

SITU

**s i t u**

**#7 ANA DIAS BATISTA**

**ERRATA**

**11ª BIENAL  
DE ARQUITETURA  
DE SÃO PAULO**



#### **Errata 2017**

Painting made by a graffiti artist with a drawing of a stone wall painted over a segment of the facade. The graffiti partially overlaps a group of marks (tags, drawings, “pichações” – a type of street writing that is characteristic of Brazil) that already existed on the facade. The “stone wall” motif is commonly found throughout the city of São Paulo and it is used to cover or curb unwanted paintings over the walls of private properties.

Concrete roadblocks, commonly called “turtles”, painted with the same pattern as the facade’s graffiti. The pieces are distributed all over the building’s courtyard, which is open to the public space but also functions as a private parking lot.



## SITU #7 | Ana Dias Batista

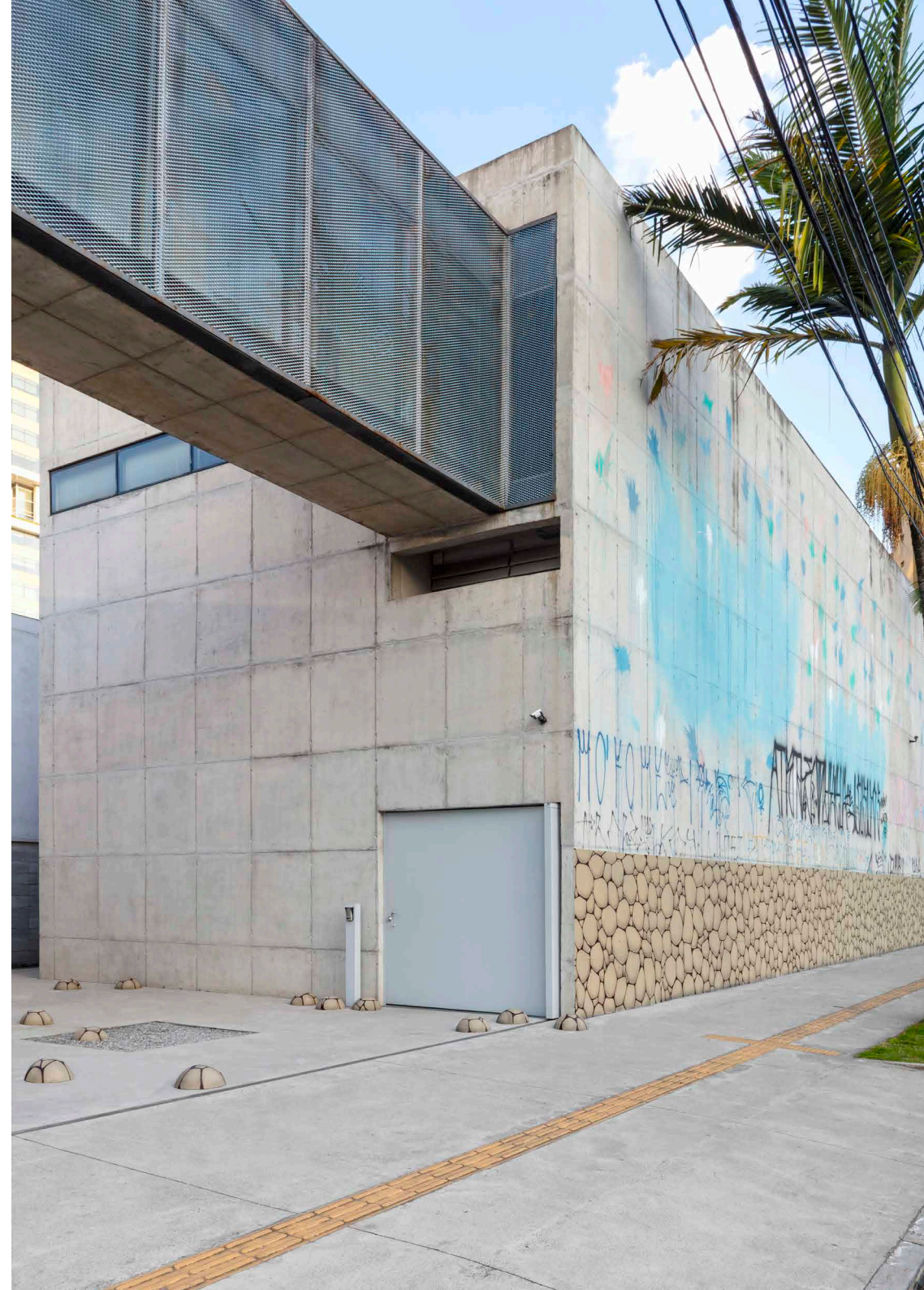
### Errata

07.11.2017 - 20.01.2018

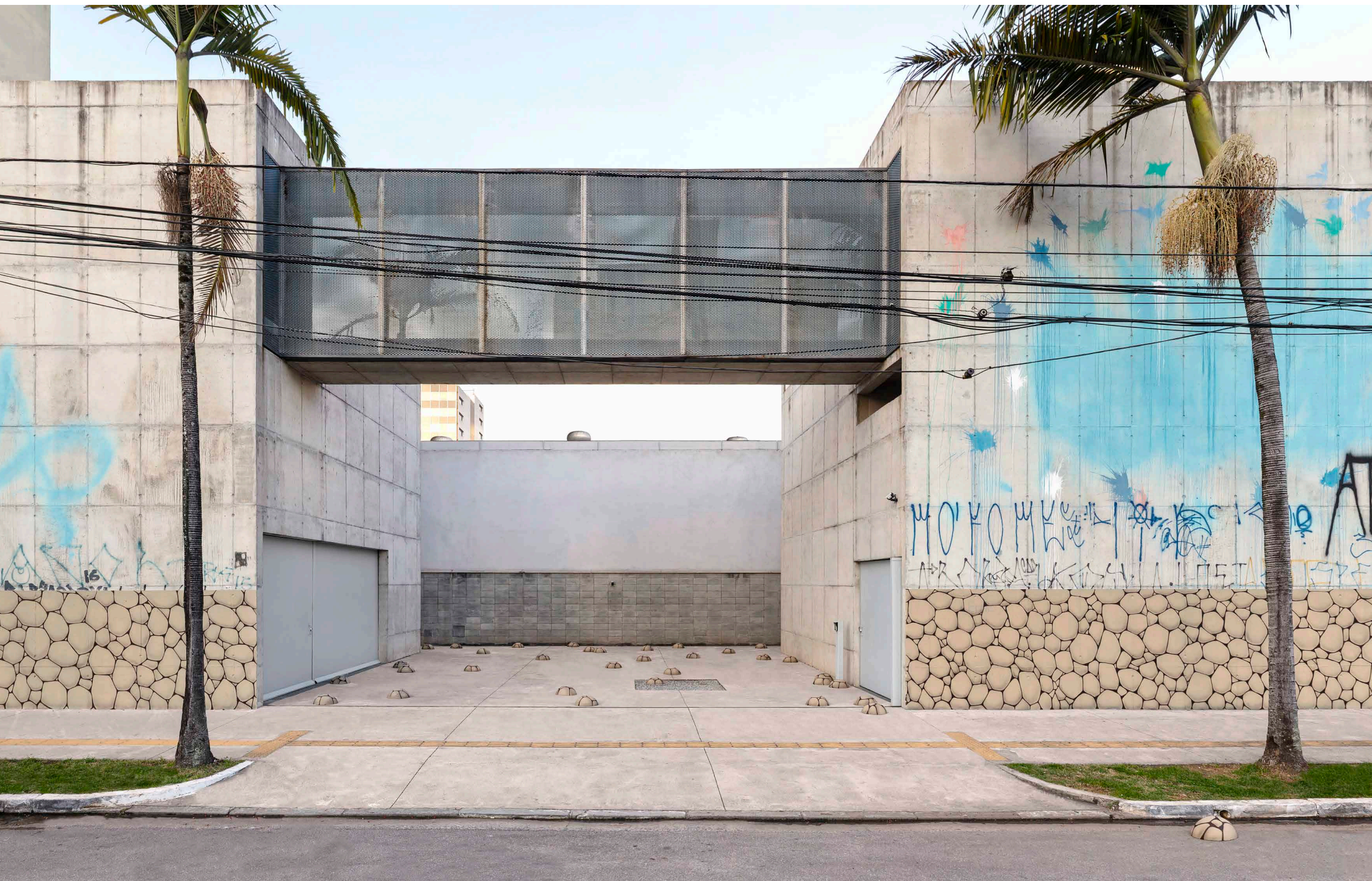
Galeria Leme presents the 7th edition of the project SITU, part of the official program of the 11th São Paulo Architecture Biennial, continuing a research on the dialogue between art, architecture and city as a tool for the analysis and problematization of urban dynamics. For this edition the Brazilian artist Ana Dias Batista creates a site-specific work that underlines the tensions and contradictions of the relationship between the gallery's building and the city. She intervenes directly on the border between public and private space, namely in the main facades of the building and in the courtyard between them.

