

Love Story

by Francesco João

I love you, you love me. I love your work, you love my work; your work loves me, my work loves you; my work loves yours, your work loves mine. Love story.

Love Story was also the name of a now-closed nightclub located in downtown São Paulo. "Centro", once the financial heart of Brazil, has now fallen into disrepair; abandoned following the currents of real estate speculation, the disasters of the fluctuating economy and Brazilian politics.

Right next to the former Hilton hotel, abandoned in the early 00s, stood the Love Story. It is said to be the place that prostitutes used to go to after work, in their free time. A large inscription on the façade read, "A casa de todas as casas", which translates to "the nightclub of nightclubs" – but literally also "the home of all homes".

We used to go to raves at the Love Story. Before its abandonment, it was a venue housing the city's electronic scene, itself a natural evolution of the São Paulo punk scene that was so strong in the 1980s - with its music and its attitude so dear to Jac, then to Adriano (and to me, too). "Through being cool," sang Devo; "Música electronica, figura ritmica, arte politica, de la era atômica," later sang Kraftwerk instead.

"The home of all homes" is a good metaphor for São Paulo. A gigantic house that welcomes everyone: a door that is always open, but with a sign above it saying, "keep your eyes peeled". Yet, like the one of the Love Story, the door of São Paulo, the home of all homes, has closed. Metaphorically homeless people are now left on its landing; and those whose homelessness is anything but metaphorical are forced to live among the roots of the gigantic figueiras scattered around the city.

Free time has become suspended time, and it is in this suspension that those capable of conjuring diamonds from dust emerge. With the same ability as Lina Bo Bardi erecting the Teatro Oficina on Silvio Santos' property and Zè Celso transforming that patch of dry land into a fertile garden, Jac and Adriano perceive and enhance the agony of apparently worthless materials, without the fictitious sparkle attributed to them by the homologation that tramples everything and imposes itself mercilessly.

We are victims of a History that has nothing of originality, that results from pure suicidal violence and that cares for nothing. We are in search of a language in its purest expression. Yet we enjoy it – because when the boundaries of individual choice are limited, the taste of freedom intensifies. After all, it is what we love; or else we would not be here, in a clash of two against the world. We love paradoxes and we love mathematics; and I believe we are romantics, as well as punks, and rappers – in tango blues, whose spirits fight with cultural weapons for a better world, marked by love.

Francesco João lives and works between São Paulo, BR, and Milan, IT. His recent exhibitions include: Marli Matsumoto, São Paulo, BR (2023); *x_minimal*, curated by Friederike Nymphius, Cassina Projects, Milan, IT (2021); *1550 San Remo Drive*, Hot Wheels, Athens, GR (2020); *Francesco João*, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels, BE (2019); *Knife in the flesh - Contemporary Brazilian Art*, PAC - Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, IT (2018); *Donkey Man*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, BR (2017); *Everything tends to ascend. Or not.*, Pivô, São Paulo, BR (2016).