

## **Rosilene Luduvico – A Nameless Place**

### *A place of origin*

Victory in the environs of Vitória. This pronouncement sounds like a happy ending. Actually, however, this first solo show by Rosilene Luduvico in a Brazilian institution, entitled *Lugar sem nome* [A Nameless Place], at Museu Vale, in Vila Velha in the state of Espírito Santo, is only the starting point for a recommencement – the reintroduction, to Brazil, of her current artistic production, which she has been developing since she took up residence in Germany in 1995.

Rosilene became aware of her interest in art while still a child. Her tranquil life in the mountainous region of Espírito Santo, more specifically in the mountains between Vitória and Pedra Azul,<sup>1</sup> fueled her playful childish imagination. The local solitude allowed her to listen to herself and thus convince her parents to allow her to move to the city of Vitória to continue her studies and consequently her career. Staying in the house of one of her cousins, the young girl began preparing herself for a career as an artist by attending classes at the local art academy. From 1988 to 1995, Rosilene studied visual arts at Espírito Santo University. Upon graduation, she wished to widen her horizons and moved that same year to Germany.

Since its creation, in 1773, the School of Painting of the renowned Düsseldorf Art Academy has always had an excellent reputation with a focus on painting, and for a very long time its only competitors in the German context where the art academies of Berlin and Munich. Great masters of contemporary art have taught at that this academy, even though they were not dedicated specifically to painting. One of these examples is Joseph Beuys, linked to this academy in the 1960s and '70s in a very innovative and controversial way, giving rise to serious conflicts among the faculty that ultimately resulted in his dismissal from the institution.

Rosilene Luduvico first began attending the Düsseldorf Art Academy as an auditor, in 1997 and 1998, being a student of Konrad Klapheck. The painting of this master was – and still is – dominated by characteristics of neorealism, surrealism and pop art. Klapheck was a contemporary and colleague of outstanding artists such as Yves Klein, Jesús Rafael Soto, Lucio Fontana and René Magritte. The Brazilian artist thus entered into a thoroughgoing, though indirect, contact with leading figures of contemporary art, whom she has continued to accompany ever since, mainly through literature.

From 1999 to 2003, Rosilene attended the painting course under Professor Siegfried Anzinger, who began teaching at the Düsseldorf Art Academy in 1997. One of the most internationally recognized Austrian artists, Anzinger chose to live and teach in Germany, being a leading proponent of *Neue Malerei* [New Painting]. This movement was established at the beginning of the 1980s and became recognized for its intensely expressive gesture. It could very well have been from this master that Rosilene Luduvico inherited her perseverance, since he espouses the (di)lemma, “Die Malerei ist ein tägliches Scheitern” [Painting is a daily failure].

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<sup>1</sup> During her childhood, Rosilene shared the “Nameless place” with a few other inhabitants. Today, this region and its surroundings have become a popular destination for tourists, partly disfiguring the idyllic characteristics of her memories from that time.

Her academic training went hand-in-hand with professional experience; this gave rise to productive partnerships that allowed Rosilene to work on a wide range of projects that positioned her artwork in renowned institutions and collections, as a practical extension of her daily art practice in her studio in Düsseldorf.

Although this introduction may convey the idea that her career has developed linearly, I believe it conceals details that were decisive in Rosilene Luduvico's formation as an artist, and consequently in her productive process. The traces and signs of this experience are doubtlessly rooted in the canvases the artist produces. It is up to us to catch sight of them.

#### *A decisive place*

For quite some time, painting, drawing and other forms of recurring artistic expression have played a decisive role in Rosilene Luduvico's life. It is as though the course of her life were framed within the context of painting. Here is a talent not so much innate as achieved!

The relation of the artist, as subject, with the painting, as object, consists of an either harmonious or conflictive cycle. Adorno referred to the relation between object and subject as a constant and not always tangible battle: "Upon being radically separated from the object, the subject reduces the object to itself; the subject swallows the object, forgetting how much it is itself the object. The image, whether temporal or not, of a blissful identity between subject and object is, however, Romantic; from time to time a nostalgic projection, today it is a myth."<sup>2</sup> Rosilene Luduvico has already surpassed this contradictory duality, since her attitude and her work are immersed in a full symbiosis and maturity.

The exhibition *Lugar sem nome*, consisting of both small- and large-scale paintings, as well as artworks in the genres of drawing and installation, refers to the artist's own – solitary, nomadic, bucolic, introspective and playful – universe.

