

# de São Paulo

Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros.

# Dis/appearance: the slash between distances

Leaving one's own Middle East collective state of mind and linking with others stimulates emotional and instinctual waves of experience. Dense socio-cultural layers and lines devise the region. They force singular acts, and compel communal readings. These distinct Middle East "I/We" writing and erasure tensions forge physical encounters. These realities construct undefined regional depths of meaning.

Contradicting powers outline the region's social realities. Violence and culture blend all across the region. The fusion of burning and boiling political tensions, current ethnic and religious collisions in the sites of ancient civilizations establish a unique human setting. The situation is all the more complicated as the Middle East is culturally and geographically in and part of Asia, Africa and Europe.

The tensions between the private life and social space; the modern (by organization) forces of the state, and the traditional, communal and religious alliances and the singularity of the self are blatantly strong. The social infests everything, every moment and every part of one's body. The singular is liable to the plural, but it also carries the plural within it like an internal organ.

Latitudes open to artists in other parts of the world are not experienced in many parts of the region. Cultural remoteness, seeming immutability of the religious perspective, the effective negation of the individual and control systems, reduce the role of art to a status of placebo. These realities hold artists back in familiar patterns of alienation and orthodoxy; against a background of the steady decay of traditional cultures, spoliation of unique environments, and the spread of degenerating urbanism.

Delicate social grounds set a peculiar position for critical artistic presence. The public space is shared between true/false volatile, religious, secular, national, ethnic, patrimonial, economic, global market and communication systems and powers. Any singular artistic activity signifies a rift with common social forms of negotiation and suggests other writing probabilities.

In this fragile region, the move towards genuine critical art processes are politicized and thwarted, and at times regarded to be coming from the outside of the "We." The ability to unfold the region's perceptions and preconceptions depend upon the improbable interlocal and communal points of view.

It is a manner of unattainable singularity that sustains an intercommunal outlook, reads obscure situations, creates a difference and has global legibility. This singularity is an inward regional Diaspora, a nonexilic seclusion and alternative, a rhizomatic cultural reading. This Diaspora dis/appearance state of mind has a personal form of experience and a subtle critical expression.

In wandering across lines, one abandons one's soul and invades a different one. Devouring oneself and the other. Proximity is defined by an experience of possible impossibilities, by being within walls. The regional voyage trails in alleys of withdrawal. The journey along the narrow shadowed walls is a long walk in confined distances.

The sense of a distance is achieved by crossing territories, by stepping out of the shadow, and by getting into the glaring reality of self/other randomness.

The Middle East Roteiros writes a route within distances: Walking away from one's situation, the engagement with the other, and the blatant experience of reality. The slash of "dis/ appearance" implies a motion between impossible distances: the movement between an imagined and forceful regional singularity and the actualness of a splintered mutuality.

*Ami Steinitz and Vasif Kortun*

Bulent Şangar **Sem título** [Untitled] detalhe 1997 conjunto [set] de 90 fotografias 234x400cm



### **Jester, spy, artist**

The "artist" as I know him is an eternal immigrant, an exile in his natural surroundings, one who is unable to put down roots in the existing social order. A refugee, whose "homeland" recedes farther and farther away, the harder he tries to reach it.

In this emotional condition there are no intermediary stops, no cities of shelter; "absence" is the motive, the alibi and the engine that can go the farthest.

This condition puts the artist in the position of social observer and critic, one who is in argument and contention with his surroundings...

The artist's angle is a conflict for which there is no solution or escape. The "absence" is an entity with a separate or separated identity; the need to search for an audience forces him to camouflage, blur and veil this separate identity.

The adopted identity may be that of the lunatic, wild boy, clown, entertainer, revolutionary, media entrepreneur, mystery man.

The essence of the conflict lies between the identity of someone who is basically "unidentifiable" and his own compulsion or need to "collaborate" with one whose mere presence defines the artist's otherness.

These and similar conflicts shape not only the character of the artist, but also the character of the "spy." He is a character suited for work in an intelligence organization as a secret agent, a double agent and provocateur. A character whose identification enables simultaneous involvement in and distancing from the circle around him, one who is busy alternatively creating and erasing his independence, while perpetually wandering between reality and the alternative world of his creation.

