

Paulo Pires do Vale**LISTEN TO THE WALLS**

*All of you undisturbed cities,
haven't you ever longed for the enemy?*

Rainer Maria Rilke

*Wall, what are you pondering
along the road, through these farms,
houses, hermitages, among the
the soul-passions of ghosts,
those present and those to come?*

Fiama Hasse Pais Brandão

AN ORIGINAL SCENE?

The work of art is always a precedent. It is an inaugural point, a beginning it does not derive from anything else; other things derive from it. It is the companion at the first man - he who is reborn in front of it. Continually. In this anterior state the chaos of birth and childhood reigns, before reason comes to divide and to dominate.

Words detach themselves from the work, fruits that are more or less ripe. Even the words of the artists. They are a consequence. Excess. They are not alien to it because, if they are right, their source is the work. But they are not it. Surplus. For this reason, this catalogue begins with the images. The discourse comes later. And even Ana Viera's account¹ of the daily, repeated opening of the doors in the *sheltering walls* of the family farm in São Miguel is a *post-work*. You may correct me: ultimately, it is the narrative of an event that took place *prior* the existence of the work. No. It is the work that creates it. In the same way that children give birth to their parents. Or the *strong authors*, looking backwards structure their genealogy.²

In this narrative, we are not revisiting the history of the artist's childhood but a *story* - and this is also a *work*. This memory-scene is now reinterpreted on the basis of the works that were created later. On the basis of this present time that confers meaning on it and transforms it into the *first work*.

Each work of art has the power to enact the "absolute absorption of the precursor"³. For this reason, the author's biography does not concern the works at all⁴. Its *origin* is of the order of the timeless and the unrepresentable. The *original scene*⁵ to which we have access is therefore the work itself. And it is also untameable. It does not allow orthodox discourses. To anyone. Not even the artist, who does not exist before it and who it throws to death at the moment when everything is consummated. The creation abjures the creator. And the critic is always judged - the work is the untouched judge.

SHELTERING WALLS

However solid it may be, a wall is always a membrane - like art, according to the artist⁶. A border. With or without doors, it always points to *another* side. Whether this is known or not. But it is this *other* that it announces in the act of hiding. Even if it is never revealed. The reverse of the visible. And therefore a *ghost* that is already present. What they hide, or leave at a distance, the *unseen*, appears through the wall. Even when

there are no open doors, it is already a passage.

The existence of *another side* to the wall resituates us: the reverse of the reverse is where we are. Being inside, an outside exists; outside, an inside is announced. By some means or other, we come to be the other of the other. The wall is therefore the fold between two. The stage of a *drama* - not of a *tragedy*. Double polarity: interior and exterior, present and absent, visible and invisible, seeing and being-seen, accessible and inaccessible, traversal and opacity, public and private⁷. A place of phenomenological reversibility. This is the stage of Ana Vieira's *dramatic* work: the presentation of a *crisis*.

ART OF THE EXIT FROM ART

Since the beginning, Ana Vieira's work has been marked not only by her lack of belief in painting - the discipline that the artist studied in Belas Artes - but also by her questioning of the power and impotence of the work of art. The works which open this catalogue and exhibition are proof of this. The gateway to this *world of crisis*. A painter who refuses to paint. A sculptor who announces absence in space, withdrawing or driving us away.

In *Ambiente*, created in 1971, she presents us with the funeral rites for "plinthable" art. On the plinth, in the inaccessible centre of the work, glimpsed through netting, there is a reproduction of the *Venus de Milo*, now just a ruin, a fragment of the *Religion of Art*. It is surrounded by empty chairs that are far from us and far from the work that they are concealing. Refusing all supposed certainty and transparency, Ana Vieira erects walls and forbids us from entering and sitting on those chairs: the works (all of them?) are impenetrable. And, for that reason, the complex-ity of this artist's work is revealed, with greater insolence, in its relation to the international artistic context: the active participation of the spectator, so desired by contemporary artists, is questioned. A deposit of insolence against the insolent.

This feeling/thought of crisis is also clearly formulated in 1977, when she places Manet's *Dejeuner sur l'Herbe*, a seminal work of modern art, at our feet. Now it is a picnic towel, desecrated, humiliated, drained of its untouchable status. Stripped of its *aura*. But, despite that, we are not participating in it either. We remain on the outside.