Over the set of pichações (distinctive street writing found in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), drawings and writings that have been accumulated over time in the gallery's blind facades, the artist adds another painting that is commonly found around town. The language is graffiti and the motif is that of a wall of stones. A type of drawing that is usually commissioned by people wishing to curb unwanted paintings on the walls of their properties. Unlike the pichação, such graffiti is legally permitted and socially accepted. Thus, one type of language is strategically used to avoid a congener, playing with a code of conduct that exists between those who paint (legally or illegally) the walls of the city. The wall commissioned by Ana Dias Batista, despite its formal similarities with others, seems to operate according to another logic. It is late in avoiding any kind of illicit writing and seems to coexist on an equal basis with them. When it is interrupted by the gallery's courtyard this two-dimensional wall is transformed and broken up in numerous concrete road obstacles that are distributed over the floor of the patio, which despite being open to the city is usually used as private parking. But such obstacles also do not seem to fulfill their original function of ordering and limiting automobile traffic. Their quantity is excessive, their positioning is illogical and redundant and they do not impede the circulation of vehicles in that area.

By disturbing the normality of elements whose function is to govern citizens' actions in relation to their city, Ana Dias Batista highlights the palliative and contradictory nature of such strategies. By shuffling which territories should be protected and which individuals should be restrained, the artist goes against a determinism which is characteristic of the current policies of socio-spatial cleansing. Which are consummated through direct action in the city either by its supposed embellishment or by the obliteration of spaces and discourses that escape the official norm. Align with this way of understanding urban space, the stone wall graffiti, widespread by popular taste, seems to gain even more meaning, since such wall is the archetypal element of territorial separation, the basis for defining the boundary between public and private, between one and another, between what can be seen and what is intended to be concealed, thus being the cause and consequence of a "walled" society.











