



Ilê Sartuzi

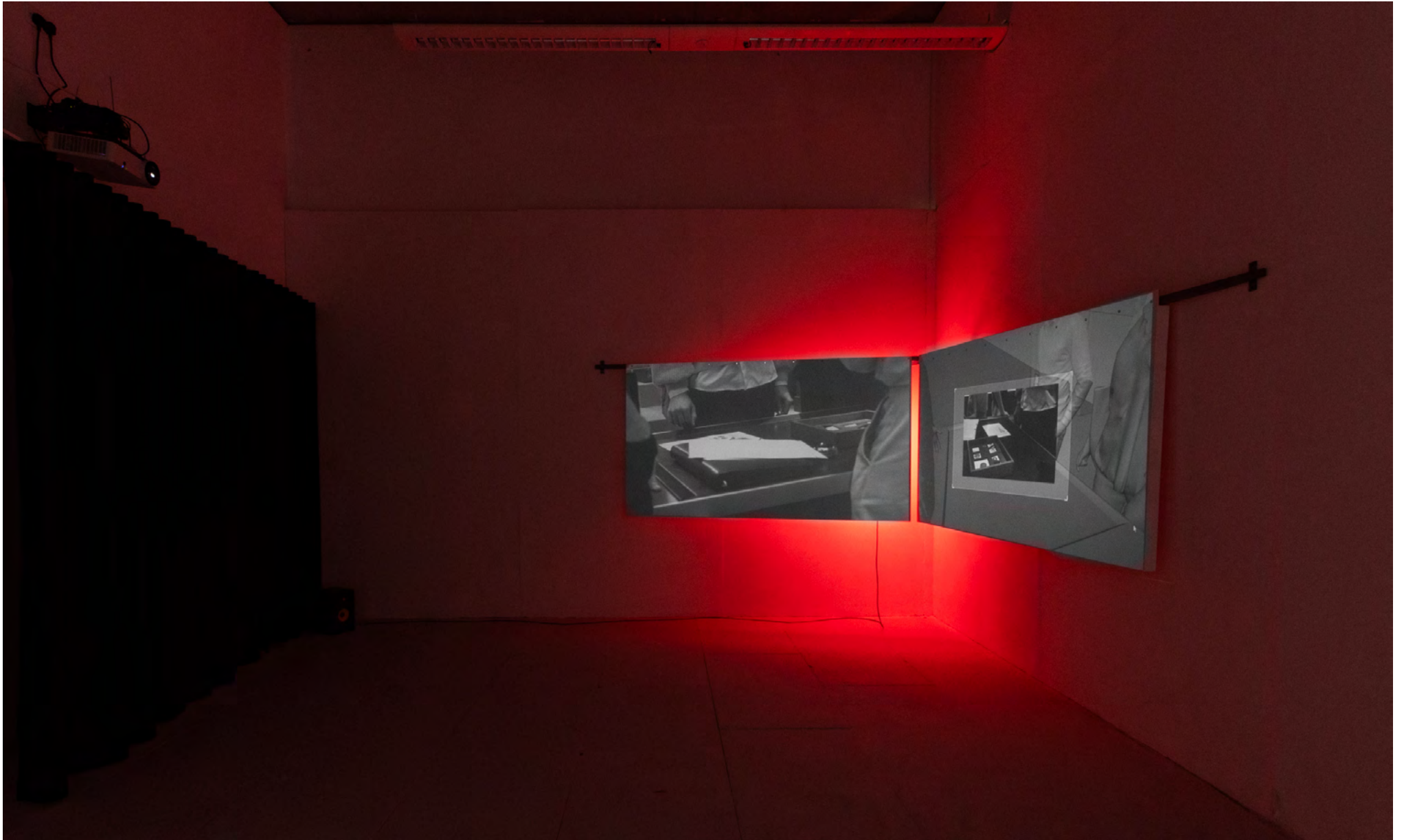
Ilê Sartuzi (1995, lives and works between London and São Paulo) is an artist who graduated from the University of São Paulo (USP) and now pursues his MFA at Goldsmiths, University of London. His research involves sculptural objects, mapped video projections, installations, and theatrical plays addressing issues related to the idealized image of the body – which is often fragmented or constructed from different parts, but also the absence of such figure in proto-architectural and digital spaces. An interest in the dramatic arts in recent years has given a theatricality to his objects and installations which are animated by mechanical movements and interpret dramaturgy and choreographies. He received the PIPA Award (Brazil, 2021), the prize at the Bienal de Artes Mediales (Chile, 2022), and has been nominated twice for the CIFO-Ars Electronica award (USA-Austria, 2022-2023).

Sartuzi has participated in exhibitions at some of the most important institutions in Brazil, such as Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2021, 2023); auroras (2021); Videobrasil (2021); Museu Oscar Niemeyer (2022); Bienal SUR (2021); Instituto Moreira Salles (2020); SESC (Pompéia, 2022; Pinheiros, 2022; Ribeirão Preto, 2019; Distrito Federal, 2018); CCSP – Centro Cultural São Paulo (2018); MAC-USP Museu de Arte Contemporânea (2017); Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto (2020; 2017; 2015); Galeria Vermelho (2017; 2018, 2019); all three in collaboration with the research group After the End of Art, which he has been part of from 2015 to 2021. Sartuzi presented theatrical plays, performing mapped video projections in spaces such as Oficina Oswald de Andrade (2018, 2020); Itaú Cultural (2019); Container Theater (2019), and TUSP (2019). Working for more than a year on a specific project, he presented his play with absent actors “hollow head doll’s foam” at Firma (São Paulo, 2019) and later premiered the play at SESC Pompéia (São Paulo, 2022). His work is in public and private collections including that of Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Instituto PIPA, Coleção Moraes-Barbosa, and Videobrasil.

**Prelude (or Curtain Call II), 2024**

steel, red velvet, curtain rack, stepper motor, Arduino,  
electronic circuit, oval flanged bearings  
210 × 130 × 80 cm





**Sleight of Hand, 2023-2024**

two-channel video installation

colour, sound, 8' 43"

Installation view at Goldsmiths, University of London, 2024

**Another object has been stolen from the British Museum—but this time by an artist**

***The Art Newspaper*, July 15, 2024**

**Evan Moffitt**

“Ilê Sartuzi’s short-lived heist involving a 17th-century coin draws parallels to the recent scandal over the theft of thousands of items from the museum’s collection”.

An artist has stolen an historical coin from its display case in the British Museum in London and deposited it in a donation box in the museum’s lobby.

On 18 June, the Brazilian artist Ilê Sartuzi removed the 1645 silver coin minted in Newark, England from its display case in Room 68 during a demonstration by a volunteer guide and replaced it with a replica. He then carried the original downstairs, where he dropped it through a slot into a box for donated change. Sartuzi, who says he planned the short-lived heist for more than a year, caught the entire incident on film and showed the footage as part of his graduate MFA thesis exhibition at Goldsmiths, University of London.

In the seven-minute video, choppy, handheld camerawork, captured by three friends of the artist, shows Sartuzi being caught by a volunteer guide on 17 June, before successfully attempting the theft again the following day. He explains that he shaved his beard to avoid being recognised by museum security and managed to swap the coins with the aid of a “misdirection”, or momentary diversion. Sartuzi considers his act a work of conceptual art which he calls *Sleight of Hand*, a reference to the legerdemain he practised in order to replace the original coin with its replica.

The original coin, which is not registered in the museum’s database, is part of its handling collection, founded in January 2000 to offer visitors opportunities to touch historical objects under the supervision of volunteers. Sartuzi and his lawyer claim his actions therefore do not violate museum policies prohibiting the handling of objects or their removal from the premises, nor do they fall under the Theft Act of 1968.



**Sleight of Hand, 2023-2024**

video stills



**Sleight of Hand, 2023-2024**  
two-channel video installation  
colour, sound, 8' 43"



A British Museum spokesperson said the police would be notified about Sartuzi's actions but declined to say if the museum intended to press charges. "This is a disappointing and derivative act that abuses a volunteer-led service aimed at giving visitors the opportunity to handle real items and engage with history," they said in a statement. "Services like this rely on a basic level of human decency and trust, and it would be a shame to have to review the provision of these services due to actions like this." The spokesperson did not comment on the coin's current whereabouts.

Sartuzi's *Sleight of Hand* comes almost one year after a scandal over the theft of thousands of coins, jewellery and other objects from the museum's collection led to the resignation of its director, Hartwig Fischer.