The emptying will be literal in the marks left by the Greco-Roman busts and heads in their exile: empty places. Of something that has withdrawn. They become objects in *minus*⁸. With a *saturated* absence. Or like the skin of a deformed face, without any content to sustain it. A mask without a face, dissolving, deflating. Depriving itself of itself. That which, in a subject, would equate to a process of desubjectivisation: to withdrawing through powerlessness and, at the same time, being obliged to remain in order to watch and bear witness to its ruin.⁹

The artist patiently constructs a fragile frame for the void. We therefore find a *kenotic* movement in Ana Vieira's work, an *emptying*, similar to the concept of Christian kenosis in Pauline theology.¹⁰ What we see here is the emptying of artistic sacredness. *Art of the exit from art*.¹¹ This process has been underway since the early twentieth century, and is evident in the artistic world of the 1960s and 70s, when Ana Vieira began working: the revolt against the plinth and the frame. Opposing the consecrated work, which is closed and remote from existence, claiming back a living, shared art; shared not only in its reception but also in its production. But her heart, as we have said, is the art of the *exit*. From traditional disciplines and media. From concepts and expectations. Even from the artistic dogmas of her contemporaries: her work *refuses* itself.

THE OPEN WINDOW-BODY

Two drawings that she did while still at the Escola de Belas Artes already reveal a preoccupation with *reflection* and *traversal*: the mirror and the X-ray. Because the former has already been explored in depth by other writers¹², I will focus on the latter.

On a sheet of paper, pieces of torn and pasted silk paper form a human figure. Strangely, a rectangle that would hide this man's torso reveals his insides to us. As in an X-ray. And in it we see what we should never see. As Hans Castorp realised, in amazement, when confronted with what he was *given to see* in an X-ray, and which made him recall the strange gift, or curse, of a dead relative: "This gift enabled him to see, in front of his eyes, the skeleton of people who were shortly going to die".¹³ And Castorp, who is violently moved by being able to see what he saw through that machine - a *magic window* - tried looking at his hand through it and "saw something that he expected to see, but which, in fact, no man should see (...): *he saw inside his own tomb*"¹⁴. It was through his aunt's eyes that Hans saw the bones in his hand and his future. Or rather, his mortal present.

Even stranger than the traversal of the body, in Ana Vieira's student drawing, is that what would be *inside*, part of the skeleton revealed by the X-ray, seems to have become autonomous, being already somewhere other than in the X-rayed space. It moves it, and thickens the void. And, before us, the intuitive thematising of what she is going to continue to develop emerges: confrontations between interior and exterior, transparency and opacity, presence and absence. The opening and closing of doors and windows. Creating inaccessible spaces and indicating others. Allowing us to glimpse and still hiding. And a permanent changeability of these poles.

In the apparently childish drawing, the void and the devastation at the heart of the work is also indicated - that which would come to be. What will be revealed is not an iconoclastic hatred of the visible. Rather, it is a questioning of what can and should be seen, of what it is to see, by drawing attention to *unseeing*. Rather than revealing the invisible (as Klee and Kandinsky intended), Ana Vieira creates in order to make us *un-see*. *Letting us see the un-seeing*. And erecting obstacles in order to bring down those that we are carrying in the form of the optimistic and illusory prejudice of total vision.

GIVING RISE TO UNSEEING

Ana Vieira's work erects a *wall* against contemporary *iconocracy*, as defined by Marie-José Mondzain: "the empire of images of spirits and of bodies"¹⁵. And for this reason she is approaching, step by step, in-visibility and the demand for effort and the use of mediators and devices intended to optimise vision: the lantern and the magnifying glass. She seems to be telling us that seeing is very difficult"¹⁶.

"What is it to see? What is it to say what we see? What is it to make someone see? Who says what it is necessary to see?"¹⁷ The questions with which Marie-José Mondzain begins *Le commerce des regards* are useful here in entering Ana Vieira's work. The artist offers an intuitive response, which in some way corresponds to that of the French philosopher: what we see is seen through a curtain that allows it to be seen, and which makes it impossible to see other things. It draws us closer and pushes us away. A *symbolic net* (E. Cassirer), a filter that modifies the world; or rather, which creates it. An invisible curtain that structures our horizon; the way in which we inhabit and orient ourselves in the world. On this net, as in *Ambientes* and *Caixas*, effective and phantasmagoric objects, memories, and desires are present. This net is the invisible of the visible.¹⁸ Thus, what refuses to be seen, the non-visible, is the condition governing the possibility of what is seen_ It is not, therefore, the absent. It is the

immanent, which, at one time, surrounds us, penetrates us, and leaves us outside - because we are not in control. Here, the invisible is most present and disturbing: it changes the world, rendering impossible or enabling perceptions and experiences. It is the matrix of vision. And this is not an individual construction, *but it shares in the act of looking*. As Mondzain has written: "The image can be constructed only in an act of *seeing together*"¹⁹. We never see alone. We see through the eyes of others, and artists play an essential role here.²⁰ This commonplace-web which makes it possible to see is the mediating wall of visibility. But it refuses the act of looking.

