

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

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José Damasceno Turns a Jaundiced Eye on a Politicised Society at Thomas Dane



"RE: PÚBLICA," 2017, by José Damasceno (1968, Rio de Janeiro), Thomas Dane Gallery
(Courtesy: Artist & Thomas Dane Gallery)

The Brazilian artist José Damasceno's latest exhibition, "RE: PÚBLICA," combines an astute eye for political absurdity in his native country with his gift for a thought-provoking conceptual approach. "RE: PÚBLICA" is Damasceno's third show at the Thomas Dane Gallery in London, and it's on view until April 14.

The artist blacked out the windows of the gallery to create an enclosed space for the viewers. "Approaching from the street the gallery seems closed, but for a small arched mouse hole ellipse cut from the blackout in the bottom corner of the front window, the only perceivable invitation in," the gallery says. "Damasceno forces us (in mind if not in body) to enter his world through this curious aperture, and — as Alice down the rabbit-hole — our perceptions begin to shift. Once inside, the chink of light from the window suggests the gallery as a kind of giant camera obscura or even a magic lantern, altering the outside world and projecting it in to the gallery."

Three giant posters, each of the symbolic face of The Republic ("República") cropped from Brazilian Real banknotes, are the centerpieces of the show. "In each poster, her normally emotionless, stony eyes have been drawn in by hand such that she has now awakened, and looks anxiously over her shoulder," the gallery says. These images appeared for the first time last year on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Damasceno's hometown, as well as in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte during protests over the corruption and crises in the Brazilian government. The Republic's "anxiety seems ambiguous: a shifting global politics (especially in Damasceno's native Brazil), something else in the world she is now able to see, or perhaps something inside herself." The artist works with shifting perceptions from society in a framework that values money over experiences and relationships. Damasceno challenges us to awaken our theories on art and politics whilst holding a mirror up to society.

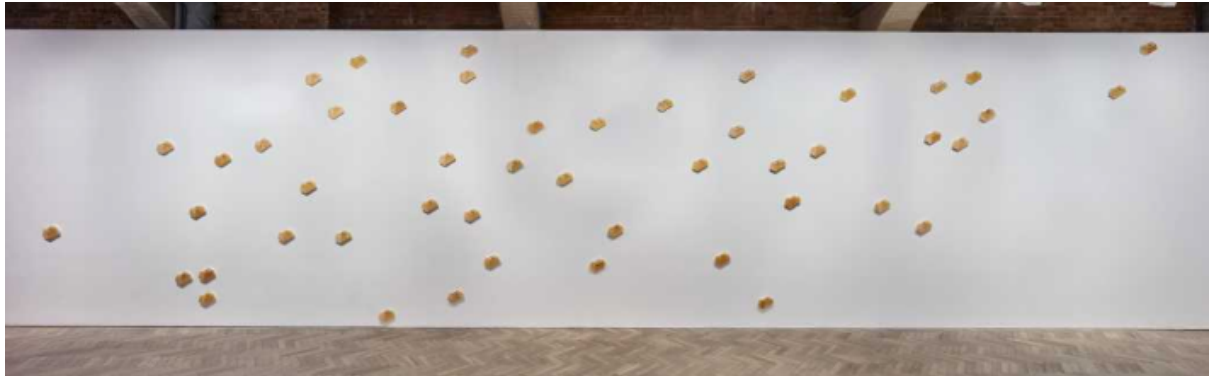
The Brazilian professor and art historian José Thomaz Brum offered a commentary that accompanies the exhibition and illuminates the quandary that the artist is underlining with his work.

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“A marble porcupine, a condensed image of the romantic aphorism, offers us a Schopenhauerian metaphor for life in society in both its necessity: 'One cold winter's day, a number of porcupines huddled together quite closely in order through their mutual warmth to prevent themselves from being frozen', — and its difficulty — '...until they had discovered the proper distance from which they could best tolerate one another'.”



<http://uk.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/2965444/jose-damasceno-turns-a-jaundiced-eye-on-a-politicised-society>

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