The museum declined to say whether any additional security measures have been put in place since the scandal broke, nor confirm if it had been aware of Sartuzi's actions prior to being contacted by *The Art Newspaper*. Although Sartuzi considers the scandal an "unfortunate coincidence", he acknowledges that his work highlights "the problem of universal museums". The British Museum "is a foundational part of the colonial, imperialist system", he says, noting that the coin he stole was the only one of British origin on display. Research reveals that more than half of the museum's collection remains uncatalogued.

Sartuzi, who intends to include the project in a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo next year, has previously had shows at Pedro Cera gallery, Lisbon and SESC Pompéia, São Paulo.

*Sleight of Hand*, he explains, is primarily concerned with mythical trickster figures and the role of magic in "the social relation of money and currency". Coins like the one he stole, made before and during the English Civil War (1642-51), were so widely counterfeited and "clipped", or trimmed at their edges, that Parliament took control over monetary policy, founding the Bank of England in 1694. The "fetishistic character of money as a form", Sartuzi says, "is closely related with the experience of the 'momentary suspension of belief' that is the basis of magic."



Installation view *Sleight of Hand* at Goldsmiths, University of London, 2024



**pickpocket, 2024**  
oil on canvas  
65,5 × 50,5 cm



**untitled (sleight of hand), 2024**  
oil on velvet and aluminium frame  
98,5 × 61 cm

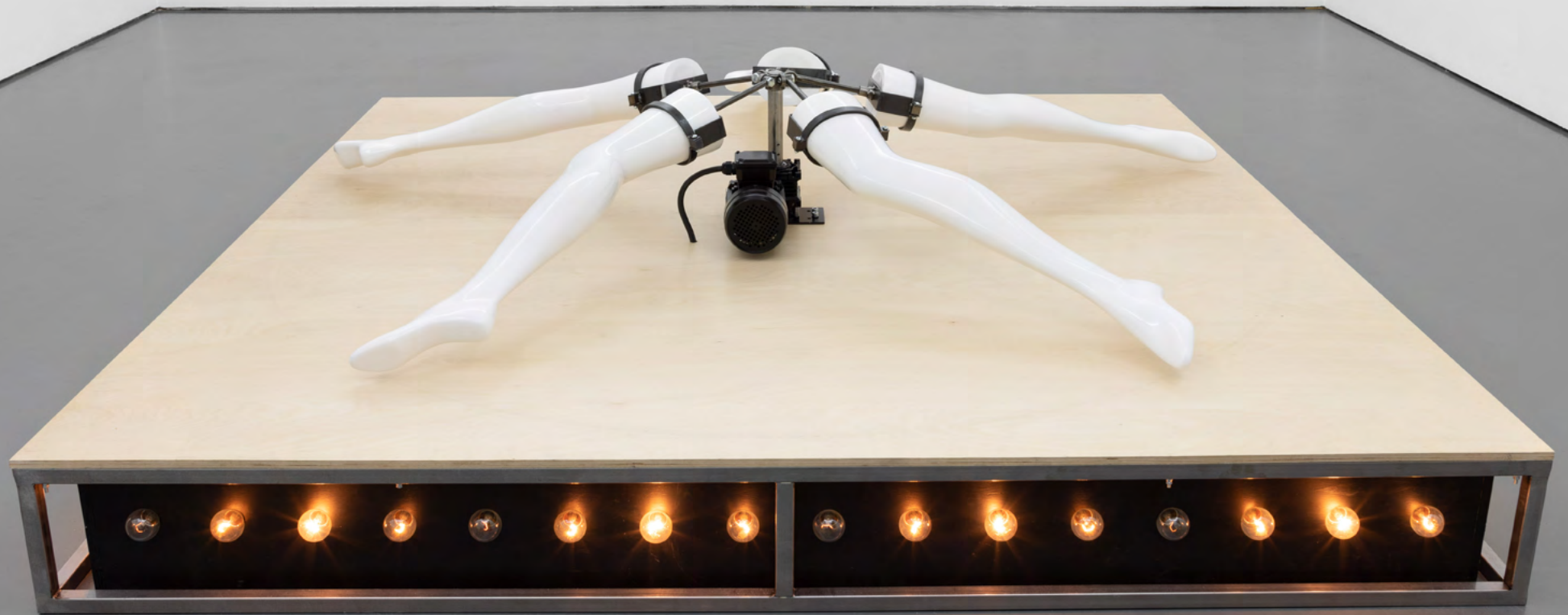


**Untitled, 2024**  
oil on canvas  
180 × 110 cm



**T.GIRLS, 2019-2024**

mannequin legs, industrial motor with reduction, inverter drive, wood, steel,  
lamps, dimmer rack, arduino, electronic circuit  
210 × 210 × 55 cm



**T.GIRLS, 2019-2024**  
(detail)



**Tiller Girls, 2024**  
oil on canvas with aluminum frame  
50 × 43 cm



**orange and pink, 2024**  
oil on linen  
30 x 30 cm



**hands movie, 2023**

video, B&W, no sound, steel structure and monitor  
6' 19" | 40 x 39 x 36,5 cm



Installation view *GIRLS AND BOYS*, Wilde Trumpets, London, 2024



**shooting star, 2023**  
found kids' shoes  
14 x 16 x 13 cm



**Gossip, 2024**

performance in collaboration with Maomi Meindl

variable time

In the context of *GIRLS AND BOYS* exhibition at Wilde Trumpets, London, 2024



**Skeleton Tap Dance, 2023**

steel, wood, 3D printed resin, Arduino, Servo motors

43,5 × 35 × 52 cm

Exhibition view at  *Artforum's 74th Birthday Party*, Plicnik Space Initiative, London, 2024



**AD MR, 2024**

oil on linen and aluminium special frame

32 x 32 cm



Installation view *in the coulisse*, Night Café Gallery, London, 2024



**house hair IV, 2024**  
beeswax and human hair  
14,5 × 12 × 11,5 cm



**disasters III, 2024**  
paraffin and oil paint  
14,5 × 12 × 11,5 cm



Installation view *Vaudeville*, Pedro Cera, Lisbon, 2023



**Skeleton Dance, 2023**

3D printed resin, strings, wood, arduino, transducer speaker,  
servo motors, curtain  
variable dimensions | skeleton 48,5 × 23 × 18 cm  
[view the video here](#)



Installation view *Vaudeville*, Pedro Cera, Lisbon, 2023



**Four Curtains, 2023**

steel, velvet, microcontroller, stepper motor, plastic, cables

152 × 45 × 46 cm

[view the video here](#)



**Proscenium, 2023**

wood, 3D printed resin, LED, arduino

12,5 × 40,5 × 11 cm

[view the video here](#)



Installation view *Vaudeville*, Pedro Cera, Lisbon, 2023



**Ghostbuster, 2023**

video HD with sound

9' 00''

[view the video here](#)

***No one, but flayed skin.***  
**Tiago Mesquita**

There is no one on stage. People don't wander around, touch each other, lock their jaws, grind their teeth or salivate. Nothing or no one gets tired, sweats or bleeds. There are video footage of actors' heads repeating some phrases. Cut out, they are projected onto mannequins, who receive them as if they were a mask. These luminous masks complain of tiredness, whine, shiver, itch, sneeze and burp. Some, more curious, look for their eyes, make macabre jokes for being projected onto an armless dummy. All the time the characters seem to talk about a body we can't see. After another sentence, the faded video is projected onto another puppet, or nowhere at all. Only his voice remains. The sounds and images emitted look like specters of something that is no longer in sight.

After all, there is no body in "hollow head doll's foam". The play takes place in the interaction between the bits and pieces of an assembly of industrial and commercial spoils. There are robot cars, pulleys, shop mannequins, synthetic materials, chemical foam, old images of Arnold Schwarzenegger, ropes, simulacra of skin and hands. The same faces of the dolls are animated by cables, semiconductors, wires, light, gimmicks, videos and sounds.

The objects are not scenography, they are sculptures that Ilê Sartuzi made for a while, until 2019. The sculptures that the artist makes, regardless of the set presented here, are unorthodox articulations between elements that imitate body parts. In works that are not shown here, he composes a hand, for





**hollow head doll's foam, 2019-2022**  
theatrical play without actors  
43'00"

example, with fingers that can have different dimensions, different colors, apparent mechanisms. An uncanny but humorous montage.

The elements with which Ilê works are not mechanisms that could replace nature. In a more recent video, made after this play, the artist works with an empty, digital body structure that seems to have lost its referent. As if only such substitutes were left, “hollow head doll’s foam” gives the impression that no living form is left, just the waste of what was the modern life.