WALL-REFUSAL

The wall is a form of refusal. Of restriction. Just as the work's essence is *refusing itself*²¹.

In Ana Vieira's work, this *resistance* is announced as early as the 1960s, in the absences of the figures cut out of wood and made present in the space; or in the recurring use of mirrors which reflect whoever is looking (in a way that pertains to opacity), placing the spectator in its interior; in *Ambiente*, in the mourning surrounding the reproduction of the Venus de Milo, which is doubly removed from us (double netting), in the sound, in a dining room or antechamber, that points to a presence that cannot be confirmed by the eyes; in the *Janelas* (windows) which look at us rather than "looking" outwards, and which allow something to be seen inside, hiding so much; in the moulded absences of objects, moulds of the *abandoner* who thus remains a *negative*; in the plasters that are fragments or ruins of the walls of disappeared and unknown houses; in the suspended and emptied cloaks which are still *Pronomes* (pronouns) but are already ghosts; in the white panels that make the photographic images face the wall, hiding them, so that we will only see parts of them, in mirrors, refusing an easy relationship, in the *Casa desabitada* (Uninhabited house) occupied by ghostly images that withdraw and refuse proximity; in the benches and chairs which refuse to be useful, being little more than suspended white memories, disintegrating; in the darkness of the hall that requires a lantern to see-read the works and find the *Chaves* (keys), and in the minute, illegible writing of the phrases that require a magnifying glass to *see through* ...

These works are presented in *the mode of refusal*. As happens in the plan of the house drawn on the ground (*Ocultação/desocultação*), which is open and empty and which we are forbidden from entering. We can move around, circulate, and read what the person who wishes to inhabit it wants to do at some point in the future (which, therefore, is still non-existent). But it is not ours. And what could be worse than an open space that is forbidden to us? A false opening, which is refused and becomes lost in the prohibition. It refuses to be experienced by the body, because it is not only the eyes that see but also the body.

In contrast to this absolute opening of the plan of *Ocultação/desocultação*, which is absolute negation, we find the windows and doors to be either closed or ajar: in this semi-(closure) a world opens up. The indetermination suspends and liberates. And, through the chinks or window panes, we find the unexpected²².

TERRITORY

An important characteristic of Ana Vieira's work is the way that she marks out territories. Delimiting. Even when it opens up to travel, it is the table that is the territory - *Mesa-paisagem*, which transfigures the meal into a voyage by sea around the world during which the travellers remain seated in a room. Or even the territory

sketched by dream or memory between the netting-walls of *Ambientes*. An imposition or awareness of the limits. Which are revealed to be unstable, because what is inside is *missing*. And what is outside is absorbed into its interior. The prison is negated, safety is called into question: the de-definitions might not be. Do the birds escape the cage? Do the shadows in the window dream about what is outside, or do they look inside, at the interior? The territory opens up and becomes limitless.

Made in our image (or are we made in theirs?) the works also open up and close, like our bodies²³. This opening becomes evident when the artist modifies photographic images, making them “emerge” from the medium, breaking windows in which the panes can be seen; opening doors with the violence of an unrestrained explosion; scratching and introducing objects; or *showing through* walls. And *Corredor* which allows us to enter and participate, confirms as an exception what we previously presented as a rule: prohibition. A space of moulded, constructed void through which to pass. An initiatory space. A passage, an exit, an entrance. And the most precise understanding of the essential importance of the body in all of this artist’s work - only through the body do we see the world: and the mirrors that reflect us, the obstacles that lift us up, and the prohibitions and the demand for mobility and deviations, permanently reveal the body that understands itself as a body. And heightened self-awareness in contact with the bodies that leave.

Ana Vieira’s works are *anchoretic*²⁴. Not because they *withdraw* from contact with others, but because they seem to have withdrawn from themselves. They are gifts in the *mode of loss*. In abandonment, in retreat. In exile. Which is not the Void or Nothing - with its mystical absoluteness - but rather the feeling of something that has been lost.