The title suggested by Rosilene Luduvico – *Lugar sem nome* – underscores the macrocosm surrounded by flexible, intercultural barriers, including here each and every imaginable and unimaginable place. The protagonists of her work occupy a neutral, pure and virgin space. Each representation signals a rupture from the massification of contemporary life. The factor of temporality is distinguished by night and day scenes, along with landscapes that depict distinct seasons of the year.

#### *A special place*

Each and every place should be considered in terms of the space it occupies or its spatial capacity. *Lugar sem nome*, based on striking places from Rosilene Luduvico's childhood, was elaborated for a specific space: that of Museu Vale, and punctuates the artist's nomadic, private and professional path in recent years. The symbiosis of this wide context is the show, as none of the foregoing factors alone could justify its existence.

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor W. Adorno. *Philosophie und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt: Reclam Verlag, 2000, p. 76. [Here, translated from the author's free translation into Portuguese.]

Michel Foucault described the coexistence of various levels and contexts that are overlain to form the whole: “The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, and wherein the erosion of our lives, of our time and of our history is brought about in a continuum; the space that wears us down, is also, in itself, heterogeneous. In other words, we do not live in a sort of vacuum, in which individuals and things are placed, in a vacuum that can be filled by various tones of light. Rather, we live within a series of relations that delineate positions that are decidedly irreducible in terms of each other and which cannot be superimposed.”<sup>3</sup>

The show, occupying all the space in Museu Vale, is subtly divided by genres of painting: cityscapes and rural landscapes, as well as portraits. All of the artworks were made specifically for this project and emphasize a generalized dialogue based on Rosilene Luduvico’s dreams, anxieties, questions and aims. The show’s content is spread throughout the museum, without losing its balance while occupying monumental, medium-sized and introspective spaces.

In an isolated room at one end of the museum, the exhibition-goer finds an emblematic drawing that plays a key role in the exhibition. With the lightness of a childish dream, a wooden cart pulled by five birds is fascinatingly taking flight, immersed in a pure and neutral environment. The diligent driver is holding the reins with maximum focus and concentration, as though he were executing an honorable task, similar to Aphrodite’s actions. According to Greek mythology, Aphrodite used a cart pulled by birds to save Adonis’s life.<sup>4</sup> The only witness to the scene reproduced by Rosilene Luduvico is a wise owl intent on appreciating the trip, seated on the cart. The dynamics of the scene is emphasized by the movement of the two flags fluttering over the cart. The huge wheels evince their performance by way of their monumental, colorful spokes, perfectly suited to this playful context. The drawing is not presented isolatedly in the exhibition space; it is immersed in its own radiant microcosm instilled by the purpurin pigment applied throughout the room. This installation-like character is something the artist has been exploring in various experiments involving the abandonment of the conventional support, resorting to a freer action that sets up a larger space for dialogue and the viewer’s experience of the work.<sup>5</sup> The lightness of the drawing and the brightness of the purpurin seduce the visitor in this introspective setting. Also for the exhibition *Lugar sem nome*, Rosilene conceived an ephemeral painting to be executed directly onto the institution’s walls, and which will exist only for the period of the show.

From this room, the exhibition path leads past a set of small-format canvases which appear simple and naïve at first sight. The purpurina of the previous context is here transposed to the paintings individually and in distinct hues. Subtlety hovers in the air. The uneasy spectator is left to explore this context more meticulously. There then emerges the image of small isolated beings immersed in their own universe, avoiding the exchange of glances with the viewer, since most of the depicted characters do not reveal their identity: they are facing away. Accompanied by their few belongings in simple packaging, they become part of the landscape of this microcosm, in which they are immersed. Rosilene Luduvico’s sensibility has been sharpened by the cosmopolitan metropolises she has actively visited in recent years, including New York, Tokyo and London – fixing her gaze not only on the monumental context, but on the refuse of these powerful cities and cultures. There she

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault. “De outros espaços.” Translated by Pedro Moura. Conference given at the Cercle d’Études Architecturales, on 14 March 1967, also published in *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 5:46–49, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Aphrodite, the goddess of love, had various lovers including Adonis, whom she raised and protected. However, one day, defying his lover’s advice, Adonis went to hunt a wild pig and was killed by the animal. Aphrodite heard his moans of pain, and immediately went to rescue him in her cart pulled by birds, but she found him covered with blood and already dead. The blood was so bright that, to perpetuate him, the goddess transformed him into a flower, the wood anemone, which sprouts on hills in the springtime.

