

Ana Mazzei
Sleepwalk

15 November 2021 - 31 January 2022

The second half of Virginia Woolf's modernist novel, *To the Lighthouse* (1927), unfolds over ten years of war. The characters are adrift, a state of ennui prevails. Life happens in a dream.

As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to the wakeful, the hopeful, walking the beach, stirring the pool, imaginations of the strangest kind – of flesh turned to atoms which drove before the wind, of stars flashing in their hearts, of cliff, sea, cloud, and sky brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within.

In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds forever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted.

Ana Mazzei's solo exhibition, *Sleepwalk*, at Green Art Gallery takes the fragmented, half-seen consciousness of waking sleep; of being in the world, *but not quite there*, and materialises this state into a mise-en-scène in which sculpture acts as both actor and set piece to a quiet drama.

Entering the gallery, initially, the visitor only sees the action in partial, our line of sight to the exhibition obscured by a semi-transparent black curtain. Drawing past, a stage comes into full view, upon which stand a series of "shadows", as the artist terms them: freestanding works in which sheets of black or white linen are stretched in varying forms over wire frames. The shapes are abstract but one's imagination might easily extract a formal motif. A face, a figure, legs akimbo. Yet nothing is fixed, and in another instant, these pareidolic associations are liable to change. Subjectivity rules. This dissolution or disintegration of certainty makes reference to the work of Italian futurist Anton Giulio Bragaglia, in which the photographer sought not to capture a static image, but the body in movement and life in flux. Bragaglia's mesmeric work captured the vertigo of war, Mazzei's sculpture, all created in 2021, similarly come from a world once again turned upside down. It is a game the Brazilian artist has played before though, building on works such as *Corpo Parede* (2018) in which, against a blue wall, strips of wood created the slightest suggestion of acrobatic figures, or *Drama O'Rama: Other Scenes*, the semi-circle of freestanding wooden blocks the artist showed June 2021 at the Glasgow International festival in Scotland. Each bore silhouettes to motifs only hinted at, never determined. Yet in the softness of their material, the "shadows" here are less assertive still than those previous projects, the tautness of the textiles symbolic perhaps of an underlying anxiety embedded in the new body of work.

To The Lighthouse was a book born of mental and political turbulence, *Sleepwalk* awakes from a period in which years have slipped by in slumber and time has seemed out of joint. Flanking the stage are a series of wall-based sculptures. The artist refers to them as "mind maps". Slim blocks of wood this time, painted different colours, are joined to form discrete geometric compositions. They refer not just to the aesthetics of Suprematism, particularly the paintings of Russian artist Olga Rozanova, who died the year of the Bolshevik revolution, but also the manner in which the twentieth century avant-garde movement sought to disassemble a landscape, breaking up and breaking down images into their constituent parts of colour and form. Here again a moment of dissolution occurs. Like dreams, reality is deconstructed; like when we wake from dreaming, life is staged anew.

Text by Oliver Basciano

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ana Mazzei (born in 1979, São Paulo, Brazil) completed a BFA in Visual Arts at the Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado (FAAP) in 2006 and a MA in Visual Poetics at UNICAMP in 2010.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Drama O'Rama: Other Scenes*, Glasgow International, Scotland, UK (2021) *Drama O'Rama*, Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil (2019); *Antechamber*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2018); *DRAMAFOBIA*, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo, Brazil (2017) and *Ghost Studies*, Almine Rech Gallery, New York, USA (2017).

Selected group shows include: *Feminists Histories*, São Paulo Arts Museum, São Paulo, Brazil (2019); *Living Structures. Art as a plural experience*, la Bienal de Cuenca, Ecuador (2018); *Brazil. Knife in the flesh*, a joint performance with Regina Parra, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy (2018); *Hands, Spells and Papers*, La Galerie Centre d'Art Contemporain, Noisy-le-Sec, France (2018); 20º Festival de Arte Contemporânea Videobrasil, Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil (2017); *Theatre of the Absurd*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2017); 32ª São Paulo's Internacional Bienal, Incerteza Viva, São Paulo, Brazil (2016).

Her works are part of the collections at S.M.A.K, Ghent, Belgium; Nouveau Musée National, Monaco; Sammlung Philara Collection, Düsseldorf, Germany; Museu de Arte Brasileira, FAAP, São Paulo, Brazil; MASP- Museu de Arte São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Glasgow International, Scotland; and Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, France.

She lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.