced by a subsequent projection in a cycle, in which new images sprout up and interweave. The dynamic composition of the images creates a depth effect in combination with the sounds. The kaleidoscopic visual structure shows a complex settlement topography and social reality which we do not know.

O Averso do Céu (The Reverse of Heaven), 2023

Video 4K, colour, sound, P/Esp/e, 38:00 min.

The film tells an essay-like story of neo-colonial exploitation deep inside the Amazon region in the Javari Reserve of indigenous at the tripe border of Brazil, Peru and Colombia.

It artfully interweaves three spheres into a dense visual and acoustic composition: the vibrant, nature-loving and acutely endangered indigenous community and culture, rhythmically underpinned by wood knocking and heart beating drum sounds, the illegal timber industry on rivers, audible through the shrill sounds of saw blade grinding machines and religion with the obtrusive proselytizing by evangelical independent churches with masses, litany-like sermons and church hymns promising paradise up to the culmination in an animal sacrifice ritual by members of *Asociación Evangélica de la Misión Israelita del Nuevo Pacto Universal*, a religious movement based in Peru who settled from the Altiplano in the Javari River basin in the 1990s and adheres to strict interpretation of the Old Testament.

In the end, the film shows the importance and power of religion in the centuries-long colonisation process as legitimacy and catalyser. The conquest of territories is closely linked to the conquest and transformation of mental territories and souls.

Texts: Bruno Z'Graggen