<sup>5</sup> Rosilene Luduvico has carried out various spatial occupations, including one, in 2003, entitled *Sweet Mystery of Life*, in partnership with Takeshi Makishima at the Parkhaus in Düsseldorf, consisting of a 225 x 360 cm wall painting. In 2006, the same artists produced the work *The Wink of the White Horse*, also a painting made directly on the wall, at Westlondonprojects in London.

discovered her valuable protagonists. The choice of the small-scale format of the paintings for this depiction was a very conscious decision. Aesthetically, the small-format of the paintings, having purpurin as a background material, sets up a visuality typical of something valuable to be preserved in small amounts. This scenario is occupied by the modest representation of isolated, desolate individuals, at the border of collective existence – that is, at the fringe of society. They are presented amidst a rocky or rural nature, accompanied by only the moon, the sun, clouds, or a volcanic eruption, as though indicating the passage of time.

Was this attitude imposed or was it an option? Since the cause is obscure, we can only make various speculations. It can be said that a myth is created, the myth of the dismemberment of certain beings of bourgeois society. In such society, there are clear precepts to be followed: “...in bourgeois society there is no proletariat culture, there is no proletariat moral nor is there proletariat art: ideologically everything that is not bourgeois ends up yielding before the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois ideology is capable of suppressing everything... Certainly there are revolts against bourgeois ideology. These are identical to what is normally called the avant-garde. But these revolts seen by society are indisputably limited, and are apt to become reincorporated into the usual social precepts.”<sup>6</sup> From this point of view, in contemporary society there are phenomena and isolated attempts at survival, along the margin of the impositions. On the other hand, at the fringe of the large metropolises, the social isolation experienced by private elements most likely does not arise from a spontaneous conscious attitude, but rather as the cause of an involuntary social dismemberment, imposed by the system, far from any heroic or Romantic attitude. These factors, however, are not part of the report given by Rosilene Luduvico, who puristically focuses her gaze, attitude and devotion on isolated moments of loneliness. Loneliness is considered an enriching and constructive moment, not necessarily requiring consolation.

The show *Lugar sem nome* allowed Rosilene the possibility of returning to produce in Brazil and for the Brazilian public. As she has had this latent desire for quite some time, she is pleased by this challenge that is accompanied by a great deal of expectation on her part, on the part of the Brazilian public, and especially that of the public of Vitória, the city where she began her artistic career.<sup>7</sup>

Back in her habitat and with a temporary studio where she was born and spent her childhood, Rosilene Luduvico is dedicated to the depiction of the landscape, composed mainly of flora and fauna and a few witnesses of this context, allowing the nature, whether utopian or real, to predominate. The works are conceived for a huge, warehouse-like exhibition room, which allows for the individual visualization of each artwork, as well as the dialogue between the works generally.

Surprisingly, Rosilene Luduvico’s paintings, especially the large-format ones, reveal an uncommon lightness, as though the various layers of pigments applied to the canvases were somehow floating above it, not fixed to the artistic support. The technique developed by the artist alludes to watercolor, even though it is executed with oil paint. The subtlety and

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<sup>6</sup> Roland Barthes. *Mythen des Alltags*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996, pp. 125–126.

<sup>7</sup> In 2006 Rosilene Luduvico returned to Brazil, more specifically to the city of Recife, to execute a series of artworks to be exhibited in Munich, Germany, at the Haus der Kunst museum, on the occasion of the exhibition *Frans Post*, curated by Leon Krempel. The director of that institution, Chris Dercon, took the initiative of sending Rosilene to Brazil in order to carry out a rereading of Frans Post’s oeuvre through her own work. Frans Post began his sojourn in Brazil in 1636 when he was only twenty-four years old, when he was invited to participate in Prince João Maurício de Nassau’s expedition. In this capacity, he traveled to many points along the Brazilian coast, executing drawings and paintings that served as reports concerning the natural wealth as well as the customs of the new society, which was then springing up in the fledgling towns.

transparency arising from the overlaying of the pastel colors, from the motifs depicted and the artistic gesture are spread throughout the physical space of the exhibition. Diversity among nocturnal and daytime motifs, landscapes and the sparse presence of human figuration dominates her current production. All of these elements are drawn from the artist's day-to-day life, focusing on trivial scenes which, altogether, represent her life. In many cases the ideas were taken from a mental image;<sup>8</sup> this device, however, is dispensable in the case of artworks to be shown at Museu Vale, as they will be produced onsite, in the place where the artist grew up – which has been continuously present in her work, even in the years she lived abroad.

