

The fishermen Menezes, Ciço, Cipriano, Irmão, Leno, Xau, Curió, Keno, Rom, Ronaldo and the types of fish pirarucu, tambuacu and tilápia were captured by Jonathas de Andrade's camera by the river São Francisco in Alagoas, in the Northeast of Brazil. Re-questioning the Western tradition of ethnographic filmmaking, Andrade creates a hybrid artwork that lies between documentary and fiction. Employing traditional fishing techniques, these fishermen take the fish out of the water and then hug them gently, caressing and keeping their catch close to their chest, until the fish stops breathing. Shot in 16mm, these long scenes allow the viewer to experience feelings of solidarity, empathy, and sensuality, as well as violence, domination, and benevolence. In dialogue with Andrade's body of work around Brazilian identity, labour issues, and race and class struggles, *The Fish* is an invitation to reset the balance between Man and Nature, as well as between the observer and the observed.

18. **Jonathas de Andrade**, *O Peixe (The Fish)*, 2016, video, 37min 6sec, 16mm transferred to 2K, sound stereo, 16:9.

Menezes Irmão Cipriano
Keno Xau Ronaldo Rom
Ciço Leno Curió

En garde by John C. Welchman

1. One of the key operating parameters for (*Le Plus Objet des Objets*) is *stealth*. While the event was announced in a formal invitation in January 2020 as the last in a cycle of four associated performances some weeks after the opening in October 2019 of an exhibition at the Zadkine Museum in Paris ('Instant de la Matière'), no further information about it was posted. There was no associated wall text or handout; and during the ensuing event the artist herself did not directly enter the space. Visitors could see no stage or performers—nothing that pointed to anything answering to the event; no visible trace, in fact, of something that to all appearances seemed not to be taking place. Visitors were only alerted to the possibility that they had been unwitting participants in, or witnesses to, the event when they left the space and were given a numbered and stamped slip of paper attesting to their presence and imbrication in whatever it was that had transpired. This *Accusé de Participation* functions, simultaneously as a receipt and attestation, but also—as both the French original and its English translation suggest—as a means of *accusation*. But more than stealth, the action was subject to plausible deniability, as the officers of the museum and the exhibition's curator, brushed-off or deflected any inquiries about the event and seemed—or claimed—to have no knowledge about it. Stealth, redundancy and deniability thus combined to frame the event as a kind of fraud or deception; or the very least, a secret of some kind ordained by a non-disclosure agreement that was itself undisclosed.

2. Katya Ev's set-up replaced and augmented all of the invigilating and supervisory staff who would normally work at the reception desk, the security station outside the galleries and, as attendants, in the exhibition galleries themselves. Normally numbering around half a dozen, for her opening night event, Ev commissioned eleven performers, camouflaging them in plain sight in the same kind of casual-smart attire that their opposite numbers in real life might have worn; and effectively replicating their "standard" age and gender profiles. From within these disguises, however, the surrogate protagonists represented a cross-section of individuals chosen because of their capacities to simulate, order or even control the rhetoric of exchange associated with a public situation: some were theatrically-trained actors or performance-seasoned musicians; and the group included the head bouncer from an underground techno-music club and a dominatrix. The artist's careful selection of "actors" offered partially to preempt the concept of a performance directive. She relied on a number of key capacities, orchestrated by a combination of personality and profession, including the ability to instruct or command in ways that were not ostentatious or conspicuous; an awareness of the formality, ritual and *politesse* of the museum space, so that the actors could inhabit the protocol of a guard, using a plausible repertoire of gestures and phrases associated with the function. But effective simulation of museological normality was at the same time overcoded by action mandates that subtly flouted or exceeded this basic framework of reference by recourse to a manner that, as the artist puts it, "would be delicately subversive, or absurd, or inadequate." By way of instructions that might be mildly contradictory, or repetitive, or accompanied by gestural or linguistic accents that somehow exceeded—but only in small increments—the visitor's threshold of expectation or awareness, Ev sought to precipitate and unravel the coercive constitution of art-denominated institutional space. The "training" of the performers was a kind of interactive seminar predicated on "rules of engagement" that emphasized a number of strategies giving rise to a general mode of situation-correlated exaggeration. The impersonating guards would respond both proactively and reactively to the social horizons of behavior that unfolded around them, interposing facetious even ridiculous routines of advice and prohibition sanctioned by and drawing on their unquestioned authority. A visitor standing some distance from an artwork might be enjoined to "please move closer . . . a bit more, please." When performed seamlessly, this patent reversal of the usual injunction in museums to "stand back" and "keep your distance" might itself appear completely normal; and reluctant viewers would—unselfconsciously—find themselves in compliance. Ev marshalled an array of these control conditions: the nature and direction of viewer itineraries; behavior modifications; and a spate of cautions and warnings. Each was enacted and delivered by drawing on the resources of authority and conviction vested in the vocational arbitration of professional invigilation and secured by unquestioning public sanction.

19. *En garde*, text by **John C. Welchman**, 2020, about Katya Ev's infiltrated performance, (*LE PLUS OBJET DES OBJETS*), 2019, commissioned by Musée Zadkine, Paris, France for the exhibition 'Instant de la Matière' curated by Azad Asifovich.

3. (*Le Plus Objet des Objets*) addresses the opacity, arbitrariness, and secrecy of the rule-governed orchestration of museum or gallery space. It foregrounds the over-riding mechanism of control by which these zones are ordered and disciplined: that of surveillance. To this end, it magnifies and italicizes the consequences of the coercive regimen by giving rise to counter-manding episodes fraught with humor, parody, contradiction and even intimations of punishment. Above all the project reveals the contours of the manufacture of consent by way of conformist obedience—a declaration more remarkable because most of the museum-going public would never imagine that their volition could be short-circuited or deferred. At the same time, the title, (*Le Plus Objet des Objets*), borrowed from Gilles Deleuze, points to the nesting of objects within hierarchies or groups; and, beyond this, to the defining relationality between subject and object. By foregrounding the structures that underwrite and manage social objectification within the museum as a system of objects, Ev points to a fundamental transmutation between orders of identification as objects are consumed by tactical subjectivities; subjects are objectified by routines of surveillance; and the event itself inhabits its invisibility by way of transgressions transacted through covert masquerade.

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