The scenic action also seems to be made of these loose fragments. Whether due to the three-dimensional volumes assembled or dismantled, whether in the elliptical text, or the sounds emitted either by a mannequin or by a speaker. Visual or written materials have no necessary relationship. They are elements that vary, as if they could be attributed to anyone. The phrases spoken during the show are sequenced, alternated, scrambled and rearranged. As the artist has already commented, they are processed and sampled verbal tics, presented in one order, then in another.

In fact, even when there seems to be dialogue in the play, we cannot say this with certainty. The dolls don’t even look at each other. They are presented as if they are not looking anywhere. They are presented as if absorbed, while repeating their sentences, changing moods. Maybe that’s why we don’t know if they respond to something or talk to themselves.

Therefore, I have the impression that, like the bodily appendages, the speeches are also fake — and I apologize for insisting. They are simple sayings, which seem to trap the characters in an agonized loop of commonplaces. Maybe they only know this small

repertoire anyway. It’s five sentences, fifteen words and that’s it, that’s all. It is for no other reason that the characters, half desperate, half joking, ask: “Stop putting words in my mouth!”.

Although “hollow head doll’s foam” manipulates a universe of automatons, Ilê Sartuzi’s imagery seems to me quite different from the theme of robots and androids that fed the imagination of the world resulting from the industrial revolution.

Since the 19th century, fantasies around such machines have been, among other things, a metaphor for the overexploitation of industrial work, a technician symbol of the changes caused by technical and scientific innovations. In any case, these devices indicated a transformed, wonderful and frightening world that would point to the near future.

This imagery of modernization was linked to ambiguous Promethean promises of transformation of everything by humanity and technology. Life would be different. Machines would bring convenience and alleviate our difficulties, as indeed they did. Even when cybernetics was shown as the figuration of dystopia, it was still linked to the potential of new devices. So advanced that they could eliminate people and take their place.

The cultural atmosphere of the play is different. The spectacle was conceived after industrial production was largely automated. A good part of our experiences is mediated by electronic devices connected to high-speed communication networks. In addition to being familiar, machines are constitutive of sociability today, in different parts of the world. Evidently, this did not mean a decrease in the super-exploitation of work or a fairer distribution of wealth. We live exclusively with these artificial, highly patented extensions that we believe to be our own.



Installation view *hollow head doll's foam*, SESC Pompéia, São Paulo, 2022



Installation view *hollow head doll's foam*, SESC Pompéia, São Paulo, 2022

In “hollow head doll’s foam”, the solitary mannequins speak of much that is not there. They tell the sensations of a phantom body, while mobilizing the vocabulary repertoire to recount cases of unspeakable violence and to make a joke. Everything, however, is fake, always fake, I repeat again. There is no constitution of a new personality or subjectivity, only superficial juxtapositions that fall apart with the same speed in which they are constituted.

Video faces, photographs, models, repeated, scrambled, serialized, reordered speeches are all prosthetic devices of intersubjective coexistence. The characters seem to resort to such a set of elements as people, when socializing on the internet, resort to avatars. These human relationships, mediated by identity prostheses, allow us to reconstruct personas in networks.

The use of artificial extensions of ourselves seems to find a picturesque interpretation here. Because, if we take the way in which the overlapping of characters occurs here, we get the impression that the voice doesn’t quite fit their avatar, similarly to a shirt that doesn’t fit right. Thus, the attribution of a mask or voice to a mannequin seems blunt, unfinished, funny, bizarre. In fact, it is how part of the relationships between people can take place, in these gigantic advertising machines, of multi-million companies, sometimes larger than national states, which are social networks: like an infinite meeting of people in monologue, trying to outwit collective loneliness.

A mismatched, and very funny, love conversation that takes place in the play is the most perfect translation of these weird relationships. Made from an algorithm that generates a question and an answer, the dialogue goes from the absolute lack of intimacy to marriage, even indicating a normative path of appeased sociability. It’s as if two broken monologues form a conversation. Meanwhile, latex skins, detached from the body, are dragged by a pulley system that could be triggering all the events in the theater. The flaying happens next to us, all the time, but no one notices.



**portrait from behind, 2020**

silver gelatin print

28,3 × 19 cm



**Curtain (after Fontana), 2023**

velvet and pins

34,8 × 42 × 3 cm



**no name, 2022**

voil, thread, cable tray, stepper motor, arduino, sewing bobbin  
variable dimensions



**disasters, 2022**

paraffin and oil paint on iron shelf

50 × 13 × 10 cm



disasters, 2022  
detail



**house hair III, 2022**  
beeswax and hair  
15 × 12 × 11 cm



**house hair III, 2022**

detail

**Conversation between Luiz Camillo Osorio and Ilê Sartuzi  
PIPA Prize, 2021**

**1 – Tell me about your education and how it was developed so that your production would incorporate elements of moviemaking, visual arts, computer sciences and theatre.**

I started producing at a very young age, exploring painting within a classic approach and a rigorous study of the human figure. In university, that interest broadened into other languages and mediums, so I began to explore the image of the body in space, focusing on the relations between the two-dimensional image in space and the flattened corporeality of the sculpture. From the moment I felt the desire to produce using tools that overcome what was traditionally assumed as the field of fine arts, it became necessary to conduct a more specific research in each area.

I've collaborated many times with artists of different specialties, in order to learn about elements that were being requested by the works. That is, it seems to me that incorporating other elements in my production is a desire that is born from itself – if such independence can even be placed upon work.

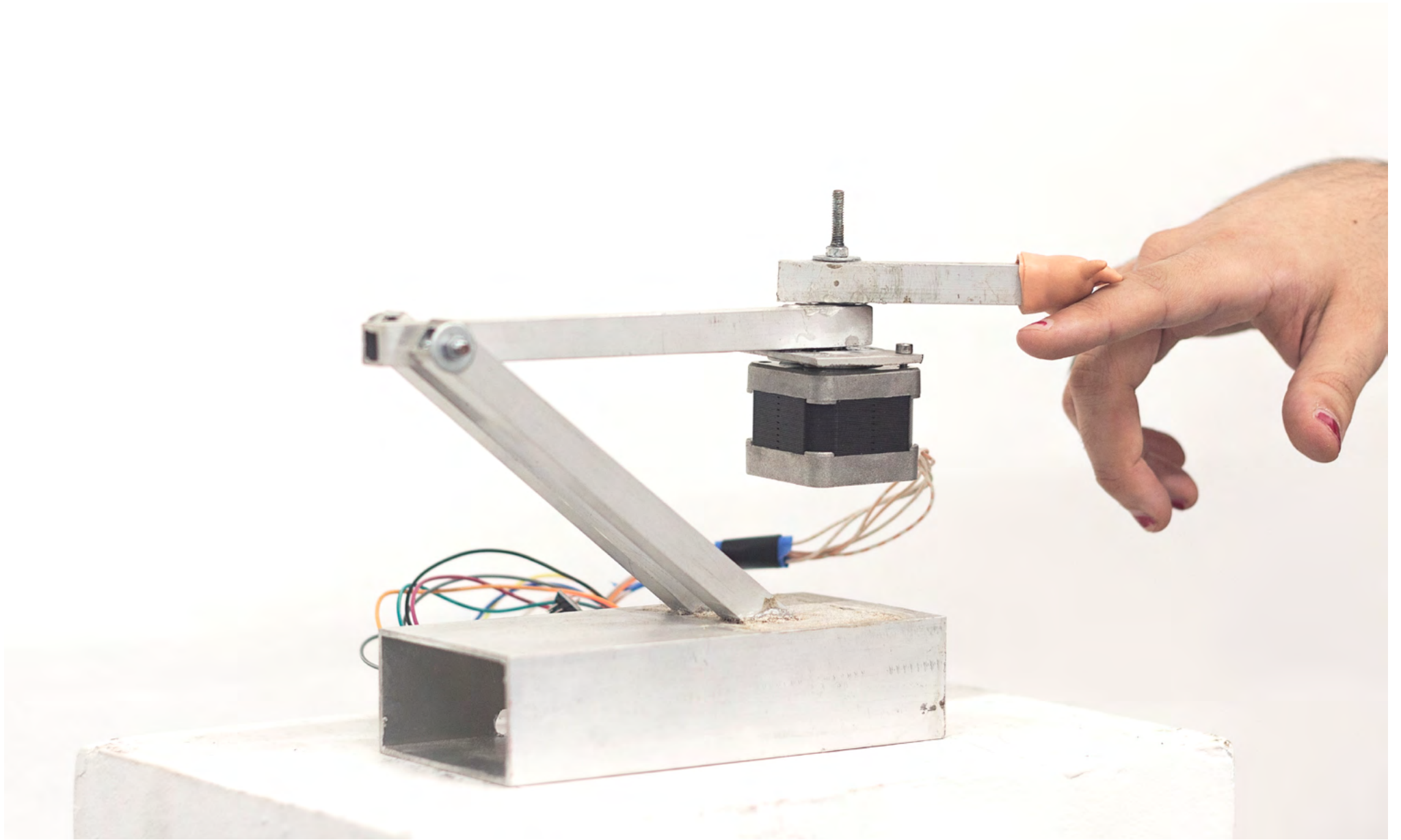
Parallel to fine arts production, my education ended up being trespassed by a series of encounters that sparked a theoretical interest. This critical investigation is still a source of work (facing precariousness, artists who have to pay for their own bills often need to engage in other paid activities), but it has also always been a complementary part of my poetic exploration. Working in public and private institutions, the defense and promotion of critical debate

around art and culture is a founding aspect of my education. In university research groups and at bars, a rigorous reading practice provided me with conceptual tools for direct confrontation with other artist works in interviews and studios, and, evidently, all that results in a critical view about my own production.