The teeming local landscape reflects the unique biodiversity of the mountainous region of Espírito Santo State.<sup>9</sup> Rosilene honors and preserves this context in her painting, and especially in the polyptic created for the show in a composition that is both fragile and delicate – characteristics of nearly all her production. The central figure is a nearly leafless tree<sup>10</sup> whose branches act as a skeleton to sustain the entire composition. This element is fascinating to Rosilene not necessarily for its symbolism, but for its striking presence. Just like the European traveling artists of past centuries, such as Frans Post, or other researchers who traveled throughout Brazil such as Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius<sup>11</sup> and others, Rosilene Luduvico is an unflagging observer and reproducer, in her work, of New World nature.<sup>12</sup>

The stark tree, with a few buds, symbolizing rebirth, acts as a support for countless small birds,<sup>13</sup> their wings flapping, with various colors and shapes. The depiction's effectual realism is reinforced by the birds' fluttering wings and the air movement caused by the dense and numerous flock. Part of the tree branches remain free like autonomous tentacles spreading into space. The large-format also allows the artist to explore the gestural aspect of her work, as seen in the lightness of the background with abstract characteristics, as well as her tendency for incisive and realistic lines spread throughout an extensive surface.

This landscape set within a nebulous atmosphere bears with it a secret immersed in what could be an idyllic context, or one taken from a dream. The lone tree is ultimately transformed into a complement of the avid birds. Rosilene takes this motif further and transposes it to a nocturnal scene: in the darkness of the night a rounded crack rises up, giving access once again to a desolate landscape with, once again, the presence of a semi-dry branch, accompanied by a few sleeping birds.

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<sup>8</sup> In terms of semiotics: "The most radical imagetic theory of thought considers that mental images are iconic copies of reality. This idea was primarily espoused by the Epicureans. In their opinion, the objects of reality irradiate, in the form of invisible atoms, material copies that reach the human brain as *eidola* or *simulacra*. Thus, the mental image is an icon of reality." Lucia Santaella and Winfried Nöth. *Imagem. Comunicação, semiótica, mídia*. São Paulo: Iluminuras, 1999, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup> This region has a diversified fauna with many species, including the capuchin monkey, armadillo, southern tamandua, ocelot, toucan, bellbird, catanga deer, crab-eating raccoon, green-winged saltator and robin, as well as animals threatened with extinction such as the buffy-headed marmoset, puma cancolor and *barbado*. The vegetation includes species especially suited to rocks and high-elevation mountain forests. The main types found are orchids, bromeliads, Leguminosae-Mimosoideae, cedars, cassias, ipes, canjeranas, and various species of canela.

<sup>10</sup> In the Middle East, the tree symbolizes Mother Earth and fertility. The myth of Adonis, born from a tree, springs from the same origin. In the Christian religion the tree plays another role: God planted all of the species of trees in Eden, including the tree of knowledge, and of good and evil. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, thus committing the original sin, which spread to all of humanity.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Friedrich Philipp von Martius traveled extensively in Brazil from 1817 to 1820 together with zoologist Johann Baptist Spix. The two of them covered 10,000 km in precarious conditions, mainly in the Amazon region, in order to document the local flora and fauna.

<sup>12</sup> The term New World was adopted by the maritime travelers, who first set sail for the undiscovered lands in the 15th and 16th centuries, in search of satisfying the European imaginary.

<sup>13</sup> Birds are normally associated with positive images, but in mythology they can represent bad luck. In ancient times, however, birds – like butterflies – referred to the human soul, which abandons the body after death. Euripides called them the "messengers of the gods." According to some scholars, birds are the direct symbol of Christ. The birds also symbolize air, in terms of the four natural elements.

The motif of the cart drawn by a group of birds as seen in the above-mentioned drawing is revisited by a painting on canvas, as though it were guiding dreams and secret yearnings. All of this playful context alludes to an endless dream...

#### *An ownerless place*

The show is capped off by a room with a series of six portraits. All of the models are portrayed sleeping. The place they are in is unrecognizable – a nameless place formed only by monochromatic backgrounds complemented by vestiges of furniture, on which the models rest. The protagonists are not given any attribute except a hat, which further covers the identity of the model who is wearing it. Could it be that these people were taken from the previous series, such as the lone people at the fringe of society or immersed in a landscape bordering on the real and the surreal? The beauty and delicateness of the lines are as subtle as the presence of the birds, whether flying or perched, in other works by Rosilene.

