
nara roesler

laura vinci
 maquinamata

 rio de janeiro
 jun 9 – aug 6, 2022

 Assistance: Marília G. Teixeira
 Development and assembly:
 Silvio de Camillis Borges and Daniel Zagatti

1 | I paraphrased Roberto Conduru in a critical analysis of the work of Antonio Dias. Although the sentence is about another artist, this connotation that the work, despite its political connotation, is not pamphleteering and, on top of that, makes use of a certain humor can also be shifted to the analysis of Laura's work. See CONDURU, Robert. Vital Bait. In: CHAIMOVICH, Felipe. *Antonio Dias: defeats and victories*. São Paulo: Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo, 2020, p. 62-63.

 scan the code to access
 the exhibition on our website


the dimension of excess

felipe scovino

The environment created by Laura Vinci for this exhibition refers to a factory component—pulleys, chains, machinery devices and rotating systems that are constantly producing. What do they produce? Nothing, in the capitalist sense of attributing value to a commodity. The machines are in operation but without any indication of production. They are operating without a goal and so, from a commercial standpoint, they are useless machines. Symptomatically, they work within a framework that exposes a globalized perspective that prioritizes persistent production over sleep.

Laura's gears become a power without a purpose because they don't produce goods. They are machines that conform to the reverse of what is expected of them. Laura makes use of an allegory of the Fordist model, of endless and constant production aimed to satisfy unbridled consumption. This model sacrifices the worker, transforming them into an automated subject, a hybrid of man and machine.

Factory work, alienating in nature, constitutes ambiguities such as profit in exchange for the worker's loss of subjectivity and in turn they are transformed into a kind of extension of that pulley. The constant movement of the mats, generating new products at a pace with no room for pause, captures and destabilizes the subject who produces and also consumes. Not to mention, of course, the fact that machines increasingly occupy the space of the workers.

In summary, the allegory used by Laura, using mats and objects in constant movement, transforms this mechanical system into one with a warlike image, associating it with an unhealthy and chaotic environment, without pause for thought, where repetitive production always prevails.

Laura is interested in unproductive spending. Like Bataille, through different strategies, she turns to question the dimension of excess. Her gears expose the nonsense and, without a doubt, the harm and inconsistencies of the capitalist system starting with itself. I say this because Laura builds her own automaton, her own 'factory'.

With this strategy, it avoids being hooked, minimizes the conditions of the prey and launches works that offer more than they appear to but do not necessarily deliver what they promise. I would say that anyone who wants a pamphlet will find critical thinking, existential reflection, humor and pain. In a way, these works act as bait. They are captivating, seductive, funny but deeply critical. They are part of Laura's strategy to escape and survive the tricks and traps of contemporaneity.

In times of excess, there is a demand for expenditure and discharge which ultimately results in waste. Laura's commentary on this is insightful. The golden dust produced by one of her machines is simultaneously production—the product is poetry, something ethereal, immaterial and

nara roesler

without valuation within capitalist thought—and lack, absence, incompleteness.

It represents the materiality of this unproductive expenditure. This critical observation about consumption also becomes an observation of human tragedy itself—how we relate to things in the world—but it also appears comedic. Its machines, because of their spectacular condition (as it is a factory with all kinds of fascinating possibilities) lead us to laugh, more I believe from our own difficulty in placing ourselves within this absurdity.

A rod is detached from one of its machines, which, in turn, has a red cloth at its end. Hoisting it as a flag is a common occurrence. However, there are some specificities that make this symbolic and imaginary community a place that is both fragile and a reflection of the uncertain times we live in, but also of resistance.

The flag is an ordinary and worthless piece of cloth. It is a flag, both in design and invention, which is not hoisted, but withers, loose, in a condition of unbalance like our own, when we critically place ourselves not only in front of the exploitations of capitalism, but also the rise of hate speech.

But I don't think that the flag is a symbol of death, but of attention to the surroundings and a critical commitment to freedom. The red flag, the yellow and gold dust that covers the surface of the leaves, an element that runs through this exhibition and Vinci's work for a long time, are the points of color in this factory complex. They are the ones who bring the escape component, poetry and anger in the midst of a destructive, cold and determined rationality by calculation, production, end, gain and speculation.

The powder, in particular, is unique. Used at the Indian festival 'Holy Festival', when the arrival of spring is celebrated, and made of cornstarch, it has this spiritual, dreamlike character. As a 'product' of one of the machines, it is a reminder that not every industrial process or product needs to walk us further towards destruction.

The kinetically shimmering leaves represent a counterpoint to industrialization dominated by massive machine culture and its harmful consequences to the social system. The leaves are artisanal; they are parts of a pulsating organism, resistant to the domineering effects of industry.