**2 – By looking at your work, we realize there is a curious combination of organic and mechanic elements, of soft materials and motors, of fragmented bodies and arbitrary movements, voices that speak for themselves. There is an unusual mixture of Samuel Beckett and Louise Bourgeois, having a weariness of fixed forms in common. Does that make sense? Tell me a little bit about where your work speaks from.**

I believe that this is a good reading, and your question may be interpreted in several ways. Your own description seems to point out that the artworks speak for themselves. Sometimes, you have humanoid bodies resembling automata, but at other times you have non-anthropomorphic objects that come to life. In both cases, they evoke an uncanny feeling of an inanimate object that starts to simulate some vivacity. However, there is ambiguity there: if those objects speak for themselves, it's also hard not to imply a sort of puppeteer.

On the other hand, if I interpret where my work comes from within an historical point of view, I feel comfortable with your remarks (laughs). Both examples you've summoned carry a more or less explicit psychological density that can resonate in those objects – granted with movement, speech and choreography –, which could assume a certain projection of artificial “subjectivity”. But, most of all, they are artists whose interest for the exploration of form led them to expand



**carinho machine (prototype), 2022**

aluminum, stepper motor, arduino and doll's hand

18 × 26 × 9 cm

the boundaries of these fields. I mean, this exercise of freedom to go beyond the “fixed forms” is given within each practice – for instance, scrutinizing the literary text to the last consequences – as well as by engaging in peripheral unfoldings, such as radio or television pieces. When it comes to Bourgeois, she ended up creating a series of signs that outline her own mythology, and, at the same time, reverberate something of the ordinary (that reminds me a little of Tunga as well). I’m interest in particular on “cells”: translated into Portuguese, it can be either “celas” (as in a cage) or “células” (the smallest life unit), indicating an assemblage in which the artist consolidates an installation thought and composes a scene starred by this recurring mythology.

In any case, these two possibilities that indicate where my works come from go hand in hand. Having in mind the very work structure, which I believe to be a privileged path to investigation, we can recall the final scene of *cabeça oca espuma de boneca (hollow head doll’s foam – 2019)*, in which we had two androids perform a conversation created by artificial intelligence. On the one hand, that object spoke from itself, but it also had words coming directly from a dataset of users that experimented with this chatbot and its algorithm. That is, it spoke from a midpoint, or the average of interactions with human users (only that could spawn a long conversation). But also, the result of a lack of coherence and the chatbot’s simple programing generated a fragmented text, whose core was difficult to define and which easily migrated from one subject to the other. Taking that result as an example, I like to compare this dramatic structure to *Waiting for Godot (1952)* for their formal resemblance. In the end, what I would like to point out is that the artwork is inserted within an nonlinear inherence or tradition of patterns, whether the author chooses or not, announcing some place from where they come and go back to.

**Luizinha (bipolar), 2022**

lamp bulb, artificial hair, cable, arduino and relay  
variable dimensions





**vedettes, 2017**

latex mask, pedestal, iron, servomotor, arduino, projector  
variable dimensions

**3 – In *cabeça oca espuma de boneca*, we have a theatre without actors, with machines, mannequins and voices running through space. A theatre without actors is a theatre without drama, but their mechanic bodies are fragile and expose that fragility. What drives this dramaturgy? Does it work the same way on stage as in video?**

Dramaturgy and form, which seem to me inseparable in this case, are driven by their own objects. But that does not make it necessarily a theatre without drama. The first event of the play unchains a movement that will follow through the entire time -span of the play, in parallel. Two glued latex skins are raised, and then torn apart by the tension produced in opposite senses by a motor system and counterweight. After separated, one of the skins draws the limits of the “stage”, moving to a higher plan until it comes back in the final scene. It is, therefore, a cyclic narrative outline, since the same skin that was torn goes back, at the end, to the beginning, as if under a return drive.

From that first movement, each subsequent scene was shaped by one or more devices. The fragility you point out could also be a dramatic element. Not because the bodies themselves are fragile, but because it seems that such a complex system – and, at the same time, a precarious one – open up possibilities for a series of failures that would expose some fragility.

That is, in general, these mechanical devices, besides offering a relation with their own time – whether with simultaneous unfoldings, whether by focusing the spectator’s attention into specific details from every scene –, they create a central appeal of drama: the immanent possibility of failure and lack of control. Dealing with imperfect mechanisms, the impossibility to predict future failures

adds up a tension to the spectator's experience. Somehow, this possible autonomous dimension of some of the mechanisms could go out of control and assume a self-destructive aspect, referring us, for instance, to *Homage to New York*, by Yves Tinguely. In the terms of these machines and objects, coming to life means, for us, to lose control.

Now, it is certainly a work to be seen in direct experience. I made a movie of the play, which became a video installation on three channels, together with Quina filmes. It was a nice work, but it's completely different. The three channels made it possible to create something closer to the play, because we were able to show several things happenings simultaneously, as it was originally. But that matter – that theatre production had to face last year – will never be solved with a perfect substitute. There is something about the body experience and spatial projection that is unique in theatre. What I was interested in and the reason I refer to my work as a theatre play without actors is precisely the traditional rite that theatre implicates: to drive to the place, enter the space, wait for the spectacle to begin, relate directly to things, the end cut and going back to the real world.

**4 – There is a lot of manual work and technology in your work process. What is the greatest challenge for the use of new technologies in arts? I remember some conversations I had with Palatnik in which he made sure to emphasize that technology was never an end, but a resource; that he was not worried to be up to date with new inventions, but he used them to produce optical events. How do you perceive that in your poetics?**

I agree, there is this danger in the enchantment of the technique and that the use of any technology should not be naive, including

