



Mano Penalva



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Cumeeira  
Ridge

texto de text by  
Marcelo Campos

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## Vão livre para dançar

A casa está vazia. Só restaram cortinas, pedaços de tecido, braços de cadeira, caminhos de mesa, passamanarias. O que restou está incompleto – não propriamente quebrado, mas faltando pedaços, deslocado ou exilado de sua utilidade. O amor, como nos confessou o poeta(1), “devorou os utensílios de meu uso: pente, navalha, escova, tesouras de unha, canivetes”. Desafinado, o amor fez perder o fio de corte dos machados. A casa, agora vazia, segue, ainda, boa e livre para dançar.

Mano Penalva nos instiga a observar a casa. Não a que se mantém íntegra, faustosa, mas a que, em certo jogo entre decadência e ruína, nos aponta ao desuso de certas manufaturas tradicionais que se tornaram baldias, mundanas, ordinárias e que, com o passar do tempo, ocupam o lugar da preciosidade. Para que tramar tiras de palha à mão, compondo os assentos das cadeiras, se a indústria pode nos fornecer a artesanaria à metro? Como um paradoxo, encontramos, ainda hoje, artesãos dessa tradição nas esquinas das grandes cidades. O modernismo europeu nos iludiu ao afirmar que a forma seguiria a função. Isso jamais se estabeleceu plenamente. Gostamos dos excessos, nos entregamos aos ornamentos. A voluta, o pontiagudo, o arabesco, a art nouveau guardam certa vontade de fazer da casa um continuum da natureza. O capitalismo, que segue cooptando a manufatura, nos prometeu a plena substituição dessas tramas artesanais pelo modular industrial. E a indústria, distante das ideologias socialistas, reproduziu as divisões de classe entre o mais caro (erudito) e o mais barato (popular). Contudo, foram ficando aos pedaços outros saberes e tradições advindos, muitas vezes, dos povos originários, quilombolas e, mesmo, da decadente monarquia. Tramar à mão está próximo ao corpo, ao gesto, ao pensamento imediato, ancestral.

Em Cumeeira, Mano Penalva permanece atento ao que constituiu suas pesquisas e seus interesses. O mercado de pulgas, os mercados populares e, sobretudo, o comportamento sociocultural que dota de sentidos e afetos o que se encontra em desuso. O próprio termo “cumeeira” define interesses de épocas remotas, nas quais festas e rituais de inauguração das casas eram noticiados pela imprensa. O rito, de outros modos, ainda é feito ao se erigir a parte mais alta dos telhados. A festa da cumeeira, cantada internacionalmente por Tom Jobim, não é senão o churrasco da laje, o cozido, o mocotó, que muitas vezes acompanham a ação coletiva (os mutirões) e que caracterizam as autoconstruções (método de edificar casas com a ajuda da família, dos amigos, da vizinhança). De modo ampliado, também entregamos as cumeeiras a santos protetores e orixás.