The Israeli condition takes the artist's role to the extreme, creating a paradox. The very act of social criticism in the existing political-social condition helps establish its permanence. Through even his most subversive actions, the artist can be construed as a collaborator and serve as a fig leaf. He reinforces the existing social order by helping create a picture of alleged normalcy in which there is room for opposing ideas and criticism (and which is turning into a regulated and supervised drainage channel and clearing house for aggression).

Shuka Glotman, 8 May 1998.

Was born in 1902  
Did not go back to the town of my birth  
Don't like to go back  
Was the Pasha's grand son at three in Aleppo  
Communist university student at nineteen in Moscow  
Was at forty-nine a guest of the communist party  
Have been a poet since fourteen  
Some people know the kinds of plants and some know the kinds of fish  
I know of departures  
Some people can recite by heart the names of the stars in the sky  
I can recite longings  
  
Was in prisons but also in grand hotels  
Was starving on hunger strikes and there is almost not a single dish that I have not tasted  
  
They wanted me hung at thirty  
They wanted to give me the peace prize at forty eight  
and they did  
  
At thirty-six it took six months to walk through a four meter square  
At fifty-nine I flew in eighteen hours from Prague to Havana  
  
Did not meet Lenin but stood guard at this grave in 924.  
The Mausoleum that I visited in 961 is on the books  
  
They wanted to tear me apart from my Party  
to no avail  
  
But I was not crushed under the icons that came down  
In 51 I faced up to death with a young friend  
In 52 I laid in bed for four months with a bad heart  
  
Was mad with envy for the women I loved  
Worked for a living and I am grateful for that  
Was ashamed for others and I lied  
Lied not to make others unhappy  
and I lied for no reason at all  
  
Rode cars, took planes and trains  
Majority cannot  
Went to the opera  
Majority doesn't even know what the Opera is  
And since twenty-one I have not been to where the majority go to  
the mosque, the church, the synagogue and the temple  
but I did have my fortune read  
  
My poems are printed in thirty forty languages  
not in Turkish in my Turkey  
  
Did not fall to Cancer  
Not necessary anyhow  
Do desire to be a prime minister either  
Not interested  
And I did not go to war  
Did not go to shelters in the middle of the night  
Did not run on the roads  
with fighter planes hovering above  
But I fell in love at almost sixty  
In short comrades  
Even though I am desperately sad in Berlin  
I can say I lived a human life  
And how long I've got  
and what do I see from today on  
who knows.

Wahid Hikmet, c.1960.



Khall Rabah **phi-lis-tine**\ˈfɪl-steen\ n. **often cap (philistine, inhabitant of ancient Philistia {Palestine}): a materialistic person; esp: one who is smugly insensitive or indifferent to intellectual or artistic values.** fi-lis-teu (filisteu, habitante da antiga Filistéia [Palestina]): uma pessoa materialista; esp. alguém que é condescendentemente insensível ou indiferente aos valores intelectuais ou artísticos 1997 dicionário, pregos [dictionary, nails] 3,5x23x17,5cm

"The street. Seven o'clock. The horizon a huge egg made of steel. To whom shall I offer my innocent silence? The street has become wider. I walk slowly. Slowly, I walk. I walk slowly that a jet fighter may not miss me. The void opens its jaws, but it doesn't swallow me. I move aimlessly, as if getting to know these streets for the first time and walking on them for the last time. A one-sided farewell. I'm the one walking in the funeral, and the one whose funeral it is."

"I walk a street where no one is walking. I remember that before, I had walked a street no one had walked. And I remember that someone who was not with me had said:

—Stop this dialogue, and come with me.

—Where to?

—To see this man.

—What's this man doing?

—Going home.

—But he's moving forward, then backward.

—That's his way of walking.

—He's not walking. He's swinging. He's dancing.

—Watch him closely. Count his steps: one, two four, seven, nine forward. One two three, seven, eight backward.

—What does this mean?

—He's walking. This is the only way he knows how to get home: ten steps forward and nine backward. That is, he advances by one step.

—What if his mind wandered, and he made a mistake in the count?

—In that case he wouldn't get home.

—Do you mean anything by this?

—No. Nothing."

Extracted from Mahmoud Derwish, *Memory for forgetfulness*, August, Beirut, 1982, trans. Ibrahim Muhawi, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1995, p.47 and pp.54-55.



### **Sacred wheat**

Moss fills you up with longing for rest in a tidy temple decorated by roses.

Your fingertips ooze unburnt wax.

