

Ministério da Cultura e  
Instituto de Arte Contemporânea  
present



regina <sup>modus</sup> <sub>silveira</sub> operandi

Curator  
Agnaldo Farias

**Regina Silveira**

## **MODUS OPERANDI OR ON THE CALCULATION OF ABSENCES**

This is not a typical exhibition – it goes beyond merely selecting a group of representative works made by our great artist over the decades. Only a few works are shown, but they are accompanied by the process of their conception: the artist's modus operandi, expressed through models, diagrams, studies, and sketches that gave birth to them. Usually, exhibitions present finished, flawless works, stripped of the complex steps, detours, and transformations that brought them into being. Regina Silveira comes to the IAC to unveil her working process, laying it out for all to see. She is presenting her shadows, and along with them, the maps, the precise calculations, their generative origins.

Shadows point to absences. In trying to understand the birth of drawing, Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History*, written between 77 and 79 CE, traces its origins to the legend of Cora: grieving her beloved's imminent departure for a foreign land, the young woman traced the outline of his shadow on a wall. The shadow as a sign of absence – yet paradoxically, the sharper it is, the more present it becomes. This dynamic appears in the work *Transitório/Durévole – Carta a Mirella* (1998), where the silhouette of Regina's Italian friend takes on volume, runs across the floor, and expands on the wall, holding a real book beside the letter, one of many exchanged between the two.

Since they arise from absences, shadows activate the imagination, bearing a quality that is somewhat phantasmagoric, unsettling, frightening. (Remember when we were small, submerged in twilight, before sleep or suddenly awakened, how we would clench our eyes shut?)

Objects block light; their clarity contrasts with the darkness and coolness of shadows. The same applies to our effort to comprehend something or a fact, expressed in the phrase “to shed light on something.” For however much we strive to uncover something, we will encounter the shadows that unfold from it. João Cabral de Melo Neto explored this connection between light and mystery in his poem *A palo seco*, dedicated to the flamenco singing style performed without accompaniment, with the voice alone, without instrumental support:

[a palo seco]  
is a kind of singing that demands  
being at noon  
which is when the shadow flees  
and magic is kept at bay.

Carlos Drummond de Andrade touched on this theme when he titled one of his books *Claro enigma* [Clear/Bright Enigma]. For better or worse, shadow borders on mystery. In his canvases, the Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico exalted the twilight shadows – elongated shadows that signal

the inaccessibility of all that exists. The intangible, inscrutable dimension of people and things, the irrational and fantastical element present in everything, even in household furniture, which is mistakenly understood as ordinary – tables, chairs, fans, knives. Nothing is simple.

Having become an artist during the dictatorship that shadowed Brazilian public life for two decades, Regina Silveira was also harassed by invisible dangers. A sense of paranoia took hold among us; the artist learned to discern what lay beneath things, beneath actions, concealed by appearances, including the most dignified and respected ones. Perhaps the artist's keen eye never needed this. She had always known that daily movements are choreographed, that our gestures and attitudes are programmed. Our families, our homes, schools, streets, and cities take charge of this training, especially at the height of the dictatorship, when gatherings of more than three people were viewed with suspicion and dispersed by plainclothes police who would suddenly appear.

Regina Silveira brings the dimension of violence into the present, as she does in *Bala de prata*, a fold between violence and the sign of violence. And aren't they the same thing? Gloomy birds circle around us. Insects and pests infiltrate our supposedly clean homes, some to the point of utter sterilization. So that we don't think too highly of ourselves – after all, we are merely animals, like the vultures circling above and weaving through lethal labyrinths.

With varying degrees of distortion, the shadows in Regina Silveira's work allude to a diversity of viewpoints. Even more so: they signal the diversity of that which common sense affirms to be real. Everything is a product of discourse, layers of discourse overlapping one another; fabrics that fray or through whose weaves other fabrics, other discourses, can be glimpsed. One atop the other, like cross-stitch embroidery applied to the glass facade of the building. Where does one end and the other begin?

