

An expansion of shelter

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Book of roofs is a conceptual project. It is virtual and at the same time, full of physicality. Its raw material is the clay roof tile, basic element in the construction of a shelter, roofs of our homes and our refuges of our imagination.

The work is an archive of histories, remembrances and collective memories, organized in the format of video-installations, with sculptures, sound and moving visual projections dealing with our basic necessity of being sheltered. It is also a live and interactive body, a webwork that poses questions, provokes and redefines the space that shelters the cyber world. In Book of Roofs, all these realities rise and articulate simultaneously, in the layers of the narratives peeled and revealed to the eyes and the gestures of the reader. Everything unfolds and reveals from an electronic panel, Turtle news that connects the external field, the city, from the internal field of art and life experiences, the shelter.

Book of roofs is a more ample discussion on our sense of dwelling. In the reality of our contemporary world, marked at one side by the technology of virtual addresses and, at the other side, by the misery of those that don't have homes, the ethnic wars that provoke a loss of sheltering, and migratory and clandestine movements, the notion of space, shelter, place loses an established geographic demarcation, one straggles from a fixed point and falls in the elastic net of uncertainties fertilized by globalization.

The roof tiles of Josely Carvalho are webs. Webs, because it retains a circular and growing shape, accompanying the constant search for shelter throughout our history. It moves spirally as the infinite; form a labyrinth in the way it opens windows exposing fragments and cracks of reality, interrupting the linear time and revealing a time in suspense, dense, unlimited as the possibilities that present themselves to the human experience.

Book of roofs is made up of accumulations. It deals with the symbolic and literal junctions of the diary pages that the artist builds, stubbornly and without untiringly since the start of her career. The work of Josely Carvalho is always based on her Diary of images. The primary source of her work, the diary is a repository of external perceptions and the place where they are negotiated internally and transformed in pungent artworks by the artist. In it, one can find, for example, the emblematic image of the turtle, symbol of the passing of time, of the history imprinted in the grooves of its shell, canvases of an alter-life that resonates and it expands to embrace the life of all of us. In the diary is Cirandas, an installation constructed from the real stories of street children and the children killed violently in Rio de Janeiro and Chicago.

Josely Carvalho doesn't dismiss or turn away from any experience. The project Book of roofs originated in the installation Codex: roofless, exhibited in 1997, at Paço das Artes, in São

Paulo. The work is comprised of the stacking of 3,000 clay roof tiles, shown in cylindrical form on the floor, alluding to the first shelters, indigenous homes. Its format also follows a disposition that facilitates its transportation from floor to roof. It equips the artwork with an extension of the construction worker's labor.

The title of the installation expands the reading possibilities. It attributes to “dos sem-teto” the character of tension construction. As a social denouncement, the work refers to the epic and indecent problem of shelter in Brazil, through a symbolic object that is the solution of the problem. Stacked roof tiles are metonyms of home, shelter. But they are also fragments of the construction of the artist's own stories.

Another installation incorporated by the artist is Xetá, shown first in 1998 at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. Through video language, the work re-tells her childhood memories in Paraná, when in the middle of the forests of Araucária pines, members of the indigenous group, Xetá, had habits still in the Stone Age. Today, the cattle graze on empty land, the tribe is extinct and the artist has heard that perhaps, one woman still lives today in a mental hospital.

Josely Carvalho incorporates all the experiences. In her artworks, we are invited to participate in the images, texts and subtexts of profound histories, built fundamentally in the shelters of memory. The strength of her work lies exactly in the pungency and in the manner by which she refuses to place it in one specific category.

The work of Josely Carvalho overflows, provokes, instigates everything and everyone. It elaborates in the confrontation between accumulation of experiences and the synthesis of an art that vindicates life. The physical and nomad shelter of a turtle, the lack of home for street children, the extinction of indigenous groups, the housing deficiencies, the problem of lack of satisfactory housing, the ethnic wars, the destruction of homes and the displacement of individuals without a fixed geography – all these realities are instruments of a synthetic and effervescent commentary about life itself. She speaks for herself and we become part of it.