**The Thing, 2021**

mannequin hand, steel, synchronous motor  
18 × 28 × 21 cm





**dedinhos, 2022**

polyester resin and zip tie

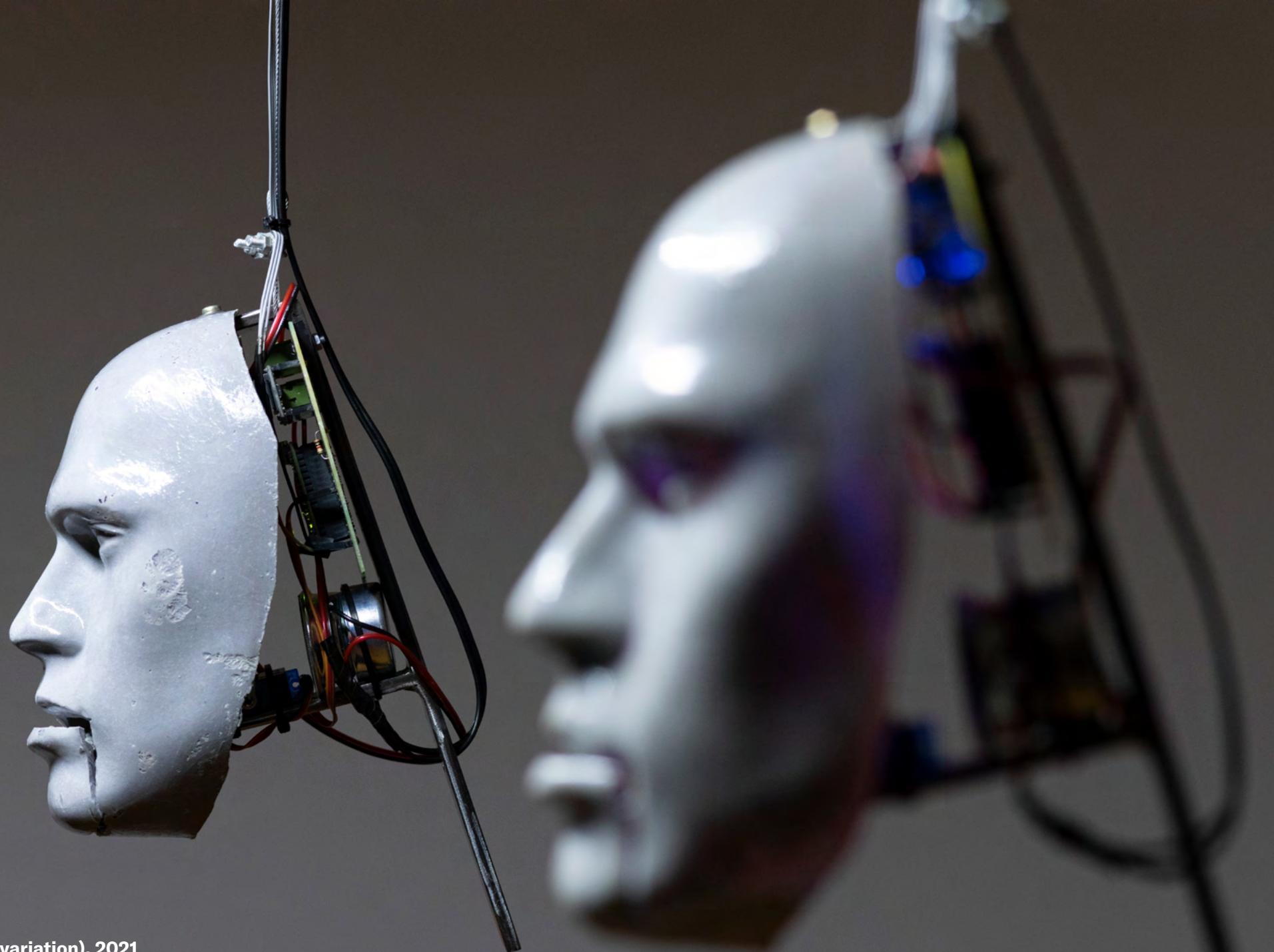
16 × 19 × 12 cm



**dedinhos, 2021**

polyester resin, iron, screw and nut

10 × 8,5 × 4,8 cm



**discussion I (variation), 2021**

resin, fiberglass, electronic circuits, mini speakers, servo motor and arduino  
variable dimension



Installation view *A. And A again.*, auroras, São Paulo, 2021



**fall, 2021**

HD video, colour, sound

12' 20''



Installation view *A. And A again.*, auroras, São Paulo, 2021

the traditional technologies of the artistic field. That is, any gesture in the elaboration of a work must be understood as such, and as an inalienable part of the artwork. As I mentioned earlier, the use of other techniques and tools came from the very need of the work's development. It wasn't something I knew a priori, and that I decided to introduce in my practice for mere effect. Unlike Palatnik – whose house I also had the pleasure to visit on a particular occasion –, who had a technical education for mechanical production, the first steps towards the use of some machines and microcontrollers is accompanied by other collaborators, in my case.

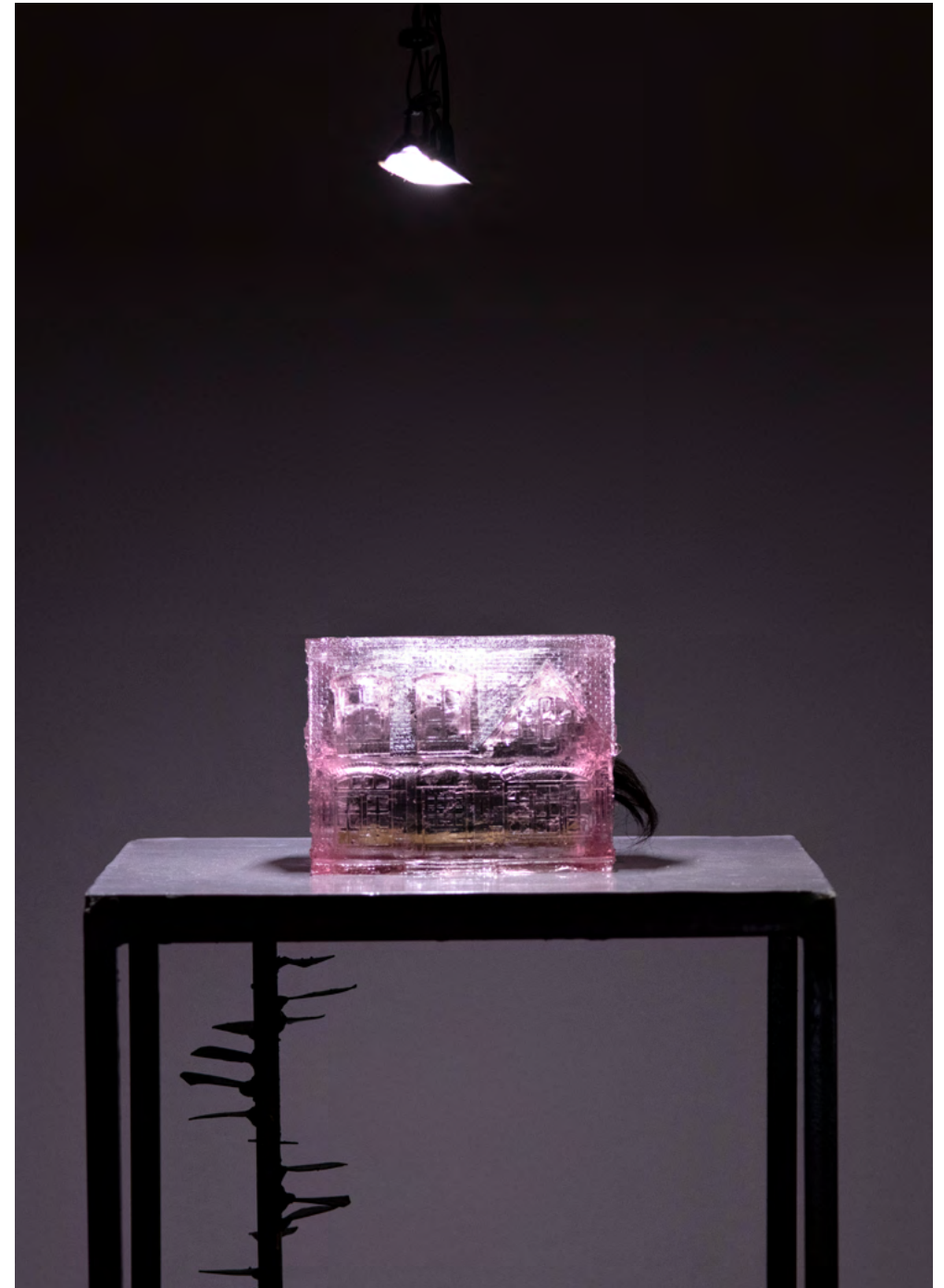
However, we cannot leave aside the fact that each tool can also create new perspectives, and ultimately new subjectivities. Therefore, taking the case of photogrammetry, although the desire to use such technique precedes the understanding and study of that technology, as soon as you begin to explore its possibilities, it indicates a visuality of its own that differs from video footage. That leads me, for example, to ghostly and continuous movement of the camera I was interested in, whose realization in the physical world would demand conditions I do not have access to.

The digital space – which is no state-of-the-art technology – presents entirely different associations. The thing is: even if it's something we all know, when it was massively appropriated by the art world, it was made in the most conservative way possible. That is, the digital space mimics real physical space – the white walls and the burnt cement floor of art galleries. What *Dollhouse Gallery* (2020) explores, regarding that matter, is an unexpected situation, something that would be impossible outside the digital world. The repetition – which was a central formal aspect of the original dollhouse – assumes a

**house hair, 2021**

steel, resin, wax and hair

132 × 36 × 36 cm





**little theater, 2021**

wood, steel, puppets, velvet, led light, vibration motor and arduino

163 × 60 × 58 cm



**Dollhouse Gallery, 2020**

Virtual Tour / Viewing Room / Website

12' 20"



*mise en abyme* format, not only for the representation of a small house inside the dollhouse that returns to itself, but also for the development of a work inside the other. I think it turns out to be something recurring: my production is usually very consequent, and, sometimes, self-referential, or it uses parts of previous works in order to make something.

