nara roesler

lucia koch
double trouble
curated by matthieu poirier

opening monday, october 17
exhibition oct 18 – oct 28, 2022

double trouble
matthieu poirier

The notion of 'Trübe' (most often translated as 'trouble' or 'turbidity'), which Goethe himself formulated in his essays *Entroptische Farben* (1817-1820) and *Chromatik* (1822), is astonishing. The turbidity in question is twofold: it qualifies an aquatic environment, whose transparency is disturbed by the suspension of a myriad of tiny sediments, and designates the very source of the formation of new colors in space and time.

Lucia Koch's *in situ* project for the Palais d'Iéna, head of the CESE, is part of this dual logic and echoes, in a non-literal way, our troubled times, where order and chaos compete for socio-political space. On the one hand, its labyrinthine, irregular, and penetrable plan invites an erratic course. The monumental installation, made of textiles with printed gradients, unfolds in multiple diagonals and heckles the orthonormal clarity thought by architect Auguste Perret more than 80 years ago. On the other hand, a singular chromatic phenomenon is at play here, born of the infinite combinations of the unstable natural light, of pigments transferred to these translucent filters that unfold in real time and space, and make this historical site the crucible of an experience that is at once optical, tactile and motor.

The massive installation of printed fabrics crossing through and nearly filling the totality of the space, from the Hypostyle room to the big staircases, literally immerses the architecture and its visitors under the waves of immense color gradients. The show is completed by *trompe-l'oeil* photographs by the artist, which relate to the scale of the Palais site and to its moucharabieh patterns filtering the light, as well as to its mass-colored concrete surfaces.

But one of the main qualities of this out-of-scale work is that its material is highly unstable, as curtain filters bearing a subtle gradation from top to bottom, from orange to midnight blue, which are constantly agitated by the lightest air currents and by the passage of spectators who move between the thin veils. The installation is as much a painting (one thinks of Mark Rothko's chromatic *sfumato*) as it is a sculpture (one thinks of Richard Serra's immense steel plates). Far from these historical proposals, the work of Lucia Koch shows itself, in the intimate and non-duplicable experience of each visitor, as highly kinetic and participative, undulating and changing according to the points of view, the hours of the day, the quality and direction of the sunlight.

Let's note that, in a space where the chromatic and atmospheric phenomenon seems to invade and modulate the architecture, the long panels formed by the curtains also challenge the physical limits of the site and even seem, through a play of connections, to extend beyond the windows of the Palais d'Iéna, crossing walls and glass surfaces and reaching the outside (the street as well as the inner courtyard).

Finally, still in dialogue with Auguste Perret's architecture, this time of the order of the image, a set of photographs is arranged on the periphery of the main installation. These consist of shots of the interior of simple packaging boxes, which, once printed in the human and architectural scale, give the impression that they represent empty modernist or minimalist buildings. These images carve out space and form a *trompe-l'oeil*, yet their appearance is quickly questioned due to their constituent details as modest cardboards that served as subject or motif. Based on the 'effect of reality' proper to mimêsis, these image-objects complete the excavation of space and question our perception of scale and appearances.

exhibition view
Double Trouble, 2022
Palais d'Iéna, Paris, France
Tumulto (Iena), 2022
printed fabric and aluminum rails
variable dimensions