The outlines and thin, profound lines making up the portraits allude to the technique of woodcut, very common in countries the artist has visited, such as Japan. The loose and full hair of the models lends a certain dramaticity to the composition. Despite the hair's being short, it forms a parallel with the female portraits by Edvard Munch.<sup>14</sup>

Far from reality, the models remain indifferent to the context and immersed in a privilege state, near to the divine and the unconscious. Nocturnal dreaming makes reference to one's rest after a day's work, while daytime sleeping, daydreaming, is closer to intellectuality, due to the work of fantasy and imagination. In and of itself, the state constructs a status of indifference, which winds up protecting the protagonists from the surrounding environment: they become the masters only of themselves and of the moment.

#### *A place of painting*

In recent years, Rosilene Luduvico has attained her own language, not only in terms of the thematics of her work, but also in regard to painting per se, having developed a specific language and technique.

Her painting concerns herself, her uneasinesses, her involvements and other subjective and individualist questionings. These characteristics, that is, the tendency toward individualism and introspection received a great impetus in the 19th century, when the right to individuality was incorporated into civil law by way of the legislation enacted after the French Revolution, as a result of developments in the field of social tolerance. This recognition took place due to the fact that each individual bears within him/herself a certain intimacy and individuality. This individuality is formed by the "eyes of one's heart," the way that one sees and experiences reality. That period also saw a transition for art's relation with aesthetics – art was freed from strict norms and from the idea that every work of art should be the reproduction of beauty and perfection set forth by an idea of classical beauty. In 1818, in his classes in aesthetics at Berlin University, Hegel was already affirming that the same individual could appreciate the classical precepts at the same time as nonclassical ones, as found in Romanticism. He

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<sup>14</sup> A series of artworks by Rosilene Luduvico consisting of four paintings was included in the show *Munch Revisited. Edvard Munch and the Art of Today*, conceived for the Museum am Ostwall and presented at the Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte de Dortmund, in 2005. Rosilene Luduvico's landscape paintings shown at that exhibition were centered on the body of a woman, whose very long hair blended with the landscape of dry branches. This female figure came to be carried by a male figure toward a dense forest of long tree trunks. Rosilene always appreciated the work of Edvard Munch. Some of Munch's portraits of females are dominated by a dense depiction of long hair and sleeping faces, as seen in *Madonna*, 1893, in the collection of the Munch-museet in Oslo, previously visited by Rosilene Luduvico.

recognized that the artistic production of his time had a psychic content and spiritual values which were distinct from those of classical art. The new artworks at that time had made him aware of the power of interpretation, of the freedom of fantasy in regard to content and the rules of art as never seen before. Hegel also saw that the idolatry in regard to the figure of the artist was shifting to a more human level. He began to see the work of art as a product made by one person for another, far from the mystifications and idolatries in relation to the image of the artist. In other words, the idea of the work of art arises from the human being and his/her experience. The artwork's origin, its conception, begins to be as important as its function, that is, its insertion in society through its effects and the dialogue it should give rise to: "The artwork does not exist for its own sake, but for ours, for the sake of the public which observes and appreciates it. For example, when putting on a play, the actors do not talk to each other, but with the audience. Both contexts should be understandable. And in the same way the artwork should dialogue with all of its viewers."<sup>15</sup>

Rosilene Luduvico's oeuvre exudes contemporaneity even while maintaining its roots in 19th-century Romantic painting. It is in step with its time, just as artists Caspar David Friedrich and Eugène Delacroix, among others, were witnesses of their own time and aware of the history of art of their era – which consisted of the coalescing of various periods. Rosilene Luduvico's foggy, fantastic and solitary landscapes evince characteristics of Romanticism by allowing the spectator to experience an introspective atmosphere, in which the people, the landscape and other elements are presented in syntony and in introspection. Many of her paintings are reminiscent of the very striking works, full of metaphysical tendencies, by Caspar David Friedrich, such as *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* [Wanderer above the Sea of Fog].<sup>16</sup> The use of cold and somber colors instills an intense luminosity, obscuring details of the landscape and, within the overall context, underscoring the intense melancholy and isolation. Many of the protagonists Friedrich depicted appear alone and immersed in a desolate landscape. Some, as in the case of *Der Wanderer*, referred to the artist himself, appreciating the landscape and perceiving the human being's impotence before the grandiosity of nature. In that painting, the artist's back is turned to the viewer as though inviting him/her to visualize the world through the artist's standpoint and thinking, thus reinforcing the tendency for introspection typical of Romanticism. Caspar David Friedrich sought for isolation, as he believed that artistic "self-expression" can only be authentic if the artist is isolated from society and from commercial precepts. For him, therefore, nature is the ideal refuge. In finalizing the works presented at Museu Vale, Rosilene was also immersed in the original landscape of her origin, seeking the essence of her works within herself and in her habitat.

