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COVER NOTE

Artur Barrio
Porto, Portugal, 1945
Seis Movimentos (Six Movements), 1974
Black and white photos without paper
Donated by the artist

Artur Barrio moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1955. He attended the School of Fine Arts in 1967. Since the late 1960's, he carried out projects on installations and situations/actions. In 1969, when he was about to show one of his works, the Brazilian Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS) closed the Paris Pre-Biennial exhibition, which was supposed to take place in the Modern Art Museum, Rio de Janeiro (MAM-RJ). In the same year, he wrote a manifesto contesting the traditional art categories and their relation to the market, in which he criticized the system of production-circulation-consumption of capitalist societies, as well as the social condition in the Third World. In 1970, he participated in the exhibition Information in New York. He has participated in several editions of the São Paulo International Biennial and since 1987 he has organized in Brazil a series of exhibitions which he calls Experiências (Experiences in Portuguese). Among solo exhibitions in the country, we can highlight the one called Metáfora dos Fluxos (Flow Metaphor) (2000) in Paço das Artes (Palace of Arts), São Paulo, and in the Modern Art Museums of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia. Abroad, he participated in the Beyond Identity: Global Conceptualism: Local Contexts exhibition in 1999, organized by the Queens Museum of Art in New York, and in the Documenta, in Kassel, Germany, in 2002. The artist subverts traditional procedures using perishable material, such as waste, toilet paper, human remains and carrion. Artur Barrio's artistic activity begins from an underground system, which since its inception has been vigorously destabilizing the accepted and naturalized concepts of the art universe. Within the effective conventions of art object, it was not long ago that the institutions started to assimilate the idea of the ephemeral and transitory artistic expression in a work conception, centered in the categories of bureaucracy and market. The hegemonic and institutionalized idea of art brings all the subtle and the elaborate implications of an aesthetic consciousness forged in the Modernism. Pointing to the opposite direction, Barrio's work is derived from the intensity of the gestures that become real in various actions and situations. In the photo sequence Seis Movimentos (Six Movements), from 1974, the artist registers the constant movement of a hand cutting paper with scissors, in a continuous movement. The playful element is present in this work, but if we take into account the political context of that period, the action of cutting could also suggest the incision of censorship. If we note that the artist cuts a painting, all the other series of interpretations are added to the previous ones. However, a daily gesture (to cut with scissors), through the distance created by its photograph, invites us to reflection.

Cristina Freire

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