The exhibition hints of an astonishment or a lack of it at that moment. If, on the one hand, the strong machinic presence and its conditioning to eternally produce nothing tells us about a world ruled by a power of excess, on the other hand, the show exposes our silence or conditioning to these extremely violent circumstances.

We live in an era filled with bourgeois and predatory thinking, as if it could separate one thing from another, which values the destruction of biomes, rivers, mountains, seas, animals, precarious individuals due to progress, a pulsating economy and our well-being.

If, in the first part of the exhibition, the machines and their production systems are relatively distant, but still form a cohesive group, in the back room we witness a consolidation of the relations between nature and culture. A branch supported by wires tangles with pulleys and chains that hang from the ceiling.

The signs of a threatened forest, of a natural world invaded by the predatory actions of man is evident. The exhibition turns into a dense and menacing scene. The fact that we are unable to get close to the environment—with the location of the work in an extensive and tight corridor, makes it even more tragic and haunting—as we observe from a distance, our passivity in the face of the confrontation between nature and culture is evident.

Amazement is before us but we cannot touch it and somehow understand it. *Muda* (Seedling), the title of this work, still has a ghostly feel, from its compact and somber form. From time to time, the yellow dust appears like a mist, like the imminence of a transformation.

Little by little, the yellowing dust settles on the branches, like a process that sets the vegetation on fire. It is possible to read it as a kind of renewal of aspiration or enchantment, largely because of the warmth of the yellow, although on the other hand, the image of fog is one with a sense of something nebulous and threatening. Images of whirlpools of sand or the dense gray mass of pollution that hover over large metropolises come to my mind.

Muda is a play on words. It has a direct correlation with the plant element of the work but it also exposes our lack of positioning and perplexity in the face of contemporary atrocities. The allegorical presence of

nara roesler

machines next to a forest is directly linked to the extraction of ores and the consequent tragedies in Minas Gerais or the Amazon, two everyday examples systematically linked in the media regarding environmental disasters connected to human greed.

The allegory of the factory or power plant at its maximum power, running at full steam, used by Laura reflects urgent demands. It highlights the machine as a symbol of extractivism and destruction, of an absurd rationale dominated by excess, but it indicates, critically, a vanishing point: the possibility not only of reflecting on the serious conditions we are experiencing but of having a new relationship, averse to modern brutality, with the world embracing the immaterial, as well as a more peaceful and idle way of life.

nara roesler

Laura Vinci is best known for her sculptures, large installation works and interventions. Her research is based on exploring the relationship between body, ephemerality and space. Vinci views the latter as a complex organism that mediates the interactions between the elements that inhabit it, all while remaining susceptible to the constant passing of time. As such, her work seeks to investigate how matter moves or is altered, showcasing its transitory nature and stimulating new understandings of our surroundings.

Vinci began her artistic career in the mid-1980s, first dedicating herself fully to painting. Rather than turning to figuration, the artist sought to achieve almost tri-dimensional pieces, which quickly lead her to focus on sculpture. Her interest for changing matters is notably visible in the idea of erosion –captured in her intervention known as ‘hourglass’, which she created for the project *Arte/Cidade 3* (1997) in São Paulo– and in the idea of condensation, present in her use of cooling coils that form frozen

words. These interests also characterize Vinci’s work with Teatro Oficina, where she has undertaken the role of artistic director, participating in the theater’s set and costume design work. She is currently working with Mundana Companhia.

Laura Vinci was born in 1962, in São Paulo, Brazil, where she lives and works. Main recent solo exhibitions and site-specific projects include: *Diurna*, at Galeria Nara Roesler (2018), in New York, USA; *Todas as graças*, at Instituto Ling (2018), in Porto Alegre, Brazil; *Morro mundo*, at Espaço Cultural Porto Seguro (ECPS) (2017), in São Paulo, Brazil; *No ar*, at Casa França-Brasil (2015), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She has also participated in the 10th Cuenca Biennale, Ecuador (2009); 2nd, 5th and 7th editions of the Mercosul Biennial, Brazil (1999, 2005 and 2009); and 26th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2004). Main recent group shows include: *O rio dos navegantes*, at Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR) (2019), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *Passado/futuro/presente: arte contemporânea brasileira no*

acervo do MAM, at Museu de Arte Moderna in São Paulo (MAM-SP) (2019), São Paulo, Brazil, and at Phoenix Art Museum (2017), in Phoenix, USA; *Belo, transitório, intangível e finito*, at Farol Santander (2018), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Pedra no céu – Arte e a Arquitetura de Paulo Mendes da Rocha*, at Museu Brasileiro de Escultura e Ecologia (MuBE) (2017), in São Paulo, Brazil. Her works are included in important institutional collections, such as: Instituto Inhotim de Arte Contemporânea, Brumadinho, Brazil; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, and Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena, Italy.