The point is that the issue was never to use more modern technologies or not, but what to do with those tools. As I was saying, each form – be it a technological device, a particular brushstroke or traditional structures of representation of art – carries in itself its history. I try not to be too naive about it, and eventually, I adopt those historical features. But I find it difficult to classify the general use of the latest technologies in the production, because they vary a lot. I believe that maybe something that surpasses this is a hybrid relationship with those technologies, combining ancient techniques such as puppet theatre or ventriloquist puppets with a more or less simple technology from contemporary mechatronics.



**5 – Your appropriation in video of Beckett’s *Worstward Ho!* is very interesting, specially knowing that it was done during the pandemic and social isolation, as if the loss of the world to which we were subjected forced us to assume the failure of our modern civilizational project. Our progress is our disaster. “Try again. Fail again. Better again. Or better worse. Fail worse again. Still worse again.” How do we branch out so we don’t drive into abyss? What would you say is the role of art in coping with this impending disaster?**

I believe that a central issue is that the idea of the failure of our modern civilizational project seems to come from a post-modern point of view; but there is, in fact, a serious of modernity issues that

have never been overcome. Ironically, to me, the starting point into understanding the role of art comes from modern thinking.

Faced with an engagement that is based on a set of established ways – an “accommodation to the world” in order to convey its messages – I’d rather bet on the “shock of the unintelligible” of autonomous art and the understanding of a complex meaning of forms, as advocated by Theodor Adorno. Coinciding with your question, one of the radical examples the author brings in his seminal work, *Engagement* (1962), is precisely Samuel Beckett. Repetition – which is the basis of *Worstward Ho!* – is about exploring form to its most radical reduction. Following a similar logic of Adorno’s, the French philosopher Alain Badiou writes about Beckett’s text that: “*If there is no adequation, if the saying is not prescribed by “what is said,” but governed only by saying, then ill saying is the free essence of saying or the affirmation of the prescriptive autonomy of saying .*”

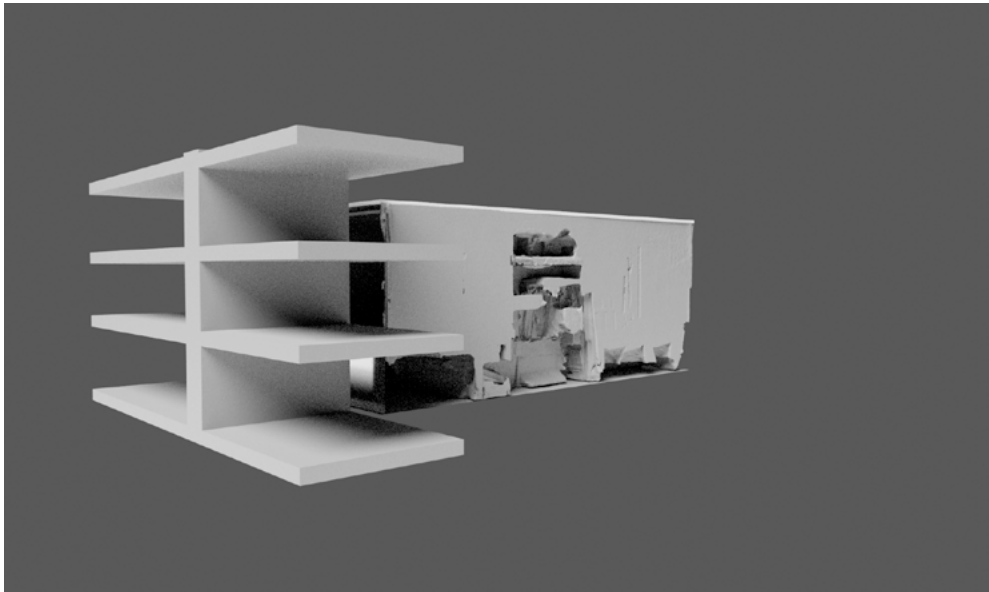
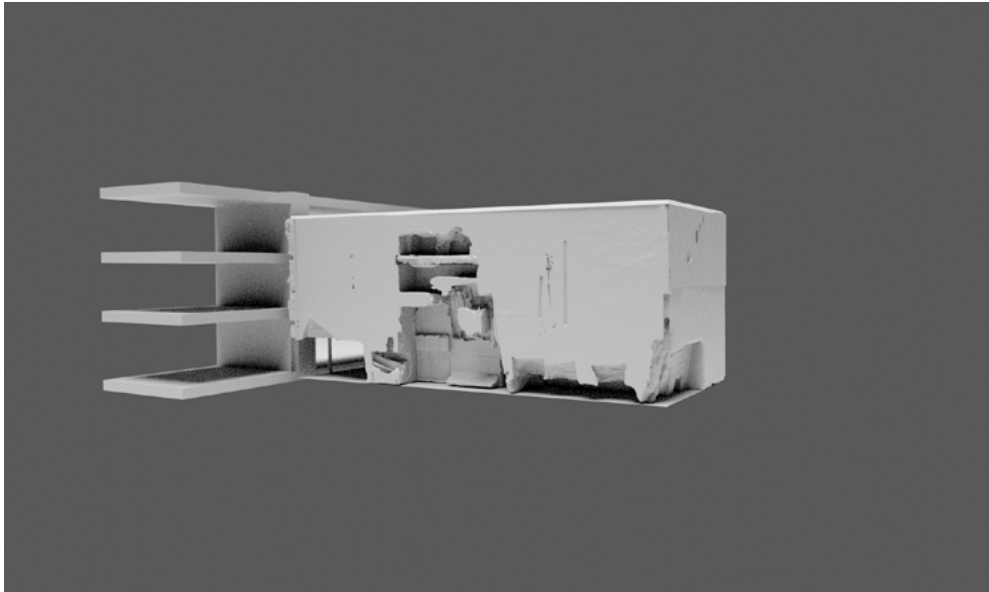
That interpretation is resonated in Adorno’s thinking, in which “ill saying” is resistance through forms that were not previously accepted by the world order. That is, “Art is not a matter of pointing up alternatives but rather resisting, solely through artistic form, the course of the world, which continues to hold a pistol to the heads of human beings.” The work of art has no final purpose, because it is an end in itself. Some may say that is a position that alienates artistic production, but we must have in mind that “*there is no material content, no formal category of an artistic creation, however mysteriously changed and unknown to itself, which did not originate from the empirical reality from which it breaks free.*”

Of course, there is a number of other attitudes outside the artistic field; concrete confrontations that must be carried out as a subject

**carrossel, 2021**

iron, resin, figure, halogen lamp, synchronous motor  
56 × 36 × 36 cm





### **Worstward Ho!, 2020**

video HD, colour, sound

6' 46'

[view the video here](#)

of the political field. But that does not mean “autonomous art” does not have its political impact, quite the opposite: what is at stake is the way we view this engagement, which sometimes simplifies the political spectrum. “Bad politics becomes bad art, and vice versa”.

I think we may see that treadmill “into abyss” in two ways. If in your question it represents the decay of humanity, regarding the political and economic scenarios and the values that ultimately rule the public sphere, it is at full steam and art will not be the one to prevent the fall. There are things that are no up to art to solve. It would be naïve to think it would resolve all material and immaterial problems. Part of the struggle is fought with public policies, social movements and within the historical class struggle. Sometimes, art may want to disguise what is supposed to be a class conflict. On the other hand, if that abyss represents the “ill saying”, then it becomes a possibility for art to open its cracks and explore the breaches. Not to ease the fall, but to sharpen the consequences of the actual failure of the modernity project that is yet to come.

### **6 – How the pandemic affected your work? What will never be the same?**

I don't think that event has had a decisive and irreversible effect, as opposed to what was believed at the beginning. But also, to take a stand at the heat of the moment may be precipitated. The basic class structure remains, and, thus, no revolutionary change in subjectivity seems to arise from this. In terms of artwork, this period has made room for developments that were in course within my production, and, at the end of the day, the tools that I started to explore seem to respond well to a number of issues raised by isolation. Nevertheless, both videos – *Night and Day* and *Worstward Ho!* (2020) – relate



**Worstward Ho!, 2020**  
video still

directly to an investigation of videos conducted in an apartment, that, since 2016, was designed as a space of exception, an isolated reality. *ensaio, h* (rehearse, h – 2017) is a video that is part of that investigation, in which the only experience outside the apartment is mediated by computer images and virtual visits. I mean, many issues that were raised during this period were already part of previous investigations that came together in different ways.