THE POETICS OF LOSS: THE WORK OF THE NEGATIVE

In Ana Vieira, the work of the negative²⁵ is the necessary counterpoint to the illusory transparency of the work. It negates itself in a fading away and disappearance that appears: negation is *underway* in the work. It is *lack* as an engine which is revealed in a *poetics of loss* the materialisation of the Brechtian suspicion “*Aber etwas fehlt*”²⁶.

Something is missing. What has got lost or never came into being? Past-memory or future-utopia? In any case, there is disquiet and uneasiness. Strangeness introduced into the world - because it is what it is; only we introduce what is missing: the staging of the void is the artist’s work. And it is possible to recognise our void when we see it mirrored in the void of the work. The difficult understanding of the *co-absence* that is immanent in us.

Faced with the emptied work, we are the co-absent: it is not co-presence that we are experiencing, but that which is also absence in us. As the French dramatist Valère Novarina has written, “we are flesh around a hole, surrounding it, and the hole is not in front of us (like, for example, a tomb into which it would be necessary to fall one day in order to reach an end point) but in us, inside, and we are not the ones for whom the future is nothing - that is the fate of the animals - but the ones who carry it inside them. Not those to whom nothing is promised (like a future that awaits us) but those to whom it has already been given as something that is inside our words. Here. Of all the animals, we are the only ones who have this hole to fill”²⁷. We carry the negative and we introduce it into the world. We are assumed omission. Man is an “animal endowed with absence”²⁸. Like the actor, we perform on the edge of the hole that we are carrying.

Valère Novarina’s dramatic thought contains a strategy that we also find in Ana Vieira’s work: disappearance in appearing. As the French dramatist wrote in his advice for actors: “Before going on stage, eat the flesh of the void! You will never be an actor

if you do not use destruction as a guide. Your own first. You will never dance well if you do not destroy all of your dance when you dance, while you are dancing. Why? Because everything was destroyed at the same time as it was created and because there is a motion, still unknown to physics, which causes all things to enter at the same time as they disappear. The being was born withdrawing from itself: and only for this reason does it appear. The world was created and destroyed on the same day”²⁹.

If the actor pierces the world with the word, the artist introduces it by carving. He mixes up the absence between the things. He creates openings, which are also a wound in the body of the work. The introduction of a flaw. A radical dehiscence. Which is first experienced as a barrier, as a wall.

LIVING WALL

The wall is essential to the work. A barrage against the alienating daily reality: it creates a shock and suspends reality, the habit that domesticates and falsifies life. Friedrich Schiller used the expression *lebendige Mauer* - living wall - in order to characterise this ability of the work, which in this case was Greek tragic theatre. And Nietzsche used it again in *The Birth of Tragedy*: “Schiller was also right to see in these matters the start of tragic art: the chorus is a living wall against the pounding reality, because it - the satyr chorus - presents existence more genuinely, truly, and completely than does the civilized person, who generally considers himself the only reality”³⁰.

The tragic chorus, in its strangeness, appears as a protective *human wall* that allows the tragedy to occur whole, in poetic freedom. A barricade in the war against “naturalism in art”, the “servile imitation of reality”. The work is fiction. A construction. A lie, reality will say, but one which will allow us to get closer to life laid bare. This *distancing* which the work of art introduces between us and reality, this splitting of the real from itself, this withdrawal, is what allows a new meaning to open up. A door. And in this movement, the mediation, the barrier, transforms itself, unexpectedly, into a passage. It is a wall that offers us the key and an un-fore-seen door³¹.

Being a withdrawal, it takes place at the heart of the world - it is not an escape to a world apart, but a crack in this horizon of possibilities in which we move³². A withdrawal that prepares the return³³. Transgression and reconstitution.

THE PROBLEM OF DWELLING: TEMPORARY SHELTERS

The work withdraws from the real in order to return to it more powerfully. It is therefore a temporary withdrawal. The work is a sort of *temporary shelter*, inhabited on a transitory basis. It cannot be a permanent dwelling. It therefore makes us nomads. Unfinished. It encourages travel - even when sitting down to a meal. Unsatisfied. It always imposes a form of destruction of what has already been acquired: and how many times is destruction necessary? Seventy times seven, Ana Vieira’s work seems to say. And Valère Novarina, her brother, writes: “Man is the only animal who periodically asks to be destroyed. This is what he is: an idol who always wants to pull his own head off. This is the way man’s violence always erupts, reappears, always breaks out, first as violence against himself. The human face wants to disappear, to become dust. The human face periodically asks for dust”³⁴.