Virginity passes you by, casting a curse upon you.

O fool, outstretch your sleeves and kill yourself in the final darkness, kill yourself up to the dates and bread, kill yourself up to the deceitful water that dwells inside you.

O you who are restricted by knowledge, the gypsy has danced with his anklets till the heart of the fire went out, the Palestinian calls out in his bones till he digs into the heart of the water.

O human being, break free! let the place fall apart in your cup!

O human being, die and let Time wander in your sadness!

O fool, rejoice in your lifespan torn off a dead Eternity, for he who knows neither sadness nor joy loses both life and death.

[...] I, Osiris the desirable, king of the green table, king of the black table.

I am the irrational one. I die by meself, I die as a crowd, I proceed in the joyful evenings pressing the poor wound.

I am the one who comes from the forest of the earth, from its cross, from the fortresses of its loins, from gathering to join the army of Love and the army of War and the army of God.

In my hand there's a pile of wheat and the spectre commanding Revival and Death.

I am the shroud of embalment.

I am the body left to be revived after Death.

I am the one who melts in the faith.

I am dispersed and revived each time till I'm wiped out. Master of those who die in all the world of the earth I have made my power a body of life.

*Nida Khury, Jerusalem 15 September 1997.*

*Translated by Hannah Amit-Kochavi.*

“Este processo é visível na troca de olhares entre o nativo e o colonizador, o qual estrutura a relação psíquica deles numa fantasia paranóica de possessão ilimitada e na sua linguagem familiar de inversão: ‘Quando seus olhares se cruzam ele (o colonizador) afirma com amargura, sempre na defensiva: ‘Eles querem pegar nosso lugar’. É verdade que não existe um nativo que não sonhe pelo menos uma vez por dia em ocupar o lugar do colonizador’.”

“This process is visible in the exchange of looks between native and the settler that structures their psychic relation in the paranoid fantasy of boundless possession and its familiar language of reversal: ‘When their glances meet he [the settler] ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, ‘They want to take our place.’ It is true for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler’s place.’”

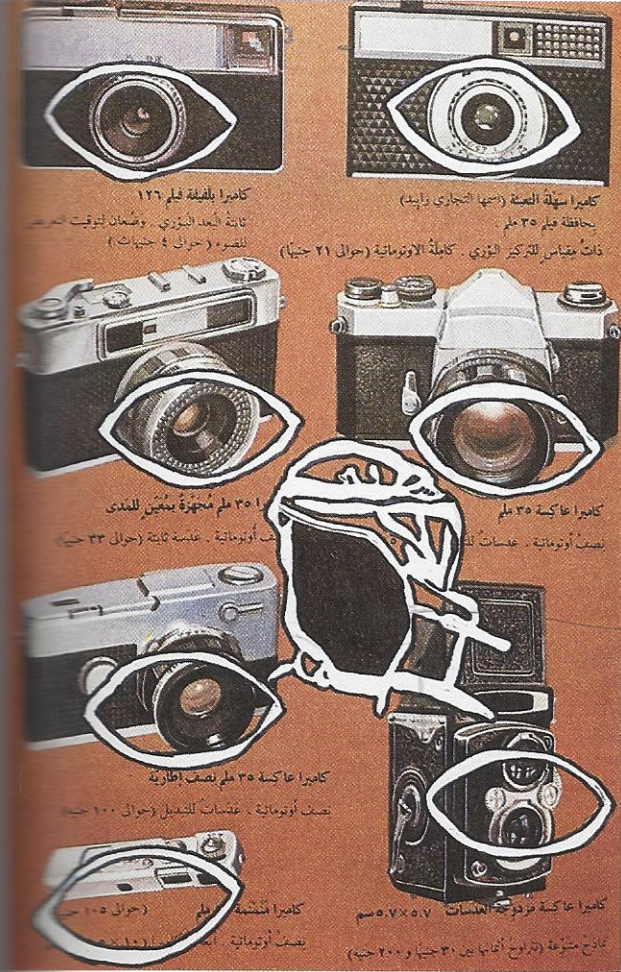
Extraído de [extracted from] Franz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969, p.30, traduzido do inglês por [translated from the English by] Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura.