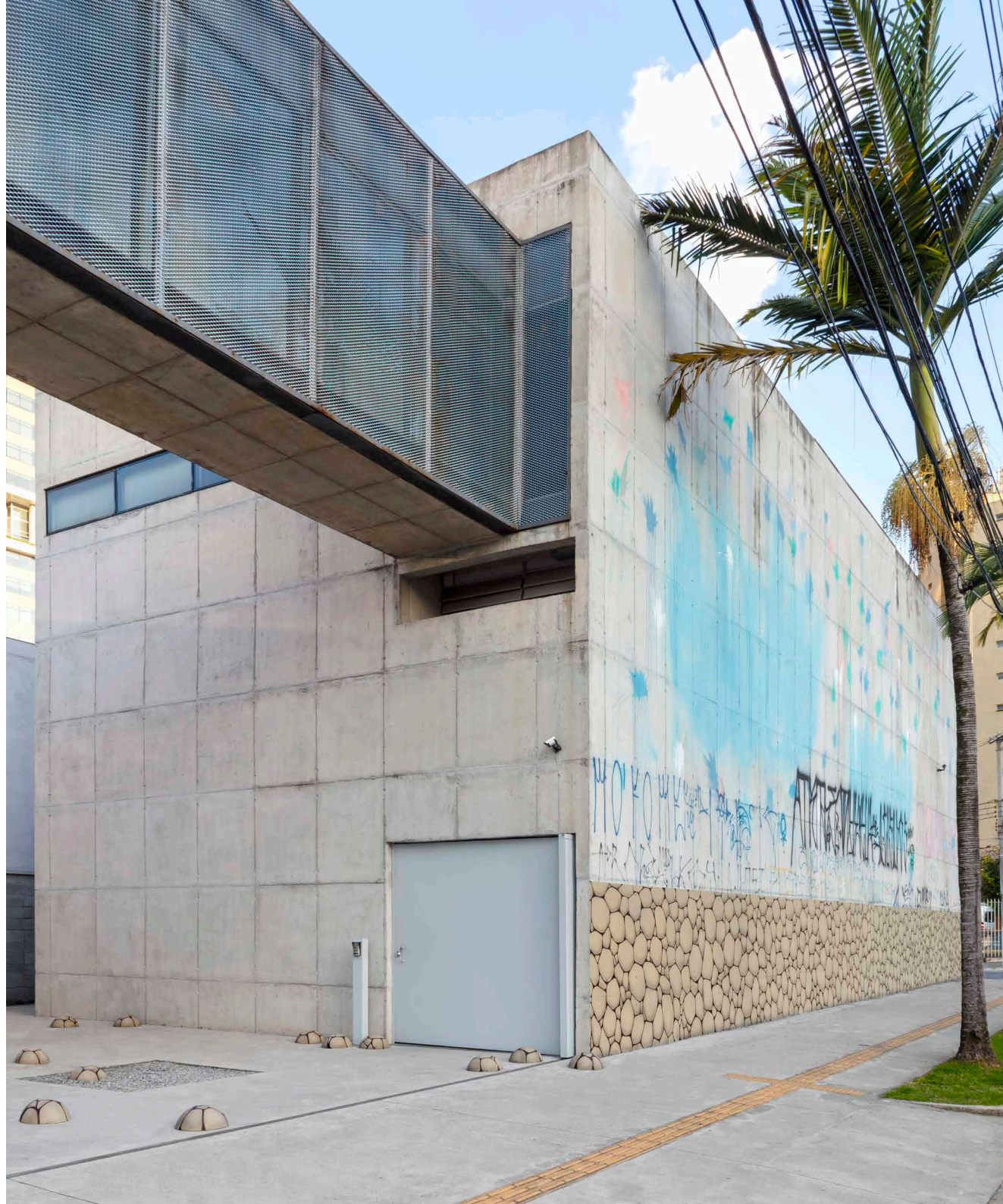


































## **socio-territorial scriptures**

### **from contract to counter-narrative**

Bruno de Almeida

In the anonymity of daily urban life, where dialogue with the fellow citizen can be easily avoided, the city imposes a constant and inescapable interlocution, acting as a communicational interface between the subject who lives it and a multiplicity of discourses that shape its territory. The urban space is a result of the sedimentation and embodiment of a series of narratives belonging to different times, authors and ideologies. But its polysemy is regulated and homogenized by an official discourse that disseminates a set of public values and norms. They serve to organize and assist the city's daily life, but also to control and prevent any kind of expression that goes against the authorized. Such codes of conduct not only merge with the visual vocabulary of the city, becoming inseparable from the way it is read. But are also embodied in elements whose presence conditions the free transit of citizens, becoming indivisible from their physical experience of space. Such strategies, from the most subliminal to those that virtually preclude any contestation, are implemented from the scale of the body to the scale of the metropolis, gradually shaping the individual's self-image and civic consciousness.