Ana Vieira also pulls off heads and torsos and makes them disappear. She casts “major works” into the dust. Art, like man, requires the recurring destruction of the usual idols. For all of these reasons, her work makes us balance, on top of the wall, between two poles, such as those described by Ruy Belo in *O problema da habitação*

between “joy is a rebuilt house”³⁵ and “joy is a demolished house”³⁶. And while “a house is the most serious thing in life”³⁷, the poet dedicates this book to a nomad.

SILENCE ISLAND

Ana Vieira’s work takes steps towards the blank space, and seems to want to switch off our light - and it does switch off. A switching off, a dis-appearance. In a wisdom shared with Saint John of the Cross, for whom visions were for beginners, she comes close to *denying images* because visions, and discourses, only occupy “the surface of the spirit”³⁸.

If, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed, it was on islands that human language emerged³⁹, it is also on islands that one can remain silent. Enrique Vila-Matas, when asked about the landscape that would correspond to his book *Bartleby & Co.* - that book of footnotes on silence to which some writers, such as Bartleby⁴⁰, refer; a book about the literature of refusal and the labyrinth of No, the Spanish author replied:

“Regarding the landscape, let’s say that if it is true that all books correspond to a real landscape, that of this diary would be the landscape found in Ponta Delgada on the Azores Islands.

Because of the blue light and the azaleas that separate the fields from each other; the Azores are blue There is no doubt that remoteness is the magic of Ponta Delgada, that strange place where, one day, I discovered in a book by Raúl Brandão, in As ilhas desconhecidas, the landscape where the last words, when their time comes, will come to rest; I discovered the blue landscape that will welcome the last writer and the world’s last word, that which will intimately die there: ‘Here, words end, here the world that I know ends...’⁴¹.

The work is an intruder. It erects walls, opens doors, and reveals itself to be the enemy inside the walls: that which casts doubt on the safety of all invincible Troys. An enemy that we secretly yearn for: it brings the silence of a world that opens up, fresh, terrifying and magnificent. Listen. The work has the un-for-see-able power of making us the first man.”

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FOOTNOTES

1 Story narrated by the artist in this catalogue.

2 Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973. Bloom cites Kierkegaard: “He who is willing to work gives birth to his own father”. In this respect, rather than being the child of its time, the work of art is the mother of

an era (Schiller), of our feelings (Kandinsky), and of life itself - that plagiarist (Wilde).

3 Expression used by Harold Bloom to describe the creative/destructive power of Shakespeare in relation to the writers that preceded him. Ibidem.

4 Although they are always autobiographical: manifestations of unique, historically situated individuals -and it is only from this profound uniqueness that the tendentiously universal power of the work can result.

5 Concept used by Freud in the renowned analysis *From the History of a Childhood Neurosis*, better known as the Wolf Man, cf Sigmund Freud, *Cinq Psychanalyses*. Paris: PUF - 2008; pp.498ss. This is the account of a story in which the window plays a decisive role, and which it is necessary to highlight in an Ana Vieira exhibition. In the dream which this patient relates to Freud, and which began when he was between three and five years old, he is lying in bed one winter's night when the window suddenly opens of its own accord, and in front of the window he sees a tree in which six or seven white wolves are sitting in the branches. The anxiety of being devoured by wolves makes him cry out and wake up, startled. The patient commented: "the only action in the dream is that of the window opening (...)". And he added an interpretation: "this must mean that my eyes opened suddenly, as I am sleeping and I awaken and I see something: the tree with the wolves". (p.525). And Freud adds: he was given to see something, "the fact of looking attentively, which is attributed to the wolves in the dream, is displaced to himself. At a decisive point, an inversion took place (...)".(p.525). This inversion is fundamental: the observer and the observed change places, what sees and what is seen changes. The window is the eye. This dream is not the "primitive scene" but its activation and a way of reaching that original significant experience, which we are not concerned with developing here. When Maurice Blanchot takes up Freud's expression (*Une scene primitive?*), he adds to it the article and the parentheses, and subsequently the question mark, to avoid falling into reductive Freudian hermeneutics. "Freud searches for the event that will connect everything. Blanchot for the point that will inaugurate the artwork and render it interminable" Kevin Hart, *The Dark Gaze*, Chicago/London: The Chicago University Press - 2004; p.64. In Blanchot's text, a boy also looks through a *window* at the garden and says: "nothing is what it is" - and cries with joy.