“Não é possível ver como o poder funciona produtivamente enquanto incitamento e interdição. Nem isso seria possível, sem os atributos da ambivalência nas relações entre poder/conhecimento, calcular o impacto traumatizante do retorno do oprimido, os estereótipos aterrorizantes da selvageria, do canibalismo, da luxúria e da anarquia, pontos que assinalam a identificação e a alienação, cenários de temor e desejo, nos textos coloniais.”

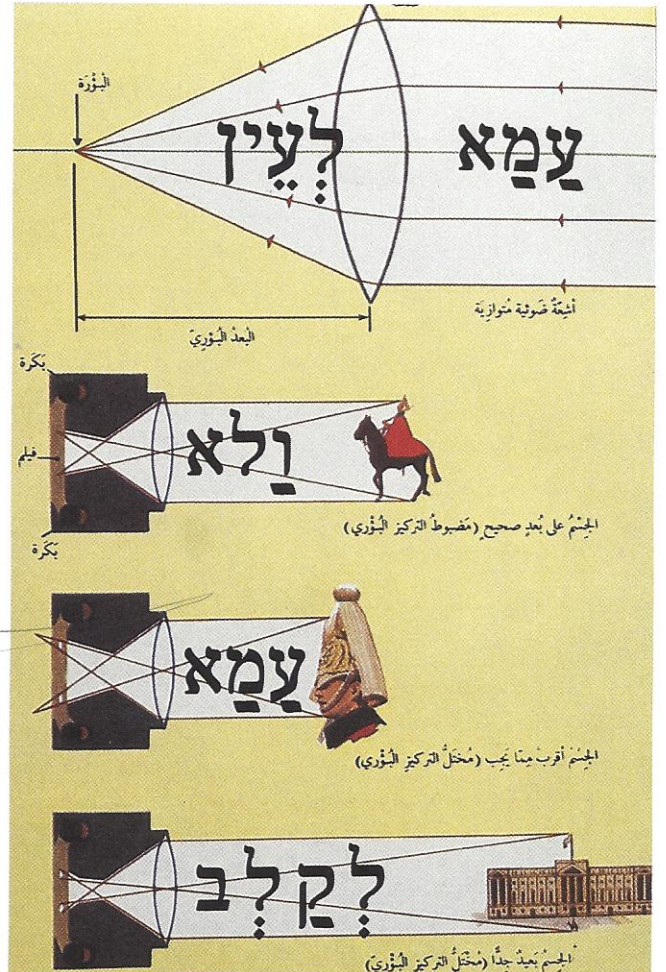
“It is not possible to see how power functions productively as incitement and interdiction. Nor would it be possible, without the attributions to ambivalence to relations of power/knowledge, to calculate the traumatic impact of the return of the oppressed—those terrifying stereotypes of savagery, cannibalism, lust and anarchy which are the signal points of identification and alienation, scenes of fear and desire, in colonial texts.”

Extraído de [extracted from] Homi Bhabha, *The location of culture* [A localização da cultura], Londres e Nova York: Routledge, 1994, p.72, traduzido do inglês por Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura.

Shuka Glotman **Beginner's photo-guide** Guia de foto para iniciantes 1992 xerox



كاميرا بلقيشة فيلم ١٢٦  
 تابتة البعد البؤري . وضمان لثوبت العرصة  
 للقصير (حوالي ٤ سنتيمترات)  
 كاميرا سهلة التعمية (سماها التجارى رايد)  
 يحافظه فيلم ٣٥ ملم  
 ذات مقاس للتركيز البؤري . كاملة الأوتوماتية (حوالي ٢١ سنتيمترات)  
 كاميرا عاكسة ٣٥ ملم  
 نصف أوتوماتية . عتسات للتحديد (حوالي ٣٣ سنتيمترات)  
 كاميرا عاكسة ٣٥ ملم نصف اطارية  
 نصف أوتوماتية . عتسات للتحديد (حوالي ١٠٠ سنتيمترات)  
 كاميرا عاكسة فورتوجية العتسات ٥٠٧.٧٥٧ سم  
 خارج متوسطة (تراوح أبعادها بين ٣١ سنتيمترات و ٢٠٠ سنتيمترات)  
 كاميرا انشعابية فلم  
 نصف أوتوماتية . عتسات للتحديد (حوالي ١٠٥ سنتيمترات)





“O Estado. Um homem e uma mulher juntos já formam um Estado. Tudo existe entre eles: um princípio de autoridade, um governo, leis de comportamento, embaixada e representação, diplomacia, armamentos, período de guerra e paz.