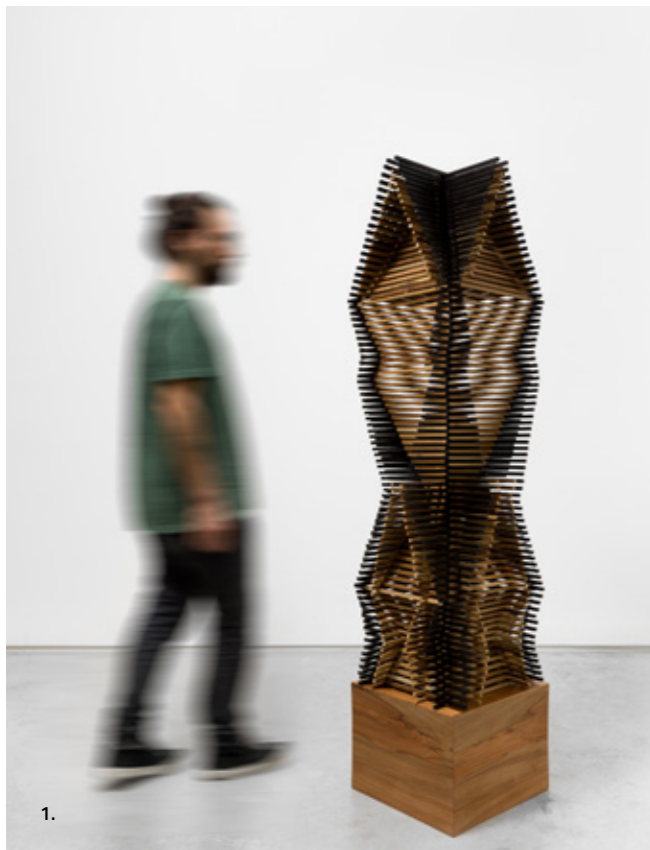
Na exposição, Penalva observa e compõe tramas, as mais variadas. Achas e varetas de madeira se empilham em construções, couros de tambores são costurados lado a lado, palhinhas são arrematadas por um tecido de crochê de juta. A casa prevalece ao ambiente externo, à própria rua e, nos detalhes, vai nos conduzindo aos sinais de um trabalho inútil. Na arte, a chamada “vontade construtiva” também se dedicou a pensar esses gestos – a junção de planos, o equilíbrio de matérias –, muito mais pautada pelos módulos industriais que regiam a ideia de progresso. O Brasil gerou, com isso, uma perigosa limpeza étnica em obras que, muitas vezes abstratas, abriram mão justamente das culturas populares de tradições negras, indígenas e caboclas que Mano Penalva reinstaura. Por outro lado, não seria propriamente a ideia de popular que estaria em jogo. Antes, pensemos que lugares conceituais vão mantendo os gestos do artista como um pensamento que invoca outras sensações, outros sentimentos. Em “Afinados” (2018), dois machados de madeira quase coincidem, como no amor, na dualidade nem sempre correspondente a um tempo partilhado. “Quebra sol” (2022) e “Arrimo” (2023) já nos colocam diante da multicultural tradição dos muxarabis árabes, reelaborados pelos brises e cobogós da arquitetura moderna, mantidos por peneiras das tradições da cestaria indígena. Ali, o que pode parecer obstáculo se organiza de modo malemolente, se mexe, dança com o vento ou com a interação humana. Ainda assim, o exercício geométrico se mantém em franco diálogo com a história da escultura brasileira, com os aprendizados concretos e neoconcretos.

Para além dos interesses pelos gestos populares, pelas manufaturas em desuso e pelos ornamentos da casa, vemos, em Cumeeira, um uso elaborado, quase literário, de metáforas visuais. Os couros redondos dos tambores são chamados de “Pérolas” (2022). A paisagem, por exemplo, se mostra como mote associativo quando um tecido azul com duas argolas pendentes ganha o título de “Chuva” (2023). Um molde de palhinha em formato aproximado a um chapéu, acrescido de pingentes de cortina é nomeado: “Arlequim” (2022). Aqui, o tom da poesia de Mano Penalva nos coloca em sensações de nostalgia e reminiscência, em um jogo conceitual romântico que convoca as memórias deixadas em pedaços nas casas vazias – memórias que ganham vitalidade ao enfrentarmos os vazios das mudanças.

Marcelo Campos

(1) Neto, João Cabral de Mello. Os três mal-amados. 1943.





1.



2.

**1. Cumeeira I, 2022**

ripinhas de madeira, tinta  
esmalte e base de madeira  
wooden slats, enamel paint and  
wooden base  
177 x 42,5 x 42,5 cm  
69 11/16 x 16 47/64 x 16 47/64 in

**2. Cumeeira II, 2022**

ripinhas de madeira, pasta  
metálica e base de madeira  
wooden slats, metallic paste  
and wooden base  
191,5 x 42,5 cm  
75 25/64 x 16 47/64 in

**3. Palafita (Série Ventanas), 2023**

nylon, ripa de madeira, tinta  
acrílica e chassi  
nylon, wooden slat, acrylic paint  
and chassis  
42 x 42 x 6 cm  
16 17/32 x 16 17/32 x 2 23/64 in

**4. Sem título (Série Ventana), 2023**

madeira, tinta esmalte, tinta  
acrílica, pasta metálica, prego  
e chassi  
wood, enamel paint, acrylic paint,  
metal paste, nail and chassis  
62 x 42 x 6 cm  
24 13/32 x 16 17/32 x 2 23/64 in



3.