6 "Art is always a sort of passage to the inner world. It plays with the exterior and with the interior. Above all, it is always a membrane, and a passage" - interview with RTP-Acores, 2009.

7 "Only the houses explain that there exists a word like intimacy

Without houses there would be no streets

the streets where we pass by others

but we mainly pass by ourselves".

Ruy Belo, *Todos os poemas*, Lisbon, Assírio e Alvim, 2000, p.212.

8 Different from Pistoletto's *minus objects*. Cf. Michelangelo Pistoletto, *A minus artist*. Firenze: Hopeful Monster -1988.

9 This would equate to the *profound shame* analysed by Giorgio Agamben in G. Agamben, *Quel che resta di Auschwitz* -1998; English translation *Remnants of Auschwitz: the witness and the archive*, MIT Press - 2002.

10 Philippians 2, 6-7: "Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity". Emptiness (*Kenosis*) or annihilation. Later, Paul uses the word *humiliation*.

11 Paraphrase in which I rewrite the expression that Marcel Gauchet uses to define Christianity: "La religion de la sortie de la religion" in Marcel Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde*. We will leave the articulation and development of this theme for a future

essay. The Incarnation dethrones the experience of a remote, untouchable God on his pedestal; exile brings him closer, God-with-us, no longer separated (like the ancient sacred) but related.

12 Cf the anthology of critical texts on Ana Vieira's work at the end of this catalogue.

13 Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*. Trad. H.T Lowe-Porter. Vintage - 2009. (My italics). A profound analysis of this passage can be found in the chapter *Limiar* in Tomas Maia's book *Assombra. Ensaio sobre a origem da imagem*. Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim - 2003; pp.157ss.

14 Ibidem.

15 Mondzain, *Le commerce des regards*. Paris: Seuil - 2003; p.17.

16 In this respect, all of Alberto Caeiro's work is a (failed, like a good tragic hero?) effort to reach this *seeing* (without thinking). For this reason, it is necessary to unlearn and tear away the paint with which the senses have been painted. Alberto Caeiro, *Poemas*. Lisbon: Ed. Ática - 1997; p. 50. pp.68-69.

17 Marie José Mondzain, *Le commerce des regards*, p. 9.

18 The "invisible canvas on which visibilities are arranged". Marie-José Mondzain, *Le commerce des regards*, p. 9.

19 Mondzain, *Le commerce des regards*, p.18. *This sharing of seeing* can also, enigmatically, be found in Velazquez's work *Las meninas*, which Ana Vieira admires so much: it is there in the absent window through which the light enters; the mirror on the wall at the back of the studio, which no one represented in the painting sees, and which reflects what is outside of the frame and would be in the place where we are: King Philip IV of Spain and III of Portugal, and Queen Mariana of Austria, the door beside the mirror, which opens onto a lighted corridor, a point of escape and exit, on the left hand side, the back of the canvas, which is denied to us and which we cannot see, and behind it the painter who paints himself with his brush in his hand, and who inclines his head, wanting to gaze at us in order to paint us; the divergent gazes of the people depicted, the works of other masters, his predecessors, on the wall of the artist's studio - the gaze of tradition; and the spectator, who becomes the centre of the action: seeing and being-seen A net that leaves no one outside it. Where the visible and the invisible intersect. And it is precisely an *omission* that is revealed in it, an "essential void" in the representation, the "necessary disappearance of that which creates it", of a central object which is not there but is invisible, or looked at, or reflected: us, the monarchs, power? In Ana Vieira's work it is also *what is missing* that interests her and proclaims: something is missing, cfr Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses*. Paris: Gallimard - 2009. pp. 19-31.

20 In his lectures on aesthetics, Hegel cites a passage from Goethe which describes how he sees the inside of his shoemaker's house through the eyes of the painter Von Ostade, some of whose works he had seen in the museum that day. *See under the influence*: cf Hegel, *Lectures on Aesthetics*. Oxford OUP- 1975.

21 cf Alain Bonfand, *L'expérience esthétique à l'épreuve de la phénoménologie. La tristesse du roi*. Paris: PUF, 1995, p.14ss.