Eles também constituem duas espécies diferentes, o que torna as coisas mais difíceis do que são para os assuntos de Estado. Algumas vezes se ignoram, quando se encontram. Algumas vezes trepam um em cima do outro, como um casal de macacos. Outras vezes uma corrente de ar fresco passa de um para o outro: existe amor. E há ocasiões em que, ao se contatarem, acontece um curto-circuito, eles se queimam mutuamente e, em seu rastro, não deixam nada além de uma mancha no Sol.

Youssef el Khal disse certo dia que eu era poeta. Sim. Sou a poeta no âmago da cidade. Uma pequena mancha. Sou a poeta aqui e agora.

Mas, sendo mulher, sou invisível. Tenho de disfarçar minha obsessão por formigas. Elas me perseguem. Se uma mulher fosse ao mercado e gritasse por socorro porque as formigas estavam subindo por suas pernas, alguns homens se enfiariam entre suas coxas e catariam brutalmente aqueles bichinhos minúsculos, a fim de aliviá-la do medo e também para machucá-la. Ela, porém, seria detida e a jogariam num sanatório até que ela tivesse alucinações, vendo a água que sai do torneira transformar-se numa corrente medonha de formigas negras. Nesse caso, eu me envolveria em meu cobertor de moscas e dormiria.”

“The State. A man and a woman, together, already form a state. There is everything between them: a principle of authority, a government, laws of behavior, embassy and representation, diplomacy, weapons, period of peace and war.

They also constitute, to make things harder than for matters of state, two different species. When they meet, they sometime ignore each other. Sometimes they climb on each other like a pair of monkeys. At other times, a current of cool air passes from one to the other: there is love. And then, there are times when, at their contact, a short circuit happens, and they burn each other and leave nothing behind them but a spot on the Sun.

Youssef el Khal said one day that I was a poet. Yes. I am the poet in the heart of the city. A dot. I am the poet here and now.

But, being a woman, I am invisible. I have to hide my obsession for ants. They pursue me. If a woman went to the market place and cried for help because ants were climbing up between her legs, some men would throw themselves between her thighs, and search wildly for the tiny beasts in order to relieve her from her fear, and hurt her too. But she would be arrested and thrown into an insane asylum until she hallucinated that the water which fell from the faucet became a sick stream of black ants. In that case, I would pull up my blanket of flies and sleep.”

Extraído de [extracted from] Etel Adnan, “In the heart of the heart of another country”, *Mundus atrium*, v. 10, n. 1, p.24–25, traduzido do inglês por Carlos Eugênio Marcondes de Moura.

“Bowles’s choice of Morocco and the Arab/Islamic is not incidental: It is not simply that emotionalism, violence and deviant sexuality, which Bowles associates with the Arab/Islamic, play an important role in his work. The fact is that Bowles’s understanding of the Arab/Islamic lends itself to the depiction of a breakdown of coherence that is one of the principal aspirations of his art. This is true because Bowles seems to believe that a lack of coherence is of the essence of the Arab/Islamic civilization. In *The spider’s house*, Stenham, who is many ways Bowles himself, tells his American girlfriend, in an echo of Bowles’s description of Mustapha and friends, ‘You must always remember that this is a culture of “and then” rather than of “because” like ours. What I mean is that in their minds one thing doesn’t come from another thing. Nothing is the result of anything. . . Even the language they speak is constructed around that. Each fact is separate and one never depends on the other. . .’”

“Abdallah Laroui places Bowles within the context of a revived ‘folklore’ generated within a world imperial system. According to Laroui, Moroccan bourgeois culture reanimates and enriches the significance of folklore as a product of its confrontation with the West, and as a result each art takes on a folkloric level. ‘All folklore entails a center and periphery,’ he writes. Paul Bowles makes a Moroccan (Muhammad Mr’abet whose tales Bowles translates from Moroccan dialect) speak for long hours into a tape recorder and believes that he is capturing a most authentic way of life that a Moroccan leads but what he is capturing is nothing but his own fantasy. The empty time, the zero degree of existence that he imagines he detects in his subjects is in reality his own. At that same time he attempts to describe the incredible, the absolute silence of the desert (in *Their heads are green*) he forgets that this silence only exists for the old inhabitant of New York or London: the desert is neither silent nor noisy by nature. In fact, neither the Moroccan nor the inhabitants of the desert would be able to recognize themselves in this false image, since they are reduced to their folkloric level, i.e., to their position in respect to a center they do not know. Bowles never leaves, and will never leave, his bourgeois culture which alone gives value and sense to this old humanity that he strives to save from oblivion.”