The artist calculates her visual discourse methodically, diligently, and exactly; she uses graph paper, the preferred medium for mechanical and architectural drafting, to translate portions of the three-dimensional world onto the two-dimensional plane. She flips and turns the drawing this way and that, adjusting it as though testing its plasticity until reaching the point that satisfies her. Once achieved, the work transforms: having begun from an understanding of spatial depth, which is then reduced to the planar dimension, the drawing grows once again, now transposed onto a carpet, onto a drawing that spills across the floor and can creep up a wall – even the walls that enclose the volume of a building. In this process, absences convert themselves into commanding presences, as or more impactful and convincing than the objects, human bodies, animals, and insects that served as their sources.

**Agnaldo Farias**

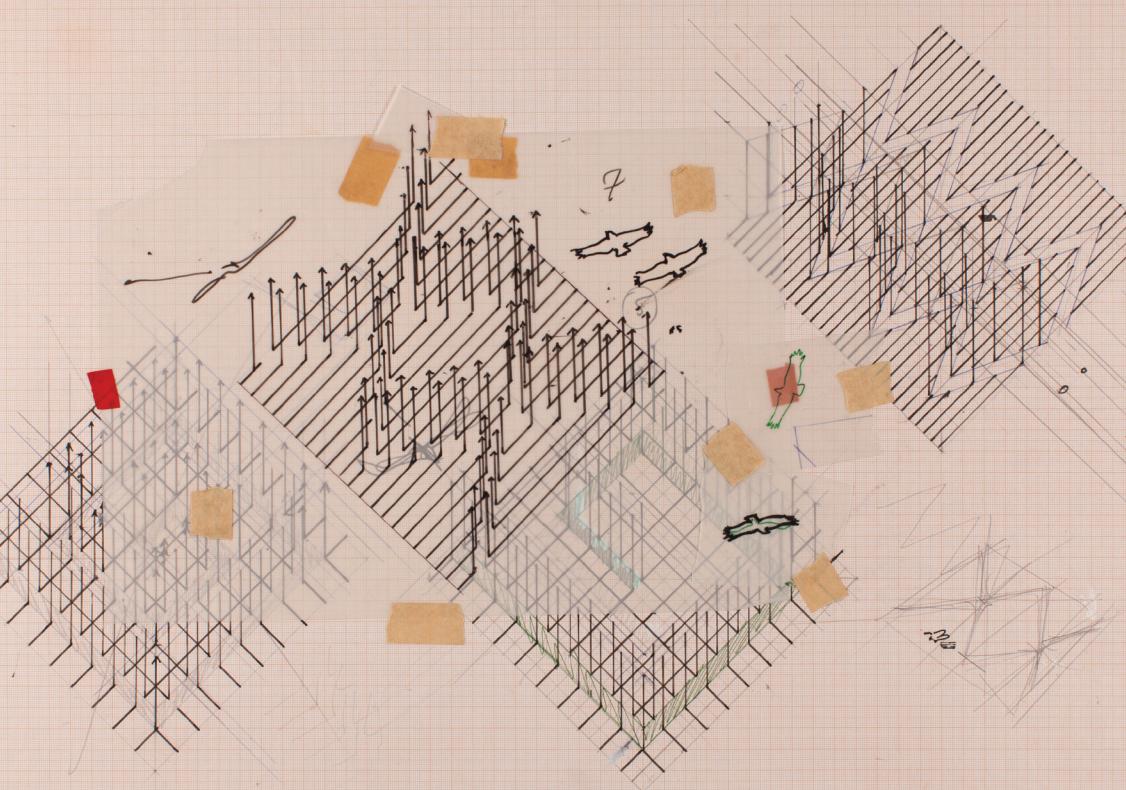
## About the IAC

The Instituto de Arte Contemporânea (IAC) was founded by Raquel Arnaud in 1997 to preserve a vast archival collection of documents related to the careers of Brazilian visual artists and make them accessible for research.

