

Conversation between Luiz Camillo Osorio and Guerreiro do Divino Amor

As it could not fail to be, it would be interesting for you to say a little about your artistic name. How and when did you come to be called the Warrior of Divine Love (*Guerreiro do Divino Amor*)?

Guerreiro (Warrior) is my surname by birth; Divine Love came about 20 years ago as a joke, at a time when my father was dating an evangelical minister and we all lived together. Warrior of Divine Love was my *nom de guerre* at the church when we were putting together a supposed heavy metal gospel band, which never came to anything. Over time it acquired many other meanings, and today it's like a force that guides me.

You did part of your training in Europe. Could you tell me what that process was like?

My academic background was in architecture and I think this is still very central to my work. The training at the school in Grenoble, France, was very experimental and sensitive, based on the observation of our surroundings, the body, the light and materials, in order to understand the spaces that compose the city, from the micro to the macro scale, thinking about how these levels are related to each other. At the same time, there was work on the emotional memories that places evoke, the memories and everything that space carries beyond its materiality, on a symbolic and historical plane.

Between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, I spent a lot of time at occupations, a techno and punk scene. This influenced my work and was important in my political education, because we discussed alternative forms of construction and experiences of the city.

The Master's Degree in Brussels was called *Contemporary Urban Condition*, and was focused on the study of the influence that phenomena such as mass tourism and geo-marketing had on the construction of the city. It was during this period, in 2005, that I began the *Atlas Superficcional* (Superficcional Atlas), a project that I'm still working on today. I was able to put all the tools I'd developed from theoretical analysis into plastic form: mockups, publications, short films and drawings, which were evolving over time. The plastic form that it has taken today only began to emerge when I was able to take a technical course in special effects and animation in 2013. It was as if the universe opened up to me.

There is something in your work that recalls a camp aesthetic. In this regard, we had here in Brazil two important moments in the construction of camp models: Carmen Miranda and *Tropicalismo*. Do you identify with these influences or do they have nothing to do with your work?

I don't identify with them.

I wasn't aware of the term camp but it's always worth asking about what and who classifications are made such as camp, B or Z movies, underground, splatter, cult films etc... Behind them there's always a concept of good taste, usually Western and white,

defining what is aesthetically acceptable. To turn this concept on its head, we could consider the bad taste of producing minimalist conceptual art and geometric abstraction today in Brazil.

I think Tropicalism has an intrinsic optimism, a quality of exaltation, which also comes from the time and social context in which it emerged. My work seeks to address the complexity of the apocalypse. Aesthetically it's influenced by several universes that I encountered at different phases of my life, references like Xuxa, Hans Donner, MV Bill, the rave scene, punk rock, samba school parades, telenovelas, Neo-Pentecostal rituals, the natural sciences, historical reconstructions, the imaginary of the corporate world and, more recently, agribusiness.

Seeing your work I always remember the phrase/work of Baldessari: 'I will not make any more boring art'. Do you see echoes of this poetic principle in your work?

Just as in science museums, at the stands of real estate or livestock fairs, in churches or anywhere you want to sell or transmit something, fictions are created to provide better and more attractive access to content. The work follows this same logic, like a carnivorous plant, which has to be beautiful and eye-catching for insects to approach it and for it to be able to feed. It has no pretense to being mass media. We live in the age of entertainment, the channels of perception are already open to this type of language; these are the images, the sounds and environments in which we are all immersed, which are already recorded in the collective unconscious and steeped in meanings. The aim is to create a competing narrative by feeding on these images themselves. Today having the attention of the public is a very important form of power, attention being one of the most valuable commodities in the market, and the object of intense competition. In order to access this place, to compete with all these stimuli, the work cannot be boring. For me, not to be boring is also a question of respecting the audience.

Is visual excess a policy or an aesthetic?

I think it's the consequence of a natural process. The work tries to deal with very complex phenomena and power disputes involving many layers; this excess is a reflection of the juxtaposition of these interconnected layers, like a kaleidoscope. The work addresses issues that are in no way abstract so it would make no sense to take it into this field. The result could not be minimalist.

This more pop-like visuality also helps the work to transcend the limits of art. I'm very happy to be widely used in classrooms, and from there to move through every kind of environment. Moreover, as I mentioned above, there is an intrinsic critique of the notion of "good taste" that underlies all the work, beyond the themes that I address.

Tell me a little about your ongoing project *Atlas Mundial Superficcional* (Superficcional World Atlas). Sometimes I think it dialogs with science fiction, sometimes I think its hyper-realistic? Or is it none of these things?

It's both, because nowadays the two things are entwined; it simply exposes this conflation.

The project *Atlas Mundial Superficcional* began as scientific research, into the economic, social, racial and religious war for control of territories and the beings that inhabit them. This war is expressed, in its most visible form, as an aesthetic war, both on the urban scale, in interior design, in commerce, clothes, nails, hair and eyebrow design, and on the spiritual planes too: it's a war that occurs on all levels. It has this realistic aspect because it is all built out of elements of reality, but it uses a language of science fiction; it creates new nomenclatures for things. I think that's why it causes this sensation of mixing familiarity and strangeness.

If you had to choose two artists from the History of Art to exhibit with you, who would they be? And why?

Currently I'm in a process, on the Pampulha scholarship, where I'm very happy, every day for 6 months, to be able to share and develop projects alongside artists who I greatly admire such as Sallisa Rosa, Ventura Profana, Gê Viana, Davi de Jesus do Nascimento and the other scholarship students. I think that together the works acquire great strength, in the resignification of the axes of historical power. The narratives complement each other. It's a story that's being rewritten by many hands, like a League of Justice. I'm very keen to see the result of our work exhibited together this September.

In the history of more classical art it's difficult to say; maybe Hieronymus Bosch, who continues to fascinate me. I think placing my panels alongside his would be beautiful (laughs).

Now my ultimate dream would be to turn the super-fictional allegories into a samba school parade and for them to parade at the Sapucaí Sambadrome.