

**‘The real is not at the exit or
the arrival: it occurs to us in the middle
of the crossing’**

(Guimarães Rosa)

What is going on shows a series of photographs by Rogério Reis taken from his trips to the beaches in the South of Rio, a rite intensified during the pandemic that has become a working routine. Some are invested with this spirit of urgency, as in the series Noite Americana, which despite the poetry, portends ecological disasters.

Rogério was a photojournalist and made a choice to work with documentary photography, a field that aims to expose our human and ecological vulnerability and encourage us, as in the identity movements, to become aware of situations which we should not accept. His language is experimental and influenced by the conceptual-political art he experienced in the 70s. His work is permeated with a sharp sense of humor and has an existentialist and critical streak, without being politically dogmatic, similar to the Poesia Marginal and Cinema Novo with which it coexisted.

Here we experience works that emerge from the hot sand, from the artist’s daily life with beachgoers, friction with migrant bodies, the communities that go there to work or enjoy a moment of leisure. Images of events, and situations that take place, such as those presented here in the creative and ephemeral assemblages, from the series Empilhamentos impact us as extraordinary. They often come to inhabit our imagination; and become iconic for their heteronomy, as something that seems to be out of order, or truths that seem like fiction to us, as in the video Aerocães; or for their expressive intensity, as in these images of anonymous bodies, human or not, all of them, coexisting in full brilliance, beauty and joy, despite adversities.

What happens in What is going on is like an index of the artist’s aesthetic -ethical investment, the record of his affective and material exchanges, the construction of his history and identity and his own shore. In direct confrontation with the so-called erudite-colonial culture, Rogério offers us a complete and immediate scenario of an expanded real, without hierarchies, which, as Guimarães Rosa said, occurs in the crossing.

Paula Terra-Neale (curator)