Another painter representative of Romanticism, who comes to mind when analyzing Rosilene Luduvico's work is Carl Blechen (1798–1840).<sup>17</sup> Although little known outside of Germany, he produced artworks of great Romantic character, widely recognized within Germany. If he had been born earlier, he would have been one of the pioneers of Romanticism. He also led a lifestyle typical of Romanticism: extremely bucolic and accompanied by excesses such as alcoholism and Bohemian habits, which also accounted for his short life. At the beginning of his career he was still in the shadow of Caspar David Friedrich. Here I make special mention of two paintings from the set *Das Innere des Palmenhauses* [The Interior of

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<sup>15</sup> (Translated here from the author's free translation into Portuguese). "Das Kunstwerk (ist) nicht für sich, sondern für uns (da), für ein Publikum, welches das Kunstwerk anschaut und genießt. Die Schauspieler zum Beispiel bei der Aufführung eines Dramas sprechen nicht untereinander, sondern mit uns, und nach beiden Seiten sollen sie verständlich sein. Und so ist jedes Kunstwerk ein Zwiegespräch mit jedem, welcher davorsteht. Rudolf Zeitler, *Die Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Berlin: Propylän Verlag, 1990, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Oil on canvas, c. 1818, 94 x 74.8 cm; Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

<sup>17</sup> Carl Blechen was honored with a detailed retrospective exhibition held at Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin entitled *Zwischen Romantik und Realismus* [Between Romanticism and Realism] from 31 August to 4 November 1990, making an extensive review of his work possible for the first time.

the Palm House],<sup>18</sup> wherein the artist depicts a collection of palm trees that King Friedrich Wilhelm III had acquired in France. Carl Blechen not only painted a faithful depiction of the space itself, but also imparted to his work the precise sensation and suggestion of a tropical atmosphere: the temperature, humidity and even the smell, without ever having experienced this context. The artist's successful undertaking runs parallel with Rosilene Luduvico's own experience upon arriving to the city of Recife in the Brazilian Northeast in 2006, where she was to stay for six months to investigate the landscape in context depicted by Frans Post in the 17th century. Due to the vastness of the Brazilian territory, Rosilene's stay in the Northeast also brought her uncommon experiences very different from the context she was used to in the country's Southeast. The artist was able to execute her work in loco, unlike artists such as Carl Blechen, who relied only on their imagination. Nevertheless, the public destined to appreciate the images of the tropics created by Carl Blechen, Frans Post and Rosilene Luduvico remained the same – the Germans. This presented a further challenge: to satisfy the Germans' longstanding yearning for things tropical. It was a well-executed task, since the result is made up of autonomous artworks far from the usual clichés.

Moreover, for centuries now painting has been one of the genres most present in German contemporary art, the context chosen by Rosilene Luduvico for developing her artistic career. This fact is visible in the recently opened exhibition celebrating the 60th anniversary of the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany – *Sechzige Jahre. Sechzig Werke. Kunst aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von '49 bis '09* [Sixty Years. Sixty Artworks. Art from the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 2009]<sup>19</sup> – consisting mainly of paintings evincing the nation's political and social evolution, by artists such as Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, Martin Kippenberger, Wolfgang Mattheur, Ruprecht Geiger, Jonathan Meese, Neo Rauch and others. German painting is often seen and then reseen, as occurred in the show *Deutsche Malerei zweitausenddrei* [German Painting Two Thousand Three], also with artworks by sixty artists, all of them painters emphasizing a pictorial version of the German reality.<sup>20</sup>

At that same time, Rosilene finished her academic training and participated in the show *Die Neue Düsseldorfer Malerschule* [The New Düsseldorf School of Painting]. Her artwork began to play a role in the context of German and international painting in a more incisive way, with greater freshness, like that propagated by the various shows cited above, focused on painting.