But this process is not unidirectional. The city's own identity is constantly renewed through the countless discursive representations that are juxtaposed to it. These movements destabilize the metropolis' normativity and impregnate it with narratives that are not committed to the official ones. More than an invitation to interlocution, these manifestations redefine the spaces of speech in relation to the prevailing discourse. Their language is also public, but it does not go through the official control. Their iconography is the result of a collective and subjective consciousness, but it is not subjected to the standardization of urban legislation. Their formalization is not tied to the aesthetic standards that are legitimized by the dominant culture, which nevertheless tries to incorporate and tame it, recognizing it as an aesthetic possibility and thus annulling its resistant and marginal character. In other cases, it simply expresses the taste of a particular social group, and the specificity of its communicational codes can break the narrowness of social relations reified by visual marketing and sour a fictitious consensus, officially instituted as a principle and goal rather than as a result of a discussion and negotiation of divergent interests. Such counter-narratives, from the subversive to those without critical pretenses, create fissures in the city that allow for a glimpse of the dissemblance between the discourse that refers to the city and the others that arises from it.

Maintaining this discrepancy is essential to sustain the narrative about a controlled and undisturbed city. A metropolis that is "requalified", "sanitized" and "iconified" by large enterprises that invigorate the market and commercialize a generic sense of "civic pride". This condition institutes depoliticized commodity-spaces, which not only exempt themselves of any responsibility over the source of urban problems but also camouflage the mechanisms and consequences of their production. This creates an environment whose narratives not only serve to regulate but also to produce simulacra, persuading and satisfying part of the population and excluding all others that do not fit the desired profile. Under a rhetoric of urban pacification, such discourses generate an aestheticization of fear, supported by stereotyped notions of marginality, delinquency, and criminality. This situation encourages more explicit forms of control and exclusion, reiterating the need for a spatial fortification of the city and the urgency of purging any deviant languages, especially those that use the built environment as their primary means of diffusion.

The fight against the symbolic claim of space that is in opposition to the dominant discourse is justified as a measure to prevent the depredation of the built environment and validated on the grounds of urban beautification and cleansing, among others. Paradoxically many of these official strategies end up becoming stains on a supposedly "normalized" and "appeased" city. Other variations of these same mechanisms arise, but they operate in disguise. Some, for instance, co-opt the counter-narratives thus annulling their subversive nature. While others avoid an illicit language through the use of their congener languages, as in the case of graffiti that is used to prevent "pichações" <sup>[1]</sup>, playing with a code of conduct between different agents. These and other strategies are gradually integrated into the urban glossary and are disseminated and reinterpreted by each social group or individual, therefore being adapted to the specificity of their contexts and criteria. In this way, new defensive vocabularies are created and replicated *ad infinitum*, which makes them increasingly autonomous from their original purpose. They end up restraining everyone and no one, creating places that are marked by a subliminal and ambiguous tension, where there is a blurring of what controls and what is controlled, what threatens and what is threatened.

<sup>[1]</sup> Distinctive street writing that is characteristic of Brazilian metropolises such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.







## about Ana Dias Batista

The familiar appearance that is intuitively attributed to the works of Ana Dias Batista is contradicted, with a closer look, by a set of enigmatic configurations that disrupt the normal behavior of these elements, but which paradoxically, seem to have always belonged to them. Through succinct procedures, related to the same logics, techniques and uses that are associated with these everyday-items, the artist captures their formlessness and transfigures them, resignifying their material presence and distinguishing them from the other “things”. But these set of attributes that singularize “the work” seem to coexist in equivalence with those characteristics that are banally ascribed to the common thing. Therefore, each one of Dias Batista’s artworks continually tests its status and autonomy in face of ordinary objects, procedures and spaces.