4.



5.



6.

**5. Móbia I, 2023**  
braço de cadeira, chassi, linho e moldura  
chair armrest, chassis, linen and frame  
162 x 82 x 54 cm  
63 <sup>25</sup>/<sub>32</sub> x 32 <sup>9</sup>/<sub>32</sub> x 21 <sup>17</sup>/<sub>64</sub> in

**6. Móbia II, 2023**  
braço de cadeira, chassi, linho e moldura  
chair armrest, chassis, linen and frame  
162 x 88 x 62 cm  
63 <sup>25</sup>/<sub>32</sub> x 34 <sup>41</sup>/<sub>64</sub> x 24 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>32</sub> in

**7. Chuva I, 2023**  
alças de madeira para cortina, linho e moldura  
curtain wooden handles, linen and frame  
137 x 117 cm  
53 <sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x 46 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in



7.













9.

**8. Quebra Sol, 2022**

miçangas de madeira, fitilho,  
ripa de madeira e suporte  
de ferro  
wooden beads, ribbon, wooden  
slat and iron bracket  
304 x 370 x 26 cm  
119 11/16 x 145 43/64 x 10 15/64 in

**9. Arrimo I e II, 2023**

miçangas de madeira, fitilho, ripa  
de madeira, suporte de ferro e  
cabo de aço  
wooden beads, ribbon, wooden  
slat, iron bracket and steel cable  
305 x 65 x 65 cm cada  
120 5/64 x 25 19/32 x 25 19/32 in each

**10. Afinados, 2018**

madeira  
wood  
36 x 8 x 3,5 cm  
14 11/64 x 3 5/32 x 1 3/8 in

**11. Espalda II, 2018**

palhinha, crochet de juta, linho  
e moldura de madeira  
straw, jute crochet, linen and  
wooden frame  
117 x 77 cm  
46 1/16 x 30 5/16 in