Conversation, 2022
printed fabric and aluminum frame
edition of 1 + 1 AP
243 x 100 x 100 cm
95.7 x 39.4 x 39.4 in
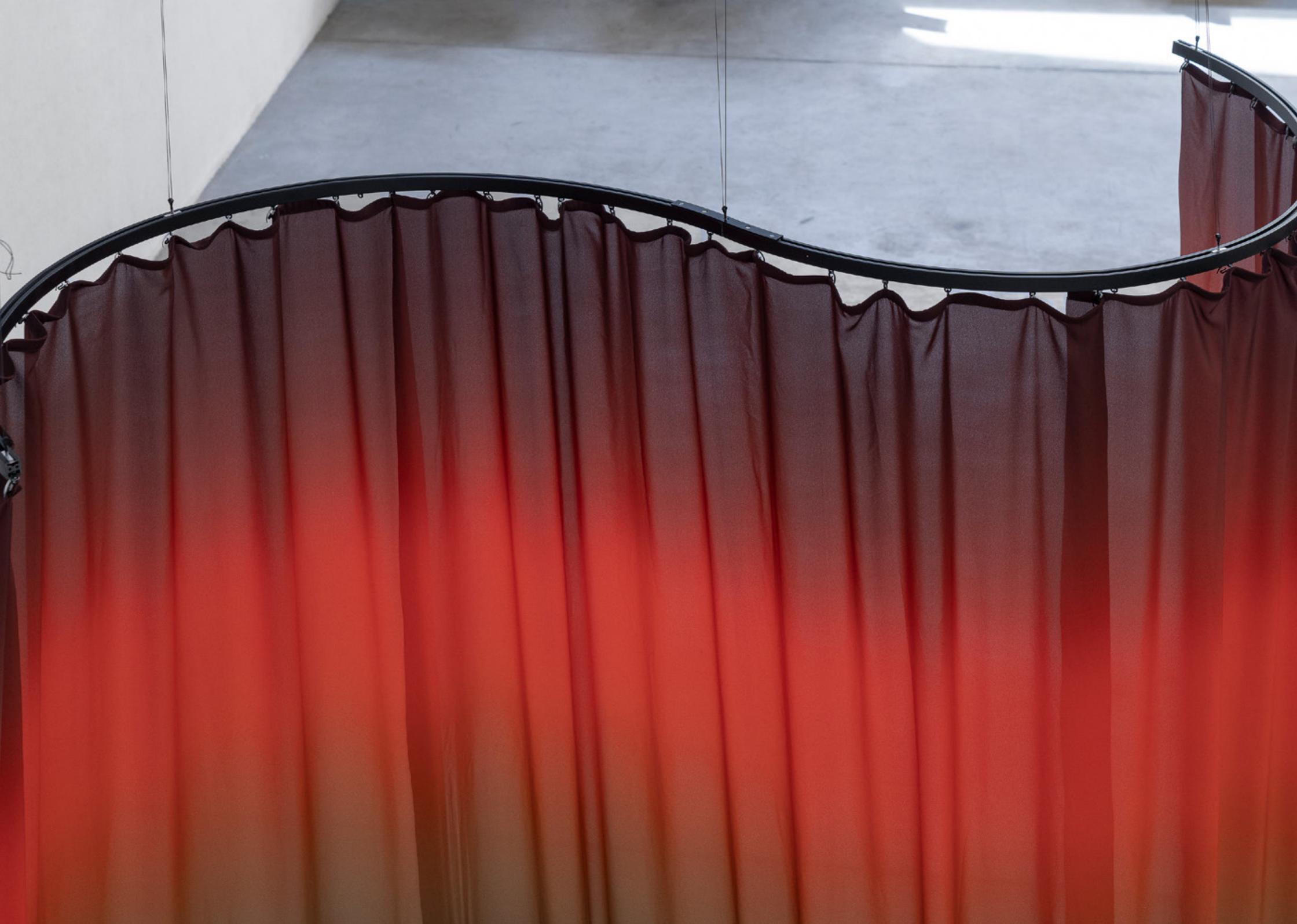
Sans fin, 2022
printed fabric and aluminum frame
edition of 1 + 1 AP
243 x 500 x 100 cm
95.7 x 196.9 x 39.4 in

fundos 2001–today

Lucia Koch began developing *Fundos* in 2001, through which she explores the architectural characteristics of everyday objects, photographing interiors of cardboard boxes used to package food, and drinks, amongst others. The inspiration for the series outcome from Koch's personal experience. 'When I had my own apartment for the first time, I almost had no furniture, so I used piled up cardboard boxes to keep my stuff, like a shelf. I found myself looking at them a lot. At the time I was making videos and I had this insight: that video turned everything flat, and I wanted to use that lack of depth. I kept thinking of making images of the bottoms of cans, bottles and boxes', tells Koch, revealing that she did not pursue the idea, due to the lack of technology for large-scale printing at the time.