Both the guidelines established for the production of her artworks and the procedures subsequently applied to them, reiterate an interchangeability between reference and referent. The artist is interested in elements that have become obsolescent, as if they were freed from their original uses, and also in those who cite others but which have acquired autonomy from their referents and genealogy. Dias Batista delegates the execution of her pieces to the same professionals who would produce the standard thing, but subverts and reformulates their processes, creating an additional effort that transforms the normalized work into an activity that eludes practicality and an objective purpose. She also explores other procedures such as variations in scale, but changes the common use of this mathematical correlation that allows one to associate the dimensions of the “real” with its bi- or three-dimensional representation. These and other methodologies create denatured and emancipated objects, deregulating the intellectual and physical perception that the viewer establishes with them.

The spectator’s encounter with the work is further enhanced by the artist’s exceptional attention to the spatial context in which they are situated. Her pieces often operate as reiterations of the spaces they are in; either by emphasizing the inherent tendencies of the places, by distorting their materiality, or even by inventing false constructions that establish a relationship with the original configurations of the site. The firsthand experience of this relation between work and space suggests that Dias Batista’s pieces could share properties with the place that surrounds them. Thus creating a strong correlation between the



“world” and the “work” and an interplay between what is the “content” and what is its “container”. There is a sense that each one of the parties claims its autonomy in relation to the others, but simultaneously that all of them share a joint intelligence.

This paradoxical feature is latent in a transversal reading of Ana Dias Batista’s *oeuvre*. As much as one can understand a strong coherence and even name some tendencies within her artistic research, there are also visible sets of strategies that intentionally interrupt any immediate comprehension of the whole. Her pieces test and reflect upon the operations and mechanisms that are intrinsic to their own existence. But simultaneously escape from any theoretical rumination that could attach them to exemplary contents. Her work is a result of an responsiveness to its social context, but any critical content is not given positively, as an end, but only as an interruption. Thereby, the artist sharply addresses the arbitrariness of certain social structures and rituals, but does it without accusation, explicit criticism nor by taking any ideological side. And, when it seems that the work has finally made itself known, it creates a twist in the plot, presenting new clues to other conclusions.



**Ana Dias Batista**, 1978, Brazil. Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Graduate, master and doctor of Visual Arts from ECA-USP, São Paulo, Brazil. Presented individual exhibitions at: Centro Cultural São Paulo, Brazil (2001), Centro Universitário Maria Antônia, São Paulo, Brazil (2004), Art Museum of Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Brazil (2007), Estação Pinacoteca, São Paulo, Brazil (2009), Ateliê 397, São Paulo, Brazil (2015). And at the galleries: Adriana Penteado, Mendes Wood, Ybakatu and Marília Razuk. Has received the grant “Bolsa Pampulha” and the prizes Conexão Artes Visuais (Funarte, 2008) and PROAc (Secretariat of Culture of the State of São Paulo, 2009 and 2015). Has recently integrated collective exhibitions such as: Paulista Avenue (MASP, São Paulo, Brazil), In Memoriam (Caixa Cultural, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Temporary Contemporary (Bass Museum, Miami, USA), Tout doit disparaître (La Maudite, Paris, France), Imagine Brazil – Artists’ Books (DHC/ART Fondation pour l’Art Contemporaine, Montréal, Canadá), Huna, Hunak / Here, There (Al Riwaq Exhibition Space, Doha, Qatar) and Alimentário (Oca, São Paulo and MAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil).

**Bruno de Almeida**, 1987, Brazil. Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Graduated in Architecture by the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, Portugal (2009). Master in Architecture by the Accademia di Architettura, Mendrisio, Switzerland (2013). He has developed projects with institutions such as: Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, USA; New Museum - IdeasCity Arles, New York, USA; Independent Curators International, New York, USA; Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, USA; Pact Zollverein, Essen, Germany; Pivô Art and Research, São Paulo, Brazil, among others. His research and projects were published in: ARTFORUM International Magazine, USA; ATLÂNTICA Journal of Art and Thought, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Spain; TELLING #2, T+U Architectural Publications, Portugal; Revista aU – Arquitetura & Urbanismo, São Paulo, Brazil, among others.





# GALERIA LEME

## ERRATA

SITU #7 | ANA DIAS BATISTA | 07.11.2017 - 20.01.2018

CURATED BY: BRUNO DE ALMEIDA

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