

Mendes
Wood
DM

Paulo Nimer Pjota
Selected Readings

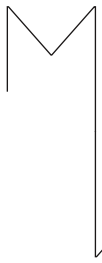


I. A Meeting of Multitudes

What we witness on the streets at all times is a combination of beings, desires and activities. In the slang used by passers-by, in the posters displayed in shops and bars, in the marks that cover walls or in the structures that support makeshift constructions, there is a collective force that does not claim authorship. There is an atmosphere that is not easy to apprehend. There is, most of all, a temporality that cannot be understood homogeneously.

The work of Paulo Nimer Pjota draws on his interest in the nature of these collective phenomena. From the inventive aggressiveness of a rap concert to the exuberant passivity of luxury shop windows, his research focuses on the examination of popular images that only come about through complex processes conducted by countless hands. In this sense, we can think of his production as the representation of a plural, busy and ongoing debate, whose interests and understandings are constantly being transformed, following multiple flows of consciousness. A conference of many voices with open research channels in an undefined space and enlarged time.

Concerned with key aspects of the global production of images, his intention is to bring to the fore a cluster of references and impressions involving objects that are deeply rooted in our social collective imagery in order to conjure the mechanisms that produce, edit and disseminate these manifestations. In a time of ultra-communication – in which demands are increasingly more global and production conditions increasingly more local – the artist proposes a space of improbable conjugations that are operated by accumulations and juxtapositions that are inherently confrontational but led by the harmonic willingness of their composition. Based in rhythm, rhyme and repetition, the artist creates arrangements that index the common perceptions of a globalised planet, exposing its profound inequalities but also its potential to produce new social and political interactions based on diversity and subjective exchange.



II. Global Fables and Anachronisms

Next to white canvases Pjota places huge metal sheets – pieces that he buys from warehouses and scrap yards after a lengthy process of searching, negotiation and transport. Sometimes, large pieces of fabric sacking are added. These materials make up a board to be filled in. However, his intention is far from creating a clean slate, as the support is fully embraced with its previous visual and spiritual marks, and is used as a place to accommodate information and versions of things which are already in circulation.

The encounter proposed in this platform is organised at the point of tension between a meticulous compositional practice and the anarchic freedom of randomness. Operating between edition and improvisation, Pjota creates global fables permeated with stories and characters that originate in each and every place. The result is vibrant scenarios, steeped in metaphors and literalities, abstractions and figurations, analogies and suggestions. This is about the reformulation of the world as we know it towards a constellation of suspended bodies in the void, moved by a piercing sense of humour and a marked state of consternation.

These patchworks - in constant metamorphosis - are generated from numerous types of torsions and distortions, producing an assemblage of radically distinct categories and eras. We see the eruption of improbable intersections and all sorts of anachronisms. Classic painting and sculpture clichés are reprogrammed next to products of mass consumption; Western culture canons intermingle with everyday banalities; and universal issues are debated in regional accents.

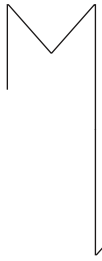
These ideas are sewn together by a combined movement of ironic contemplation and active consternation, capable of handling icons and indexes, shaking their pre-defined roles in the power relations that got us through history. It is clear that there is no single historical direction or linear course of facts. As centuries anchor onto each other we see the opening of huge gaps in the regimes of truth. In effect, the structure that operates the succession of things as proposed by conventional conceptions is taken apart. In place of the legitimization of historical sources we see the emergence of endless alternatives of contextualisation.

III. Greek Vases, Stickers and Fire Guns

In the field of fiction the term ‘crossover’ is used to designate episodes or editions that promote an event in which circumstances, scenarios or characters from different media products (films, series, comics, etc.) interact under the same narrative. A literary technique that concentrates its power in merging spheres, articulating previously impossible realities.

Pjota’s montages mobilise a cosmogony that proposes the coexistence – in a single shot – of the language of peripheral zones and codes from mainstream and high culture. In this gap, the Fang mask that influenced Picasso can be placed next to fridge magnets and confessional scribbles; Greek vases shine next to super-hero stickers; guns are exhibited next to anatomy illustrations; Tibetan skulls and emojis printed on old tin are fused into totems; and the study of geometry is combined with vernacular architecture.

As the artist samples pillars of erudition and mass culture megahits, he delves deeper into the boundaries that define the ghetto and other socially fragile spaces. Pjota leaves his empirical incursions with an extensive repertoire that he then orchestrates in order to mark sensations of tumult and violence. It is as if Mickey Mouse met an AK-47. As if a library of classic books was opened in an arcade of shops that sell electronic devices and cheap gadgets. As if a Boko Haram or ISIS YouTube video was narrated by Darth Vader and disrupted by the invasion of Bugs Bunny. As if an organic market was set up in a modernist construction in ruin and completely overtaken by graffiti.



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Paulo Nimer Pjota, Germano Dushá, Claudia Rodriguez Ponga Linares,
Thierry Raspail and Kiki Mazzucchelli, Mousse, 2018,

The anthropophagic voraciousness of these short stories create a terrain populated by many masks, following the advent of mass communication in its current stage of digital search engines, data sharing and social media. If a series of traumas and public catharses comes to the surface, new coexisting dynamics also quickly emerge. Leading roles previously established by official narratives are gradually dissolved. There is no easy solution; we are left with disputes and negotiations under a restless noise.

Without the limitations of experienced knowledge and the bureaucracy to which we are subjected, bodies can therefore try new forms of existence. Bodies can risk themselves far beyond of what is possible under the gravity force of known social organisations.



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São Paulo
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www.mendeswooddm.com
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