

LAURA LIMA

Bar Restaurant

November 23, 2013–February 02, 2014
Opening: Friday, November 22, 2013, 6–8 pm

The artistic practice of Laura Lima (b. 1971, Governador Valadares, Brazil; lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) is characterized by her fascination with the complexity of social relations and modes of human behavior. Her scenarios, in which the human body is often the central medium and driving force, combine performative elements with various forms of artistic expression such as drawing, sculpture, and installation. Lima never appears in her pieces herself, instead delegating her dramaturgic specifications to selected protagonists. The Brazilian artist's first solo exhibition in Switzerland presents the works *Bar Restaurant* (2010/13) and *The Naked Magician* (2008/10/13), selected performative installations with a focus on the magical.

Laura Lima's works are experimental arrangements that explore our perception along the boundaries of reality, illusion, and fiction. With the works presented in Zurich, she evokes mysterious worlds that revolve around the subject of magic. A long corridor leads to the work that has given the show its title, *Bar Restaurant* (2010/13), whose appearance initially suggests an everyday situation in a bar. However, stacks of paper, salt, colorful geometric figures, and amorphous clay masses are placed on the chairs as "guests," and on the tables there are full glasses of chilled beer that mysteriously empty themselves. A protagonist acting as a waiter continuously refills the glasses, maintaining the scenario. The formal vocabulary suggests a reference to late-1950s Brazilian art, when Concrete Art started to integrate time and the human body into the works in a challenge to the era's ascetic geometry and its association with industry and progress. In Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, it metamorphosed into an organic movement. Lygia Pape worked on these ideas as well, developing a Neo-Concrete ballet in 1958 in which cylinders and cubes floated across the stage. The figures in *Bar Restaurant* now give the impression of a colorful posse of descendants of Pape's geometric ballet figures sitting down for a drink.

Behind the closed doors of a second corridor that branches off from the first, the next work that awaits the visitors is *The Naked Magician*, a different form of which was shown in 2010 as part of the exhibition *Grande* at the Casa França-Brasil in Rio de Janeiro. The space opens up again and reveals, in a labyrinthine arrangement, a system of shelves whose slanted structures partly appear to defy gravity and form the installational framework for a protagonist instructed by Lima. Dressed in a black tailcoat with sleeves too short, this protagonist pursues what seem to be the puzzling activities of a magician. A plethora of different found objects, some set on the shelves and some floating in the air, serve him as a supply of materials and tools for his incessant actions, which seem quite determined even though the degree to which they are purposeful ultimately remains a secret. The beholder becomes the observer of a creative process, a constant balancing act between chaos and order, insanity and reason: complementary opposites that appear inseparably interconnected.

Both pieces display rational order side by side with the magically animated—an aspect which, especially in light of the ongoing boom in magic within Western popular media and the simultaneously increasing purpose-driven rationalization of all realms of life, suggests a reading that refers to the dualisms of our time.

Laura Lima's works have been presented at Art's House, Melbourne, Australia (2013); the Ruhrtriennale, Essen (2012); the Lyon Biennale; Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm; and the Manchester Art Gallery (all in 2011). Lima is also a cofounder and artistic advisor of the artist-run gallery A Gentil Carioca, Rio de Janeiro.

Curator:
Heike Munder, Director, Migros
Museum für Gegenwartskunst

The exhibition is accompanied by a monograph on Lima's art produced in collaboration with Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, and published by JRP|Ringier. The catalogue includes contributions by Sara Arrhenius, Victoria Noorthoorn, Heike Munder, and Jochen Volz as well as an interview with the artist.

MIGROS MUSEUM FÜR
GEGENWARTSKUNST
LIMMATSTRASSE 270
CH-8005 ZÜRICH

T +41 44 277 20 50
F +41 44 277 62 86
INFO@MIGROSMUSEUM.CH

MIGROSMUSEUM.CH
MIGROS-CULTURE-PERCENTAGE.CH