

By: Alessandra Simões Paiva

The exhibition title, taken from the 1962 song *Na cadência do samba* (In the Cadence of Samba) by Ataulfo Alves and Paulo Gesta, introduces an ambiguous key from the start: the evocation of death, the passage of time, and the reputation one leaves as a legacy. This horizon traverses the works, not as a nostalgic lament, but as a critical meditation on the values underpinning contemporary social and political narratives. As the curator writes, memory does not appear as an intimate recollection, but as a shared symbolic construction permeated by silences, erasures, and contradictions.



Formally, the exhibition evidenced a recurring choice by the artist: the use of materials and elements that reference industrial production, featuring clean surfaces, flat colors, and techniques that tend to hide the manual trace. This erasure of the individual imprint creates a productive tension with the themes addressed, since what appears impersonal and stand-

paradoxically carries a densely affective and political content. The curatorial text also observes that this production privileges a macro reading of social behaviors, moving away from autobiography to address values that affect entire groups. His procedure becomes particularly evident in the *Imperio* (Empire) series, which constitutes the exhibition's strong conceptual core.

In *Bandeira do Brasil II* (Flag of Brazil II) (2020), a wooden plaque presents the national flag reduced to a hard, frontal sign. Crosses occupy the blue field in place of stars; words such as prejudice, inequality, poverty, and falsehood join the flag's positivist maxim "*Ordem e progresso*" (Order and Progress). What might otherwise result in a literal critique is precisely grounded in the austerity of form and the cool detachment of the support. The flag neither becomes a caricature nor a deconstruction; instead, it undergoes a symbolic displacement that manifests persistent historical tensions between proclaimed values and the affective practices of Brazilian society.

Through the representation of other countries' flags, the *Imperio* (Empire) series also articulates the past and present not as a linear continuity, but as layers of the same ideological construction. By mobilizing national symbols through industrial materials and strategies of objectification, Frangioni inscribes his work within a lineage of Brazilian art that, since the second half of the 20th century, moved away from the utopian promises of Constructivism and Neo-Concretism to operate critically with their ramifications. This is not a direct affiliation but a historical leap: from abstraction and sensitive participation to symbolic figuration mediated by ready-made or "almost" ready-made objects, as seen in artists like Nelson Leirner and Cildo Meireles, leading figures in Brazilian art who provoked structural ruptures.

Another relevant group in the exhibition was the *Cofre* (Safe) series, in which transparent containers house various objects –bills, coins, toys, souvenirs– that function as symbolic capsules of value. In *Cofre # 419, Bolinhas de Gude* (Safe # 419, Marbles) (2017), the artist isolates and protects the childhood object associated with play and innocence, transforming it into a sign of affective capital that no longer circulates. The transparency of the acrylic does not eliminate distance; what we see remains preserved but inaccessible. The safe, traditionally associated with security and accumulation, here becomes a device for suspending meaning, in which economic value, memory, and affection merge.

R-evolução (R-evolution) (2017) is an acrylic box containing a group of identical monkeys wielding megaphones, surrounding a large, crowned gorilla. The scene allows for an immediate reading yet avoids pure caricature by relying on the industrial repetition of the figures. The monkeys' formal equality contrasts with the symbolic hierarchy established by the crown, suggesting a cycle of power where contestation and domination feed into each other. Revolution here appears less as a rupture than as a performance; a play of forces where structures remain intact.

Situating Alexandre Frangioni within art history entails placing his work within a tradition that employs industrial and symbolic elements to critically reflect on society. Without claiming a radical reinvention of language, the artist mobilizes consolidated strategies to think through social contradictions. *Levarei saudades da Aurora* thus presented a coherent set of works operating in the field of memory and collective values. The exhibition asserted a continuous exercise of critical observation, in which objects, symbols, and narratives reorganized themselves to expose the persistent fissures in contemporary society. A production that finds its strength in the precision with which it articulates form, matter, and meaning.

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