

waltercio caldas

Exhibition from May 18th to June 30th, 2018

Opening on Thursday 17th of May from 6 to 9 p.m.

Rue des Sablons 6 & rue des Bains 61, 1205 Geneva

The Xippas Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition by the Brazilian artist Waltercio Caldas. Major figure of the latin American contemporary art scene, he is coming back to Geneva after more than 20 years - his work had been the subject of a personal exhibition at the Center of Contemporary Art in 1995 - with a set of sculptures made during these last years.

Waltercio Caldas started his artistic practice in the 1960s, a period marked by the Neo-Concrete movement. Neoconcrete artists rejected the pure rationalist approach of concrete art and embraced a more phenomenological and less scientific art.

“The minimum of physical material reveals the maximum latent spatial energy.”¹

Guy Brett, writer and curator, describes the work of Waltercio Caldas, who for more than five decades has placed the process of perception and the relations between the gaze and reflection at the heart of his work. Extremely pure and almost minimalist forms coexist with a conceptual complexity. His sculptures are both present and immaterial and show not so much the objects but rather the space between these objects.

Caldas pushes the paradox between presence and absence, and between transparency and opacity, to its extreme. This paradox is reinforced through a play on mirrors, a recurrent technique in his work. Here again, the artist develops the idea of reflection without actually employing mirrors. In creating several planes where lines and objects replace the reflections of one another, the artist reveals a three-dimension mirror and materialises the idea of reflection, a process he considers as a “functional dismantling of the mirror.”² Thus Caldas goes beyond the duality between presence and absence, positive and negative, and manages to reach a paradoxical fusion between a tangible reality and thought.

¹ Guy Brett, « Taking Liberties » in *Waltercio Caldas, in Conversations with / En Conversacion con Ariel Jimenez*, introduction by Guy Brett, Fundacion Cisneros, New York, 2016.

² Waltercio Caldas, *in Conversations with / En Conversacion con Ariel Jimenez*, introduction by Guy Brett, Fundacion Cisneros, 2016, New York, p.76.

Language plays a fundamental part in this process of constructing meaning. Because of this essential relation between names and objects, between what we see and what we read, the title becomes an integral part of Waltercio Caldas's work. Language introduces a new approach, that of reading, and also confers another dimension to the word – its physical presence. For instance, in *Not now* (2014), words and steel rods create an inseparable ensemble, enter into a game of repetitions, reflections and transparency. This use of language, both poetic and conceptual, also allows Caldas to introduce references to art history. The titles of his sculptures often allude to names of artists, such as *Brancusi* (2014), and trigger a reflection on the work of art itself, on the distance between art and art history.

Waltercio Caldas's sculptures, while displaying a rare visual fineness and using such an economy of means, invite the viewers to experience his/her own reading of the work, somewhere between an immediate comprehension and an intellectual interpretation. In the same line as Umberto Eco, who, more than fifty years ago in *The Open Work* (1962), argued that the viewer was now part of the creation process of an art work, Caldas wants to involve his viewer in the experience of interpretation and opens multiple possibilities of meanings. What matters when approaching his work, is the precise and enigmatic moment of perception revealing the work as a process, an echo to phenomenological thought which argued that the object only exists in the eye of the viewer.

Waltercio Caldas was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1946, where he still lives and works. His first solo exhibition took place at the Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro in 1973 when he was only 27. In 1990, he received the Brasilia Art Award at the Brasilia Museum of Art. Since then, numerous museums and art institutions have dedicated exhibitions to his work including the Kanaal Art Foudation in Kortrijk, Belgium (1991) ; the Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam, Netherlands (1992) ; The Contemporary Art Center of Geneva, Switzerland (1995) ; The National Museum of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2000) ; the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal (2008) ; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, United States (2013) ; the Institute of Contemporary Art of Sao Paulo, Brazil (2015), among others. He also represented Brazil at the 47th Venice Biennale (1997) and took part in the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007. He also participated to the Documenta 9 in Kassel (1992) and the 5th Mercosul Biennial (2005). His works have been acquired by major collections throughout the world: Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris, France), the Museum of Modern Art (New York, United States), the National Gallery of Art (Washington, United States), the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo and the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), among others. His monumental public installations are present in numerous countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Spain, Norway, Germany.