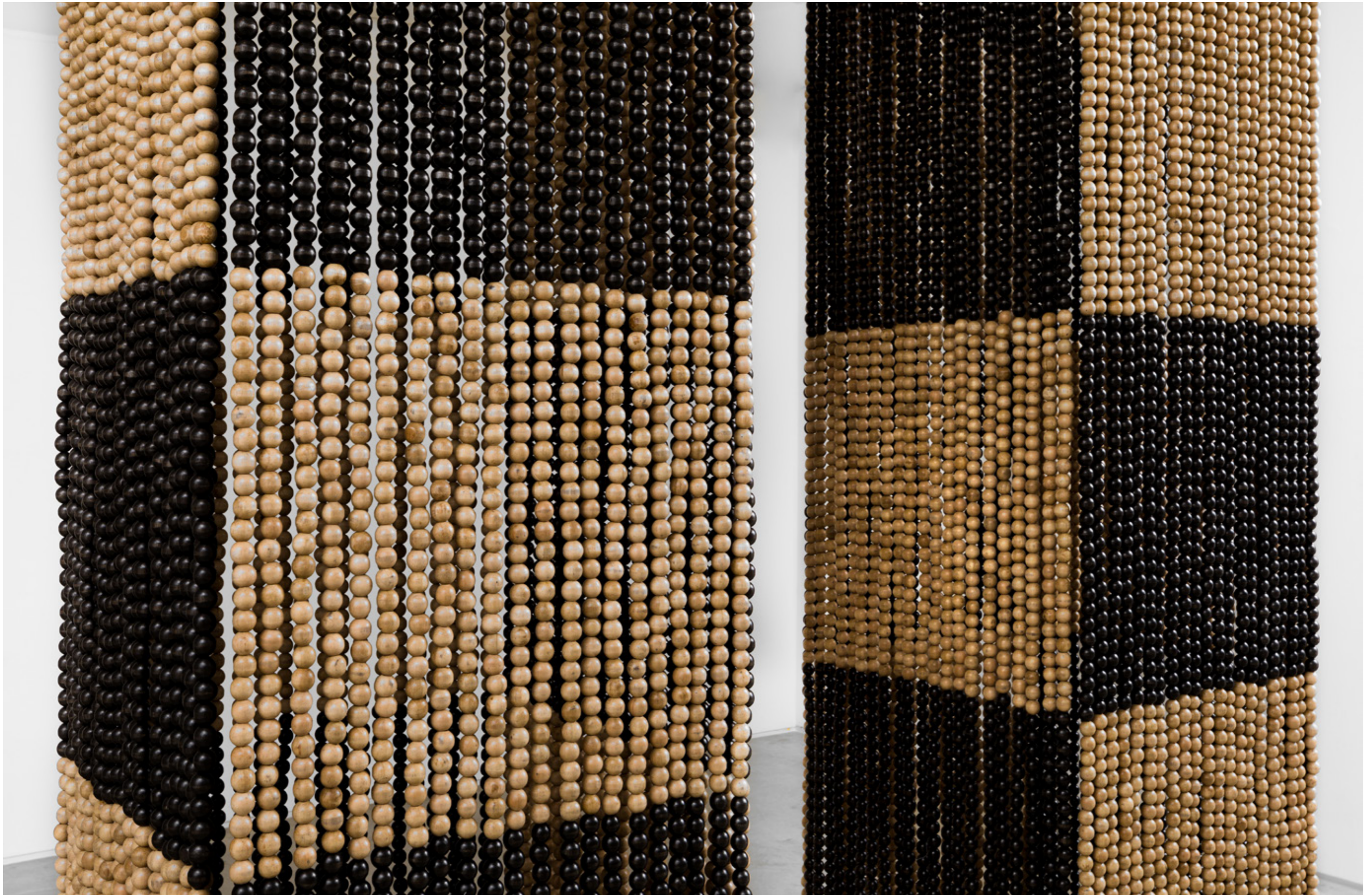


10.



11.













## Free span to dance

The house is empty. All that was left were curtains, pieces of fabric, armrests, table runners, trimmings. What remains is incomplete – not exactly broken, but missing some pieces, displaced or exiled from its usability. Love, as the poet confessed to us, “devoured the utensils of my use: comb, razor, brush, nail scissors, pocket knives” (1). Out of tune, love lost the cutting edge of the axes. The house, now empty, is still good and free to dance.

Mano Penalva urges us to observe the house. Not the one that remains intact, sumptuous, but the one that, in a certain game between decadence and ruin, points us to the disuse of certain traditional manufactures that have become abandoned, mundane, ordinary and that, with the passage of time, occupy a place of preciousness. Why weave strips of straw by hand, making up the seats of chairs, if the industry can supply us with handicrafts by the meter? As a paradox, we find, even today, artisans of this tradition on the corners of large cities. European modernism deceived us by claiming that form would follow function. This was never fully established. We like excesses, we indulge in ornaments. Volutes, sharp angles, arabesques, art nouveau, they all keep a certain desire to make the house a continuum of nature. Capitalism, which keeps on co-opting manufacturing, has promised us to replace these crafted weaves for industrial modularity. And the industry, far from socialist ideologies, reproduced the class divisions between expensive (erudite) and cheap (popular). However, other knowledges and traditions that often came from native peoples, *quilombolas* (2) and even the decadent monarchy became increasingly fragmented, falling to pieces. Weaving by hand is close to the body, the gesture, the immediate, ancestral thought.

In “*Cumeeira*” (Ridge), Mano Penalva focuses on what constitutes his research and interests. The flea market, the popular markets and, above all, the sociocultural behavior that endows what is in disuse with meaning and affection. The very term “ridge” defines interests from remote times, in which parties and house opening rituals were reported by the press. The rite, in other ways, is still done when erecting the highest part of the roof. The ridge festival, sung internationally by Tom Jobim (3), is none other than the barbecue on unfinished roof slabs, the stew, the *mocotó* (4), which often accompany collective actions (*mutirões*) (5) and characterize self-constructions (a method of building houses with the help of the family members, friends, neighbors). In a broader sense, we also offer our roof ridges to patron saints and orishas.

