

A Casa (the House)

BY JOSÉ BECHARA

2002

About the experience in Faxinal - the first action

"A Casa", "The House", is a project that began in May 2002, in Faxinal do Céu, city of Pinhão, Paraná State. A project that came to life during a meeting/internship that brought together one hundred artists organized by the State Office for Culture of the State of Paraná, curators Agnaldo Farias and Fernando Bini, with consulting by Christian Viveros.

"The House", (or "The House Spits", perhaps one could think of it this way) uses a real house/chalet typical of the region, a wood building comprised of living room, kitchen, bathroom and two bedrooms, a house that was also the guest artist's home and workshop for the duration of the event.

The project "The House" explores the concept of shelter and, starting from the familiar notion of housing, strives to establish physical, metaphysical and visual relations about habitat, creating poetic associations that encompass both its internal and external space. The house's furniture, all of it, is grouped together, stuck out through windows and outside doors. Closets, benches, tables, armchairs, mattresses, cushions, all project themselves through its openings, thrown up one against the other like great weighty burdens, inflicting change on the house's design as a "body", in other words, changing the house's original form.

One could perhaps say that from a formal point of view, the project shows "sculptural intention" in its reorganization of an emblematic object: the house. In this sense, it is possible to say that the house's "outside" face, exposing pieces of the house's insides, does not come about at random. It betrays an order, if not a constructive one, one that was reorganized both methodically and rigorously.

The project is neither social-art, nor psychological-art. It reworks the artistic elements from which the notion of housing, or shelter, seems to have gathered a sense of emotional safety both aesthetically and visually, by reconstructing them and creating formal tension. One naturally recognizes that the familiar objects that populate one's home - mattresses, tables and stools - are forms, and reductively, that they are geometric or geometrically shaping, forms. A stool, for example, is usually determined by a circle or square resting on vertical lines, a mattress, a rectangle.

From the symbolic point of view, the project presents an inversion or a detour in the perceptual memory of the notion of housing, as it "vomits" objects and utensils that, on human scale, remind us of human presence. It is not just the physical dimensions of domestic

instruments, but the scale of the daily impressions and inscriptions left by these objects, involuntarily fixed in our memories.

In spite of this, the house nevertheless remains steadfastly itself, a house, an effect that, I venture, creates a certain degree of tension. An estrangement based on the very inversion of the notion of shelter. It dislodges its human occupant, at the same time reacting to its condition as a repository of memory, the guarantee to psychological survival.