installation view
PROPAGANDA, 2021
Instituto de Arte Contemporânea
de Inhotim, Brumadinho, Brazil
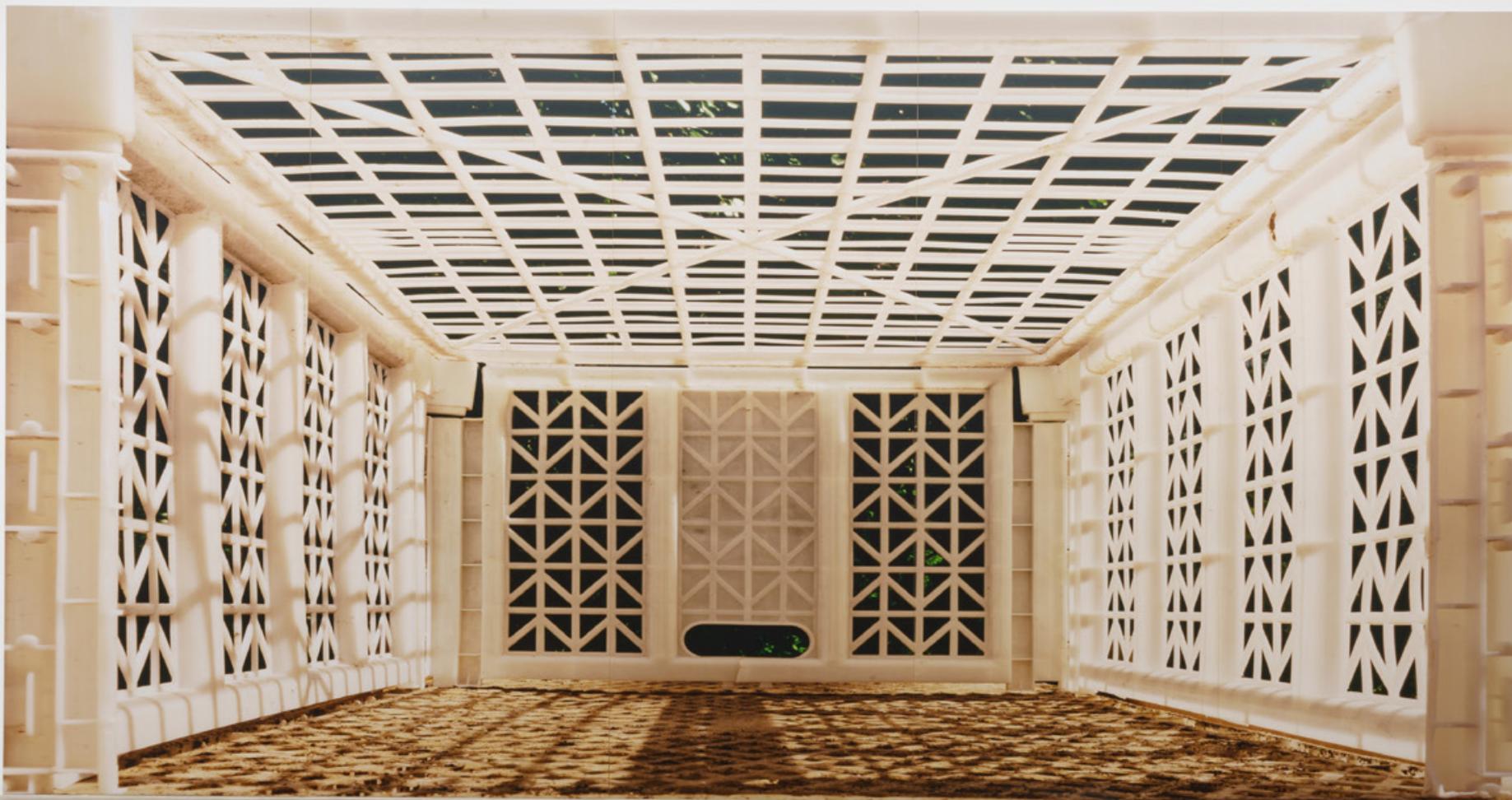
Frutas, 2021
c-print with matte lamination
edition of 6 + 2 AP
280 x 540 cm | 110.2 x 212.6 in

Only in 2001, with the arrival of print equipment capable of making the high-definition images, Koch returned to the project. This series of works, in production since then, was titled as *Fundos*. Each image has the same name as the product photographed: Tetra Pak, Tagliatelle, Cream Cracker, etc. The operation used in the title, then, is tautological and evokes the concrete reality of the product in opposition to the illusory effects brought by the perspective established by the photographic angle. An uncanny feeling arises when we face those familiar objects that present themselves under new perspectives, disturbing our perception.