In the exhibition, Penalva observes and composes the most varied wefts. Axes and wooden sticks are piled up in constructions, drum skins are sewn side by side, straws are finished with a jute crochet fabric. The house prevails over the external environment, over the street itself and, in the details, leads us to the signs of useless work. In art, the so-called “constructive will” was also dedicated to thinking about these gestures – the joining of planes, the balance of materials –, much more guided by the industrial modules that governed the idea of progress. Brazil, thus, generated a dangerous ethnic cleansing in works that, often abstract, gave up precisely the popular cultures of black, indigenous and *caboclo* (6) traditions that Mano Penalva reinstates.

On the other hand, it would not exactly be the idea of popular or folkloric that would be at stake here. Rather, let us consider that conceptual places keep the artist’s gestures as a thought that invokes other sensations, other feelings. In “*Afinados*” (In tune, 2018), two wooden axes almost coincide, just as in love, in the duality not always corresponding to a shared time. “*Quebra sol*” (Sun visor, 2022) and “*Arrimo*” (Prop, 2023) place us in front of the multicultural tradition of the Arab *muxarabis* (7) (or *mashrabiya*), reworked by the brises and *cobogós* (8) of modern architecture, maintained by sieves from the indigenous basketry traditions. So, what may seem like an obstacle is organized in a sensual way, moving, dancing with the wind or with human interaction. Even so, the geometric exercise remains in open dialogue with the history of Brazilian sculpture, especially with the teachings from the concrete and neoconcrete movements.

In addition to the interest in popular gestures, disused manufactures and domestic ornaments, we see in “*Cumeeira*” (Ridge) an elaborate, almost literary use of visual metaphors. The whiteish round drum skins are called “*Pérolas*” (Pearls, 2022). The landscape, for example, is shown as an associative motto when a blue fabric with two hanging rings is titled “*Chuva*” (Rain, 2023). A straw mold in the shape that evokes a hat, with curtain pendants attached to the edges, is named: “*Arlequin*” (Harlequin, 2022). Here, the tone of Mano Penalva’s poetry brings up feelings of nostalgia and reminiscence, in a romantic conceptual game that summons the memories left in pieces in empty houses – memories that gain vitality when we face the voids of change.



(1) Neto, João Cabral de Mello. Os três mal-amados. 1943.  
 (2) Quilombolas are residents of the Quilombos, settlements founded by Afro Brazilian people, usually who escaped from slavery. These communities represented an important resistance to the slavery that was operated in Brazil for centuries. In recent times, descendants from these communities were awarded the collective ownership of the land they occupied since colonial times, and preserve the culture and traditions that were developed in the settlements.  
 (3) In the song "Águas de Março" (1972), composed by Tom Jobim, one verse mentions the "festa da cumeira" (ridge festivities), which is a Brazilian folk tradition of celebrating the completion of an important stage of building a house, especially when the construction is realized through mutirões (5).  
 (4) Mocotó is a traditional dish that came to Brazil, originally from Angola, through the Portuguese colonization. The Brazilian version of the stew is made from cow feet with beans and vegetables.  
 (5) Mutirão is a form of communal work, usually employed in the construction of housing, in which the communities and families gather to complete a project.  
 (6) Caboclo is the ethnical denomination of people with Brazilian Indigenous and European parentage.  
 (7) Muxarabis are architectural elements of Islamic origin that became popular in Brazil in the 19th century. It is a kind of window cover made with carved wood latticework. It allowed for shadow and cooling of the interior environment, and also enabled people to see from the inside out, without being seen from the outside in. It is the precursor of the modern architectural element called cobogó (8).  
 (8) Cobogó is the name given to hollow elements employed in the façade of houses and other constructions, usually made of clay or cement. They substitute or complement walls, allowing for ventilation and the passage of light. They became a central element in Brazilian modern architecture from the 1930s, when it was invented, onwards.