The recently published book *Die Neue Deutsche Malerei* [The New German Painting] concerns the current painting production in Germany, taking into consideration that it is manipulated by images supposedly based on reality. Nevertheless, they are from new-media, cinema, billboards, photography and video, crossing over the borders between reality and fiction and altering the discernment of the information obtained. This avalanche hinders the perception of the landscape, the sound, the place, the time, and other aspects, and creates distorted contexts. Art critic and author of the publication, Christoph Tannert, suggests the deceleration of this process for the return to a more authentic perception.<sup>21</sup> I would say that this process

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<sup>18</sup> Oil on canvas, 1832–1834, 78 x 54 cm and 74 x 65 cm, Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten, Potsdam-Sanssouci, commissioned by King Friedrich Wilhelm III, as the depiction of a greenhouse designed by architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1831, in which the king planned to keep his collection of exotic plants. However, the building was destroyed by fire in 1880. Plants were kept there under appropriate conditions to allow for scientific research and to satisfy yearnings for a tropical environment.

<sup>19</sup> In Berlin at the Museu Martin Gropius Bau, from 1 May to 14 June 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Exhibition at Frankfurter Kunstverein, from 15 January to 13 April 2003.

<sup>21</sup> “Today, I find that the most interesting artists are those who work in accordance with the principle of ‘out of time’: painters who defend their activities within the expanding area of digital, visual art. ‘Out of time’ could be interpreted as meaning ‘outside of the time axis’ or ‘away from the old game.’ Inaccessibility is the preservative of the paintings. These have taken escaping from the tread-

is being carried out by means exemplified by Rosilene Luduvico's approach in the artworks composing the show *Lugar sem nome*, which is her usual way of working, through introspection.

As mentioned above, in her work Rosilene Luduvico joins Romantic and contemporary characteristics in complete harmony. Her language is international and not necessarily based on the practice and tradition of Europe, where she lives, nor of South America, her origin. Indeed, one of the most striking characteristics of Latin American contemporary art<sup>22</sup> is its approximation and dialogue with international trends. In terms of contemporaneity, I can here visualize, for example, an intense dialogue between Rosilene Luduvico's artworks and those by Peter Doig, who abandoned his life in London in search of inspiration in the mountains of Trinidad. His current paintings are also full of Romantic characteristics with lone individuals immersed in the landscape, their backs turned to the viewer.<sup>23</sup>

### *Her own place*

Without a doubt, Rosilene Luduvico has arrived at her place. A nameless place, a place of origin, a decisive place, a spatial place, an ownerless place. Far from illustration, far from realism, far from any trend – her focus falls on the introspective human being and on his/her habitat.

“But it so happened that the little prince, having walked a long time through sand and rocks and snow, finally discovered a road. And all roads go to where there are people.”<sup>24</sup>

Tereza de Arruda

curator

Berlin, April/May 2009

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mill of doing the same over and over again as their position [sic]. Scepticism of the everyday state of affairs seems to be appropriate. The daily rat-race often borders on the destruction of the self. On the other hand, the constitution of the self could be found in a deceleration of the speed of life.” Christoph Tannert. *Neue Deutsche Malerei*. Munich: Prestel, 2007, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> The artistic interchange has been intense since the 20th century: Tarsila do Amaral studied in Barcelona to then return to Brazil and participate in the “group of five” with Anita Mafalti, Menotti del Picchia, and Oswald and Mario de Andrade, precursors of Brazilian modernity. Alfredo Volpi emigrated from Italy to Brazil as a child and constructed his career as a painter focused on popular tradition.

<sup>23</sup> “The characters that populate Doig’s worlds renew a Romantic theme, that of the relationship between the individual and nature. Primarily, however, they put well-known patterns to the test. They turn their backs on the viewer or lie down flat, in line with the pictorial plane, in nature (*Daytime Astronomy*, 1997–98), they get lost high-flying or shooting beyond the surface (*Olin MK IV*, 1995) as though the extension of the pictorial space here were not merely thematically metaphorical, as if, in fact, the exuberance of the sporting high spirits could really transcend even the pictorial, object-like limitations.” Gabriele Mackert and Peter Doig. *Dear Painter, Paint Me... Painting the Figure Since Late Picabia*. Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2002, p. 182.

<sup>24</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. *The Little Prince*. Translated by Richard Howard. Harcourt, 2000, p. 54.