Six vins, 2022
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 150 cm | 94.5 x 59.1 in

In the photographs, we face the emptiness
left by the product, which is no longer there
and which, in some way, previously gave
purpose to that packaging. Koch's aesthetic
operation, then, consists of transforming
the ordinary into extraordinary images.

Soba, 2022
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 120 cm | 94.5 x 47.2 in

When printed in large scale, the images appear to form virtual extensions of the spaces they occupy. In altering dimensions and playing with perspectival angles, the artist creates an imagined, or invented space, with the packaging's holes and openings reinforcing architectural illusion. 'By upsetting the expected hierarchy of scales between these objects and the surfaces occupied by their images in this series, Lucia Koch momentarily disassociates the photographs from their immediate references […]. But besides challenging our usual ways of relating with the space, these photographs also depend on an outside source of light to bring to life the dark inner corners of the boxes; [they] acquire meanings through light; meanings that cannot be fully expressed by mean other than the ones proper to the pieces themselves', wrote the curator Moacir dos Anjos.

Sans gluten, 2018
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 110 cm | 94.5 x 43.3 in

Fundos series brings together methods and fundamental questions in Koch's practice, which are based on the relationship between art and architecture and the use of banal objects to change our perception of spaces—virtual or real ones—, leading us to question the way we perceive our environment.

installation view
Spaghetti lená, 2022
pigment print on
cotton paper, UV matte
edition of 6 + 2 AP
240 x 110 cm | 94.5 x 43.3 in

lucia koch

b. 1966, porto alegre, brazil
lives and works in são paulo, brazil

Lucia Koch's works often engage with investigations around space and its possibilities, seeking to offer ways of understanding, experiencing and inhabiting it. By establishing a dialogue between her artworks and architectonic aspects present in the space they occupy, Koch reimagines and interferes with materiality, light, textures, colors and other tangential lines.

According to critic and curator Moacir dos Anjos, the artist 'reorganizes the understanding of visual spaces [...] and establishes an interaction with the public, through negotiating with uprooting perceptions and the disconcerting effect this causes'. Using light filters and textiles, Lucia plays with light and its chromatic effects, creating tensions between the inside and the outside, transparency and opacity, thus altering the nature of space.

Since 2001, Lucia Koch has been photographing the interior of carton boxes and empty packaging in such a way that they come to resemble architectural structures. Also playing with notions of perspective, once these images are hung on a wall, they seem to allow for an extension of the space they exist in. Koch also experiments with scale, where the typically small becomes enormous and seems to become inhabitable, raising the question of what turns space into place and uproots the norms that dictate our spatial expectations and experiences.

selected solo exhibitions
• *Casa de vento*, Casa de Vidro, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
• *A longa noite*, Sesc Pompéia, São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
• *La temperatura del aire*, Fundación Caja de Burgos, Burgos, Spain (2015)
• *Mañana, montaña, ciudad y Brotaciones*, Flora ars + natura, Bogota, Colombia (2014)
• *Cromoteísmo*, Capela do Morumbi, São Paulo, Brazil (2012)
• *Correções de luz*, Centro Universitário Maria Antonia (CeUMA), São Paulo, Brazil (2007)

selected group exhibitions
• 1st Rabat Biennial, Marocco (2019)
• *Fiction and Fabrication. Photography of Architecture after the Digital Turn*, Museu de Arte, Arquitetura e Tecnologia, Lisbon, Portugal (2019)
• 2th Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA (PST: LA/LA)—*Learning from Latin America: Art, Architecture and Visions of Modernism*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG), Los Angeles, United States (2017)
• *Cruzamentos: Contemporary Art in Brazil*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, United States (2014)
• 11th Lyon Biennial, France (2011)
• *When Lives Become Form*, Yerba Buena Center For Arts, San Francisco, United States (2009); Contemporary Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2008)
• 27th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2006)
• 8th Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2003)

selected collections
• J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, United States
• Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, Lyon, France
• Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
• Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, United States
• Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brasil

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