13.



**Mano Penalva** (Salvador, 1987) transita por diversas linguagens, como instalações, esculturas, pinturas, vídeos e fotografias. Artista visual, formado em Comunicação Social pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (2008), frequentou cursos livres da Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage entre 2005 e 2011. Atualmente mantém seu ateliê em São Paulo, cidade que também abriga o Massapê Projetos, plataforma idealizada por ele, gerida por artistas que possibilita o pensamento e produção de arte.

**Mano Penalva** (Salvador, 1987) transits through several languages, such as installation, sculpture, painting, video and photography. The artist graduated in Social Communication from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (2008), and also attended free courses at the EAV Parque Lage between 2005 and 2011. He currently has his studio in São Paulo, city that is also the location of Massapê Projetos, a platform idealized by him, and managed by artists that enables the thought and production of art.

Nos últimos anos participou de diversas residências artísticas, como Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido (2021); Fountainhead Residency, Miami (2020); LE26by, Felix Frachon Gallery, Bruxelas (2019) e AnnexB, Nova Iorque (2018). Dentre suas exposições individuais, destacam-se: "Cama de Gato" (2022), Llano Galeria, Cidade do México, "Alpendre" (2022), Galeria Portas Vilaseca, Rio de Janeiro, "Entre les Plis" (2022), Felix Frachon Gallery, Bruxelas, "Ode ao vento" (2021), Llano Galeria, Oaxaca; "Hasta Tepito", B[X] Gallery, Brooklyn (2018); "Requebra", Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection, Bruxelas (2018); e "Proyecto para Monumento", Passaporte Cultural, Cidade do México (2017). Dentre as exposições coletivas, integrou: "What I really want to tell you...", MANA Contemporary, Chicago (2020); "Tropical Gardens", Felix Frachon Gallery, Bruxelas (2019); Bienal das Artes, SESC Distrito Federal, Brasília (2018); "Blockchain/Alternative barter: a new method of exchange?", B[X] Gallery, Brooklyn (2018); e "L'imaginaire de l'enfance", Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2015).

In the last years Penalva has participated in several artistic residencies, such as Casa Wabi, Puerto Escondido (2021); Fountainhead Residency, Miami (2020); LE26by, Felix Frachon Gallery, Bruxelas (2019) and AnnexB, New Iorque (2018). Among his solo exhibitions, the following stand out: "Cama de Gato" (2022), Llano Galeria, Cidade do México, "Alpendre" (2022), Galeria Portas Vilaseca, Rio de Janeiro, "Entre les Plis" (2022), Felix Frachon Gallery, Bruxelas, "Ode ao vento" (2021), Llano Galeria, Oaxaca; "Hasta Tepito", B[X] Gallery, Brooklyn (2018); "Requebra", Frédéric de Goldschmidt Collection, Brussels (2018) and "Proyecto para Monumento", Passaporte Cultural, Mexico City (2017). Among the group exhibitions, he participated in: "What I really want to tell you...", MANA Contemporary, Chicago (2020); "Tropical Gardens", Felix Frachon Gallery, Brussels (2019); Bienal das Artes, SESC Distrito Federal, Brasília (2018); "Blockchain/Alternative barter: a new method of exchange?", B[X] Gallery, Brooklyn (2018) and "L'imaginaire de l'enfance", Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris (2015).



14.

**12. Pérolas, 2022**  
 couro, argola de metal, barra de ferro e suporte de cortina  
 leather, metal ring, iron bar and curtain brackets  
 231 x 152 cm  
 90 15/16 x 59 27/32 in

**13. Espalda I, 2018**  
 palhinha, crochê de juta, linho e moldura de madeira  
 straw, jute crochet, linen and wooden frame  
 117 x 117 cm  
 46 1/16 x 46 1/16 in

**14. Arlequim, 2022**  
 palhinha, juta, pregos, miçangas de madeira, pingente, tecido blackout  
 straw, jute, nails, wooden beads, pendant, blackout fabric  
 126 x 156 x 5 cm  
 49 39/64 x 61 27/64 x 1 31/32 in



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