

**António Rodrigues, 1998**  
**THE HOUSE SKY**

“The first objects by Ana Vieira date from 1967 and materialise the spatial setting of emptiness and the transitory nature of the image. The procedure questioned image and representation, approaching the close and very diverse concern of the shadows by Lourdes de Castro, the transparencies of Noronha da Costa and Pistoletto’s “real perception of the contingent”; artists who interested Ana Vieira at the time.

Pieces such as “A Senhora M.M.T.S.” (The Lady M.M.T.S.) or “Efígie Transitória” (Transitory Effigy) integrate the mirror so that, based on the play of reflections and symmetries, the space affirms itself in the virtual plane. These are not images of anyone, as the pseudo-identifying title “A Senhora M.M.T.S.” stresses, but images of themselves, with their dialectical sense of the hidden and the displayed. An emptied silhouette and at the same time the shadow that replaces it, “A Senhora M.M.T.S.” does not deny the image, but rather reworks it as a contour or ephemeral occupation of the space. The shadow painted on the mirror is blue. The same blue appears in many of Ana Vieira’s works. It is that monochordic blue which creates distance.

Ana Vieira has brought these emptied images to the space itself, in the series of objects in her first one-woman show (installation-environment), in 1968, which materialised the movements and positions of absent figures. Residues of the occupation of the space by the living body, that which runs, walks, sits or reclines. The space crosses these white objects, that are seen as fragments of walls (un)occupied and crossed by beings of this world. Shadows, we might call them, but more than negative images of those anonymous beings, they affirm that the shadow is a residence.

From the shadow as a house, as shelter for the body, Ana Vieira moved onto the primordial image of the residence, the house, in a first series of environments that she presented in 1971, 1972 and 1972-1973.

The first simulates a dining room - the ritualistic place of the house - with the table laid and the sounds of people at it, and this process of *mise en scène* leaves no illusions about the virtuality of the object-space at the same time as it guarantees a dimension of excess.

Here the space is everything and it is that which stirs the memory. This is the dream house that exists in each one of us, a memory-imagination house. This is not about inhabiting a house through memory but about living in that disappeared house as we once dreamt. The transparent nets, with their shadows of objects and furniture, lead the observer, forced to remain outside and in the act of peeping appropriate to a voyeur, to the middle of the room. In other words, to the laid table. To put it better, to the centre of the reverie Ana Vieira works on the basis of reverie which requires solitude and melancholy without reason for its imaginary actions.

In the second environment produced, in 1972, the transparency of the white nets directs the eye, once again to the centre of the “lounge”, constituted by a reproduction of the Venus de Milo, protected by identical transparent nets, around which chairs are lined up in uniform black. Black on white, here traditional art and its mechanisms of representation and reception are rejected; without, however, programmatic paragons but rather in a subtle theatrical game of the dislocation of the pieces.

The object-environment, in its false similarity to traditional sculpture or playing with this similitude, is only penetrable by the eye. The sculpture we are taken to consider, however, is a copy of a work of art which as well as being one of the most celebrated has also become one of the most banal through reproduction. The distance

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established is double here. The distance in relation to the observer who remains outside, not to stand still contemplating the work but to walk around it, watching it to the limits of its visibility. The chairs arranged around the four sides of the object set up this mortuary look of the observer of fine arts. The distance in relation to Art, that remains inside, musefied in its isolation as a Fine Arts' object, the prisoner of the voracity of the absent looks, imposing its empty presence on the emptiness created around it.

Ana Vieira once again rejected traditional artistic means with the installation "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe 77", produced for *Alternativa Zero*. The reproduction of Manet's "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" - a pioneering picture in modern painting, conceived from the tradition to open a crack in academic painting - is projected onto the floor like a cloth with picnic objects, to which was joined an unusable palette with brushes. The irony of this process of diverted doubling establishes a distance in relation to the painting, placing it on the floor until it disappears, and in relation to the observer by making him look down, the place of the dead. {...}"

**Catalogue *Ana Vieira*. Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 1998, pp. 158-160 (excerpt)**

**Catalogue *Ana Vieira: Muros de Abrigo / Shelter Walls*; Ponta Delgada [Azores], Museu Carlos Machado, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2010, pp. 232 (org. Paulo Pires do Vale)**

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