22 While the windows in renaissance painting open outwards, towards the landscape, those of Ana Vieira make us look at the inside - of the images and ourselves. As Baudelaire writes: "He who looks out through an open window never sees as many things as he who looks at a closed window. There is no object more profound, more mysterious, more fertile, more terrifying, or more fascinating than a window illuminated by a candle". Charles Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris*, poème XXXV.

23 George Didi-Huberman, *L'image ouverte. Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*. Paris: Gallimard, 2007, p.30. *The opening of the image is a metaphor for spiritual interiority*, but here the "open image" is not just a metaphor.

24 From the Greek *anakhôrein*: to withdraw.

25 The expression “Arbeit des Negativen” occurs in G.W.F.Hegel, *Werke 3. Phanomenologie des Geistes*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp -1986, p 24, trad francesa *Phénoménologie de l'esprit*. Trad. J. Hyppolite. Paris: Aubier - 1995; p.18. *The work of the negative* is the expression that summarises, in Hegelian thought, the essential active presence of the negative in the structure of the work and in the development of the spirit. For Hegel, negativity is the driving force behind the patient manifestation of Truth in History. A necessary mediation.

26 “But something is missing”, something is missing, a statement made by the character Jimmy Mahoney in the opera with libretto of Bertolt Brecht and the music of Kurt Weil, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*.

27 Valère Novarina, *Para Louis de Funès*, in *Artistas Unidos, Revista*, no. 19, July 2007, p.48. For more on this author, read Rodrigo Silva, “Técnicas de (des)habit(u)ação - uma abertura” in *Cadernos Ista*, no. 21 – *Em questão*, Lisbon: Ed. Instituto S.Tomás de Aquino - 2009, p.45-59.

28 Valère Novarina, *Para Louis de Funès*, p 45.

29 *Ibidem*, p.47. “to be an actor is not to enjoy appearing; it is to really enjoy disappearing”. *Ibidem*, p.45.

30 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, Kritische Studienausgabe, Band I, herausgegeben von Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari Deutscher Taschen buch Verlag. München/Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter - 1999, p 54. English translation Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy*. Dover Publications Inc. - p.37. (our italics).

31 There are images that seem familiar to us and that later reveal themselves to be inaccessible; there are also those that are experienced as “an insurmountable obstacle, a bottomless opacity”, and, suddenly, they reveal themselves before us, they open up and suck us inside them, cf G.Didi-Huberman, *L'image ouverte*. p.25.

32 “The sphere of poetry does not lie beyond this world as the fantastic impossibility of a poet’s brain. It wants to be exactly the opposite, the unadorned expression of the truth, and it must therefore cast off the false costume of that truth thought up by the man of culture”. Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke...*, p.54. English translation. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p.37.

33 In the *Tenth of his Letters on aesthetic education*, Schiller states that “whoever does not dare to abandon reality will never manage to conquer the truth”. F. Schiller, *Kallias*. On the *Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*. Dover Publications. New York - 1990; p.193. And this abandonment, this exile, is possible through the mediation of the work of art: it facilitates a comparison between the concept disguised by culture as *reality* and what life is in its raw *truth*. This is a theory that, in other terms, would be echoed in Paul Ricoeur’s interpretation of the essentialness of *distancing*: “the broader the withdrawal, the more lively is the return to the real”. The work is therefore the (de) construction that, according to Nietzsche, would make possible the reencounter with the Dionysian, because “life, at bottom, despite the variability of appearances, remains imperturbably powerful and full of joy”. Nietzsche, *The Birth...*, p.75. Through it, the abolition of the abyss between men becomes possible, whether the abyss be political, social, civilizational... Thus the *living wall* is a form of separation that leads to a union: an immediate blindness on which is overlaid a clear visibility. But this would not be possible without the first refusal.

34 Novarina, pp.46-47.

35 Ruy Belo, *Todos os poemas I*. Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim - 2000, p.137.

36 *Ibidem*, p.145.

37 *Ibidem*, p.137.

38 On this subject, read the comparison between the euphoria of the image in Santo Inácio de Loyola and the rubbing out of the images required by Saint John of the Cross in R. Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loiola*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press 1997.

39 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, - 1999.

40 cf Herman Melville, *Bartleby*. Penguin Books Ltd. -1995- And Bartleby also has his *window* and at the end of his refusal, he does nothing more than to stand in front of that window which opens onto a blind wall.

41 Enrique Vila-Matas, *Bartleby and Co*. Editorial Anagrama S.A 2000.