There will certainly be impacts and changes in some work relations, in the art market, and in the way we relate to each other that should unfold over the next years. But I tend to be resistant to the idea that the disastrous impact of this phenomenon will have drastic and longing implications. A recurring statement is that human “nature” and its technical and cultural ingenuity is that of adaption (often together with a conservative tendency). The “sharpening” lapse in the conditions of isolation, hyperconnectivity and social distancing are a rehearsal for central issues in the next steps of the development of the species.

**Night and Day, 2020**

video HD, colour, sound

4' 44'

[view the video here](#)



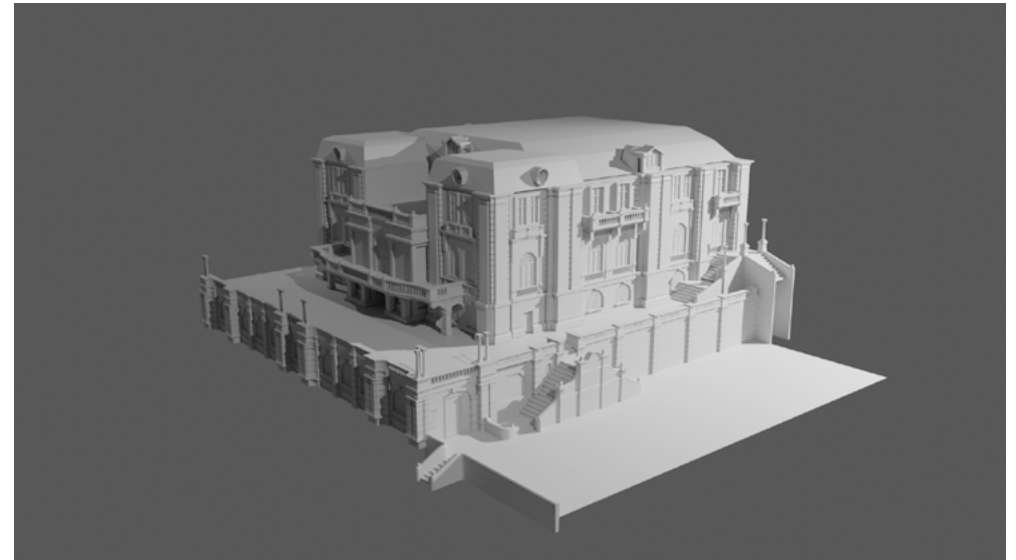
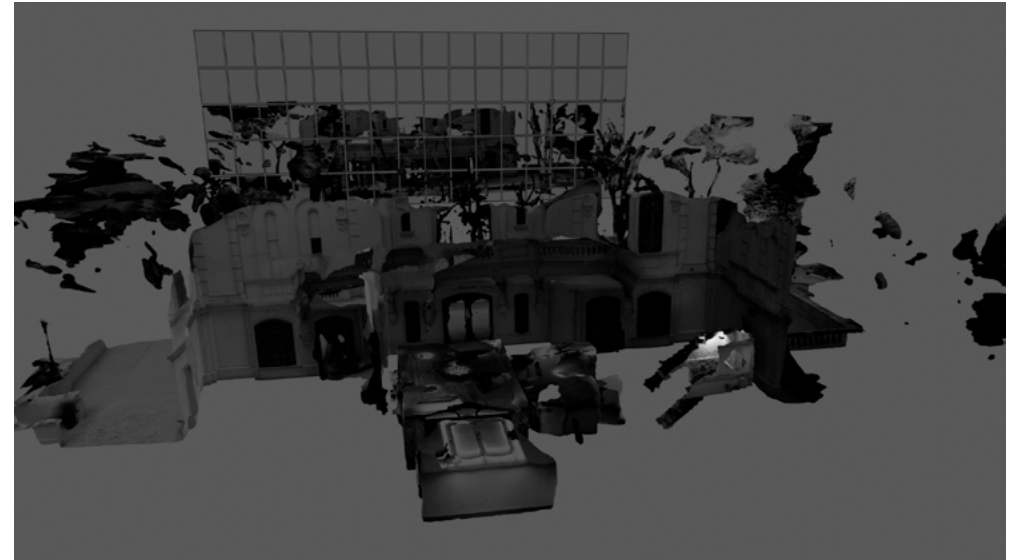


**nhonhô, 2021**

video HD, colour, sound

9' 46'

[view the video here](#)



**nhonhô, 2021**  
video stills



**Arnold Schwarzenegger, 2018-2019**

video projection on expanded PVC plate and steel

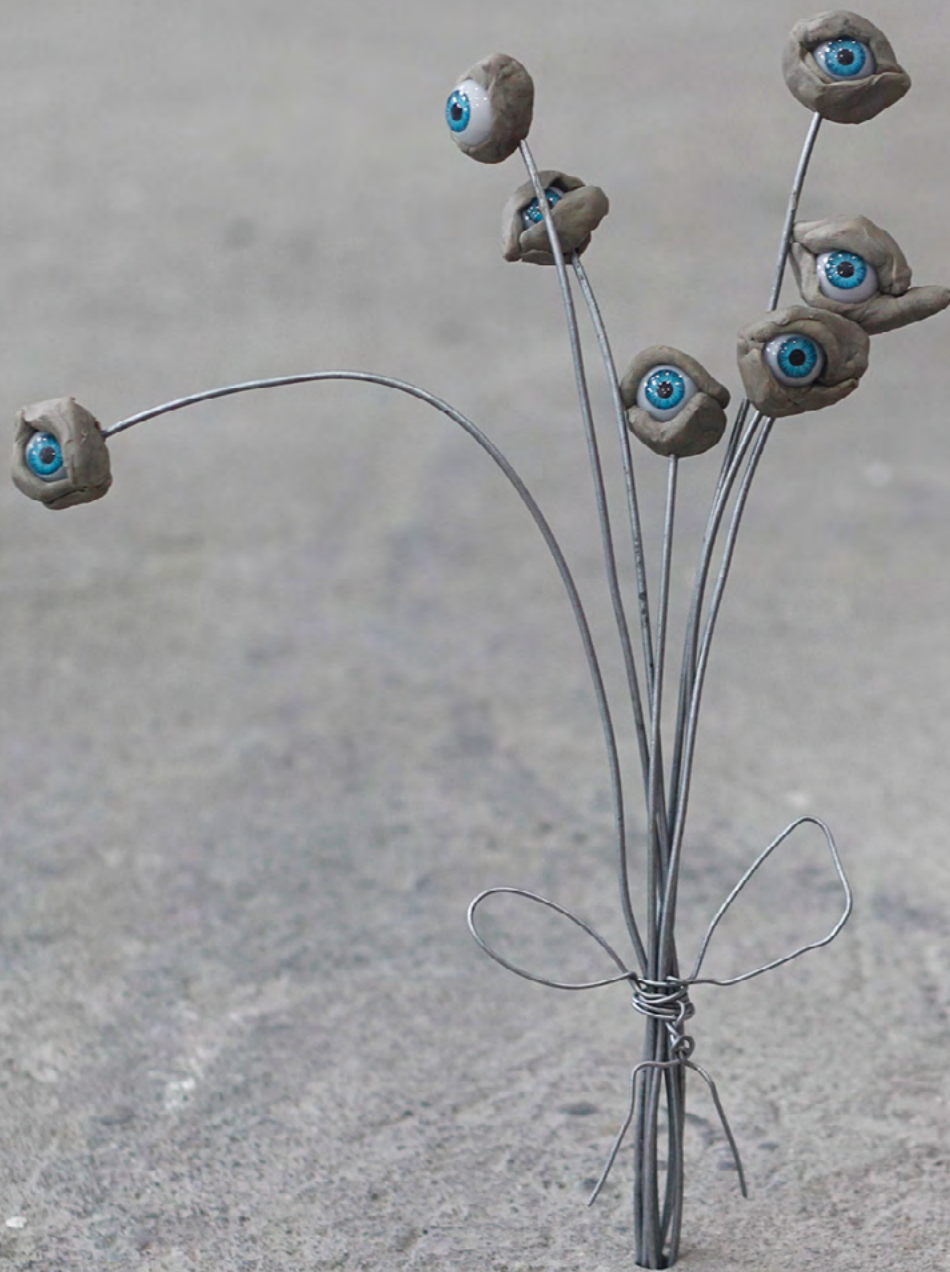
193 × 106 × 33 cm + projector



**The Kardashians, 2021**

steel, latex and digital print

20 × 188 × 26 cm



**bouquet, 2021**

wire, doll's eye and clay

24 × 16 × 8 cm



**fly-boy, 2018**  
latex, oil paint and nylon  
65 × 53 cm



**skin (legs), 2018**  
latex and nylon  
110 × 60 × 40 cm



**Urubus, 2022**  
oil on canvas  
18 x 24 cm

Ilê Sartuzi

Born in 1995

Lives and works London and São Paulo

### Education

- 2022 – 2024 Master in Fine Arts, Goldsmiths, University of London  
2014 – 2019 Bachelor in Fine Arts, Universidade de São Paulo (ECA/USP)  
2015 – 2021 Research group – After the End of Art with Prof. Dr. Dora Longo Bahia  
2018 – 2019 Reseech Scholarship FAPESP “Images of otherness in the work of Henri Matisse” thesis advisor Prof. Dr. Sônia Salzstein

