

## Mirror Game

The artist, who deals with the subject of memory in her works, increases here the scope of her individual intervention by fictionalising a collective memory that may eventually grow into a universal one. In the present exhibition, the elements conveying that memory are cities – historic entities whose images can be part of the millennial imagination of the men who have created them and base on them much of their common heritage.

Rosário Rebello de Andrade has chosen symbolic cities from every continent and used their plans to create a starry sky. The cities' outline stands for the (virtual or otherwise) wall that separates and protects them from the cultivated or wild lands from which they rose. Their buildings, symbolic or unremarkable, articulate themselves via a network of streets that acts as a living circulatory system. Wherever these streets cross or separate (squares, intersections and bifurcations), bodies can be found, which come from everywhere and move all over the city.

The artist imagines these particular urban spots as metaphorically brighter than everything else and lends them the glow of stars of varying magnitudes. Within these hubs, inside and outside each one of them, our civilisational history carries out its manifold evolution.

On the other hand, by turning each one of her chosen cities into a field of stars, Rosário Rebello de Andrade reminds us that the heavens were also conquered by men, when the stars, joined by the powers of drawing, were made to suggest the basic lines of imaginary, magical and divinatory figures.

We fly (it is so easy, nowadays, to be halfway between heaven and earth!) and the illuminated cities, down there, emerge as terrestrial stars which we are able to arrange in ever-new constellations. We continue, our heads lifted up to the sky, and, in the endless scattering of stars, we find signs and features of possible celestial cities. On earth as in heaven, city plans and constellation drawings share the same formal vocation and the same fate as figures of isolation: on the one hand, they are islands of themselves, and on the other, they are mirrors that send their reflections to one another – in such a way that what is above is as what is below.

The artist brings a third element into this dialogue by dividing the cities of men into two kinds: cities of the living and cities of the dead. The former, as we have seen, are suggested as delicate constellated skies; the latter are conveyed as darkened territories – each one of them is an Isle of the Dead, reflecting each one of the various names given by men to God or Death. Here, too, a complex back-and-forth of images and symbols occurs: the compact form of each one of these metropolises can be viewed as the black mirror of the starry city to which it refers.

Respect for the scale, cartography and political / human geography conveyed by the pieces and confirmed by the captions does not withstand the poetic interventions to which Rosário Rebello de Andrade subjects each city and each cemetery of each city: the theme's sociological density is rarefied into music of the spheres, and its precise planning is pulverised into star dust.

Finally, at the centre, atop a pedestal, a moulded piece (more a small jewel than a sculpture) reminds us of a primordial depiction of the symbolic connection between heaven and earth: it is a magic mountain, its silvery surface absorbing and reflecting all light from the stars.

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