Currently housing around 100,000 items, the collection includes studies, notebooks, projects, prototypes, photographs, film stills, letters, personal documents, and graphic materials, among other formats coming from the archives of artists, architects, and art galleries. This extensive collection allows the public to learn about the lives of these artists and their creative processes, as well as their connections to artistic movements in different periods.

So far, the archives that have gone into the IAC's holdings are from the artists Amilcar de Castro, Antonio Dias, Carmela Gross, Hermelindo Fiaminghi, Iole de Freitas, Ivan Serpa, Lothar Charoux, Luiz Sacilotto, Paulo Bruscky, Regina Silveira, Rubem Ludolf, Sergio Camargo, Sérvulo Esmeraldo, Ubi Bava, Waltercio Caldas, and Willys de Castro; the architects Jorge Wilhelm and Gregori Warchavchik; and the galleries Franco Terranova's Petite Galerie and Galeria Raquel Arnaud. New archives are being incorporated each year.

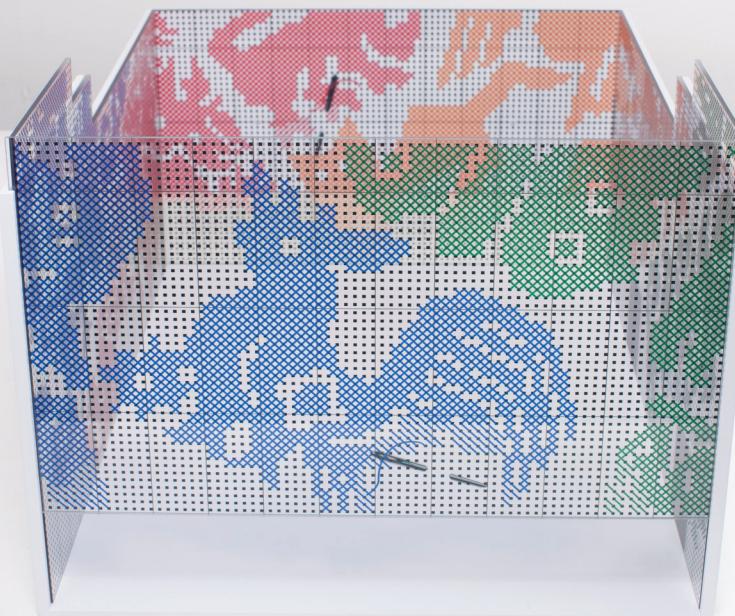
Besides serving as a documentation and research center, the IAC offers public exhibitions, courses, seminars, and educational programs focused on public schools with an emphasis on social inclusion and accessibility. The Institute also provides training grants in conservation, research, and heritage education.



*Corredores para Abutres* –  
preparatory drawings, 1982  
pencil and pen on  
graph paper



*Intro*, 2005  
La Médiatine, Centre Culturel Woluwe Saint-Lambert, Brussels, Belgium  
scale model, adhesive vinyl on wood and acrylic



*Sueño de Mirra*, 2014  
Exhibition *Sueño de Mirra y otras Constelaciones* –  
Museo Amparo, Puebla, Mexico  
scale model, vinyl adhesive on wood and acrylic

**Exhibition**

Regina Silveira – modus operandi

**Conception**

Regina Silveira

**Collection**

Regina Silveira e IAC

**Curator**

Agnaldo Farias

**Executive Production**

Carla Ogawa | Duk Produção

**Design**

Homem de Melo & Troia Design

**Photo credits**

Estúdio Regina Silveira

**Start and end dates**

March 22 to July 26, 2025

**Hours**

Tuesday to Friday - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays and holidays - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Núcleo de Documentação e Pesquisa – NDP**

Tuesday to Friday - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

By appointment

[contato@iacbrasil.org.br](mailto:contato@iacbrasil.org.br)

**IAC**

Instituto de Arte Contemporânea

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