### Solo Exhibitions (selection)

- 2026 *to vanish*, Pedro Cera, Madrid  
2025 *A CRIME, A CONFESSION AND A TRADE*, NiCOLETTi, London  
*trick*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea (MAC), São Paulo  
*Contract*, Luisa Strina, São Paulo  
2023 *Vaudeville*, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon  
2022 *hollow head doll's doam*, SESC Pompéia, São Paulo  
2021 *A. And A again. auroras*, São Paulo  
*Nhnhô*, Videobrasil, São Paulo (duo)  
2020 *Dollhouse Gallery*, Dollhouse Gallery  
2019 *hollow head doll's foam*, firma, São Paulo  
2018 *Faço pé e mão*, arte\_passagem, São Paulo (duo)

### Group Exhibitions (selection)

- 2026 *The Assault of Illusion*, Centre d'Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona, Spain (upcoming)

- The Assault of Illusion*, Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid, Madrid  
*INDEPENDENCE, CASA / Brixton House*, London  
*breach*, Setareh, London 2025 *Genius Loci. Notes on Places, Chapter I. The Ballet of the Nations: A Present-Day Morality*, Rudolf-Scharpf-Galerie, Wilhelm Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen am Rhein, Germany  
*Vital Lies: Studies of Some Varieties of Recent Obscurantism*, Johannes Gutenberg University (in collaboration with Kunstverein Ludwigshafen), Mainz, Germany  
*Trou Noir*, Enhorabuena Espacio, Madrid  
*Sex in Space*, Isla Flotante, Buenos Aires  
*ExtraLegal*, BayArt, Cardiff  
2024 *Sleight of Hand*, Goldsmiths, University of London, London  
*Making Expansive*, Austrian Cultural Forum, London  
*Summer Show*, Pedro Cera, Lisbon  
*Great Expectations*, General Assembly Gallery, London  
*Rio, e também posso chorar*, Casa de Cultura do Parque, São Paulo  
*Phygital*, Centro Cultural PGE-RJ, Rio de Janeiro  
*🎂's 74th Birthday Party*, Plicnik Space Initiative, London  
*in the coulisse*, Night Café Gallery, London  
*GIRLS AND BOYS*, Wild Trumpets, London  
2023 *Chão da Praça*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo  
*Taste the Difference*, Hypha Studios, London  
*Hybrid Mirrors*, The Wrong Biennale (online)  
*Spectral*, The Cookhouse Gallery, London  
*Spinning Yarns*, ArtHub, London  
2022 *Desvairar 22*, SESC Pinheiros, São Paulo  
*Ópera citoplasmática*, Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Curitiba  
*Setas e turmalinas*, Casa de Cultura do Parque, São Paulo  
*Apocalypse Now*, Projeto Vênus, São Paulo  
*O cru e o cozido*, Galeria Athena, Rio de Janeiro  
*Uma mão lava a outra*, OLHÃO, São Paulo

- Por detrás da retina*, Instituto Inclusartiz, Rio de Janeiro  
*Aquisições recentes: Coleção Instituto PIPA*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro
- 2021 *Ninguém teria acreditado*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo  
*SUPER-NATURAL*, OLHÃO, São Paulo  
*SUPER-NATURAL*, MASSIMO, Milan  
*SUPER-NATURAL*, BPA, Cologne  
*Notes on some dysfunctionality*, Homeostasis.lab  
*Tropic 23° 26'14" S – Visualizing Spatial Data*, Homeostasis.lab
- 2020 *IMS Convida*, IMS - Instituto Moreira Salles  
*Ao Ar, Livre*, Tiago de Abreu Pinto  
*SARP*, Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto  
*Tá me vendo? Tá me ouvindo?*, Casa Niemeyer, Brasília
- 2019 *Mostra de Arte da Juventude*, SESC Ribeirão Preto  
*O Grande Susto*, cc espaço, São Paulo  
*Amarradona*, Espaço das Artes (USP), São Paulo  
*Cripta*, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo  
*os dois a 80km/h...*, Caixa Preta, Rio de Janeiro  
*Nascente*, Centro Universitário Maria Antônia, São Paulo  
*ArteLondrina7*, UEL - Universidade Estadual de Londrina  
*DEFILÃO de\_passagem*, arte\_passagem, São Paulo  
*migalhas*, galeria o quarto, São Paulo  
*Ocupação 9 de Julho*, São Paulo
- 2018 *Paredão*, CCSP – Centro Cultural São Paulo  
*VERBO*, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo  
*Bienal das Artes*, SESC-DF, Brasília  
*Ruído e ausência contínuos*, Galeria Sancovsky, São Paulo
- 2017 *Ainda não*, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo  
*Subsessões: Av.Paulista*, MASP – Museu de Arte de São Paulo  
*Programa de Exposições 2017*, MARP – Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto
- Novas Poéticas 2017*, Galeria Cañizares, Salvador  
*25ª Programa Nascente*, MAC-USP – Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo  
*24º Salão de Artes Plásticas de Praia Grande*, Palácio das Artes  
2015 *Programa de Exposições 2015*, MARP – Museu de Arte de Ribeirão Preto  
*40º Salão de Arte de Ribeirão Preto (SARP)*, MARP  
Salão de Artes Visuais de Vinhedo  
2014 *I Salão de Artes Plásticas Solar dos Andradas*, São Paulo  
*23º Salão Curitibano*, Curitiba  
*22º Salão de Artes de Mococa*, Mococa
- Theatrical Plays
- 2020 *Terra tu Pátria*, MIToff, São Paulo  
2019 *hollow head doll's foam*, firma, São Paulo  
*Terra tu Pátria*, Itaú Cultural, São Paulo  
*Terra tu Pátria*, Teatro de Contêiner, São Paulo  
*Terra tu Pátria*, TUSP – Teatro da USP, São Paulo  
*Terra tu Pátria*, FETO - Festival Estudantil de Teatro, Belo Horizonte  
2018 *Terra tu Pátria*, Oficina Oswald de Andrade, São Paulo
- Screenings
- 2023 *Semana del Cine Latinoamericano*, El Cultral San Martín, Buenos Aires  
*Festival PLAY*, Corrientes, Argentina  
*14 Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo Ch.ACO*, Santiago de Chile  
*16 Bienal de Artes Mediales TRUENO*, Cineteca Nacional de Chile,

- Santiago de Chile
- 2022 *Juan Downey International Contest*, Bienal De Artes Mediales, Santiago, Chile  
*9no Corriente*, Encuentro Latinoamericano de Cine de no ficción, Arequipa, Peru
- 2021 *Juan Downey Prize Finalists*, Onda Media, ARTV, Santiago, Chile  
*NaVaranda*, Casa de Cultura do Parque, São Paulo  
*Imersões: arte e arquitetura*, Rio de Janeiro
- 2020 *Night and Day*, Olhão, São Paulo  
*Arte como Respiro*, Itaú Cultural  
*Audiovisual sem destino*, Galeria A Sala

#### Residences

- 2026-27 Centro Pecci, Tuscany
- 2025 Ybytu, São Paulo
- 2022 Pivô Arte Pesquisa, São Paulo
- 2020 Olhão Art Residency, São Paulo

#### Prizes and Awards

- 2024-25 Goldsmiths (University of London) Junior Fellowship, UK
- 2023-24 Hopper Prize, USA (shortlisted)
- 2023 CIFO-Ars Electronica Award, USA and Austria (nominated)
- 2022 XV Prêmio Juan Downey, Bienal de Artes Mediales, Chile
- 2021 Prêmio PIPA, Brasil
- 2018-19 Bolsa de Pesquisa da FAPESP, Bra