Extracted from Ralph M. Coury, “The Twain Met: Paul Bowles’s western and Arab critics”, *Public 16: entangled territories: imagining the Orient*, 1997, p.125 e pp.130–131.

“The West—the Christian world of the Middle Ages—when it found itself encircled to the maximum extent possible by the Islamic world, that is, when it was faced with the threat of obliteration by the power of the Islamic nations from two or three directions (from the East, the South, and the Southwest) and was obliged to marshal its resources right there in those few Northern Mediterranean states, it had a rude awakening and was pushed into a hopeless aggressive campaign against the Islamic threat, like a cat trapped in a room. When did this happen? Toward the end of the 6th Century A.H. (Twelfth Century A.D.)—when the University of Cordoba was at one end of the Islamic world in Andalucia, the Balkh and Bokhara school was at the other end and all of Jerusalem, the eastern, southern, and the western shores of the Mediterranean and even the island of Sicily were under Muslim control. It was immediately after this that the peace-loving Christians, who had been derisive of the Islamic holy war were transformed into holy-war-waging crusaders and laid down a foundation during the long crusades borrowed from Islamic arts and knowledge which transformed the Christian world after five or six centuries into the lords capital, the arts and knowledge and after seven or eight centuries into the lords of industry, machines and technology. If the Christian West suddenly awoke with the fear of obliteration and overthrow in the face of Islamic danger, fortified itself, went on the offensive, and inevitably saved itself, hasn't the time come now for us to sense danger and obliteration in the face of Western power and rise up, fortify ourselves and go on the offensive?”

Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* [Westruckedness], Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 1997 (originally published in 1962 in Iran).

ROTEIROS - LATIN AMERICA - Rina Carvajal

Transgressive and irreverent, Brazilian *Antropofagia* initiated a crucial discussion in Latin American cultural history.<sup>1</sup> Its metaphor of appropriation, consumption, and selective digestion of differences not only became a foundational image for critical reflection about the intellectual and cultural autonomy of Brazil and its ability to challenge hierarchical relations with other cultures; it also became a paradigm for analyzing notions about decolonization and cultural emancipation in the rest of the continent. The *mestizaje*, the ingestion and repeated contamination of notions of cultural purity or superiority—first proposed in the anthropophagite project of the 1920s—still offers today, at the close of the millennium, a provocative framework for examining significant dynamics at work in Latin America's artistic production.

Utilizing the lucid strategies of a heterogeneous group of artists and the interpretations suggested by the complex, powerful metaphors they employ, Roteiros Latin America seeks to articulate a polemical perspective and reflection on the continent's art. Rejecting any sole definition of identity or fixed and uncontaminated cultural borders, these works seek to account for the intricate strata of signification that make up a territory and an artistic production whose clearest characteristic is the constant reformulation of their own terms. The excessively fragmented and hybridized experiences they reflect are expressed in the manner of a palimpsest—an ambivalent perspective within a space of incessant contradiction, movement and transformation that leaves behind the exhausted anthropological and exotic models of recent decades and their assumptions of a Latin American 'unity' or 'authenticity.' The tensions resulting from the diverse forces and narratives in Latin American cultures and the dislocations produced by today's migratory movements and nomadism require that these notions of identity, appropriation, and cultural borders be rethought in much more open and dynamic terms. One possible way to approach this work is to view it through the metaphor of the labyrinth—fragmentary, incomplete, continuously restructuring itself.

The work of the artists participating in this exhibition is extremely diverse and individual, spanning different generations and a vast complex of strategies and modes of expression. This production, however, shares the images of dynamism, metabolic process, and cultural expansion articulated by *Antropofagia*. The juxtaposition of, and dialogue among, its divergent points of view speak to a multiplicity of identities and strategies suggestive of the experience of reappropriation, border crossings, exchange, passage, instability and an endless chain of transformations. The work of Gabriel Orozco, for example, confronts us with artistic situations marked by hybridity and flux—it may, at moments, be an object, a process, a piece of sculpture, a photograph, or an action, shifting points of view and location continuously, effortlessly moving between the interstices and margins of different cultures.