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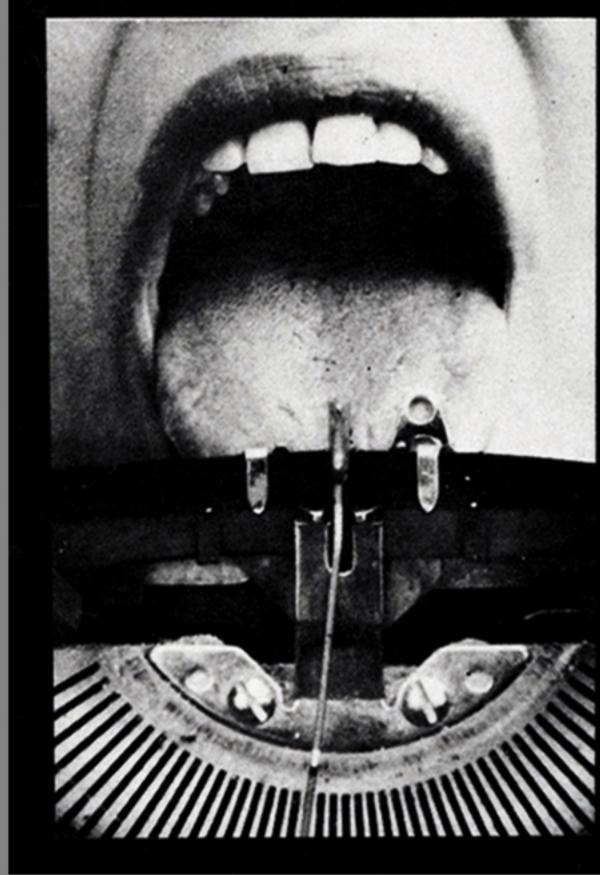
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LENORA
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LENORA DE BARROS





"I've always been interested in the contact between languages, in generating meaning through the confrontation of different languages, particularly the verbal and visual ones and the acoustic aspect of the words."

- Lenora De Barros



ULTRAPASSADO

LENORA DE BARROS Lives and works in São Paulo and New York

Lenora de Barros (born 1953) studied linguistics in São Paulo and started her artistic career in the 1970s, a time of intense experimentation in Brazilian art, marked by a strong avant-gardist bent since the 50s. One of the protagonists of this scene was Lenora de Barros' father, the Concrete Art pioneer and designer Geraldo de Barros.

The first works created by Lenora de Barros can be placed in the field of 'visual poetry', a trend that found its development in Brazil, springing from the Concrete Poetry movement of the decade of 1950. Words and images were her initial materials.

The first concrete poetry context Lenora de Barros engaged with was POESIAEM from 1975. This book was an important platform for the visual poetry avant-gardists of the time in São Paulo. De Barros launched here for the first time her legendary performance "Homage a George Segal" as a photographic sequence piece.

Lenora de Barros saw works by American artist George Segal at the São Paulo Biennial in 1967.

"I never forgot that amazing blank lonely and pathetic figure at "Gas Station." I was young and it hit me and inspired me".

As homage to the legendary artist, De Barros did a performance in front of the camera brushing her teeth with such exaggeration that the foam of the paste covers more and more her face and head until she looks much like the eerie plaster figures of George Segal's sculptures.





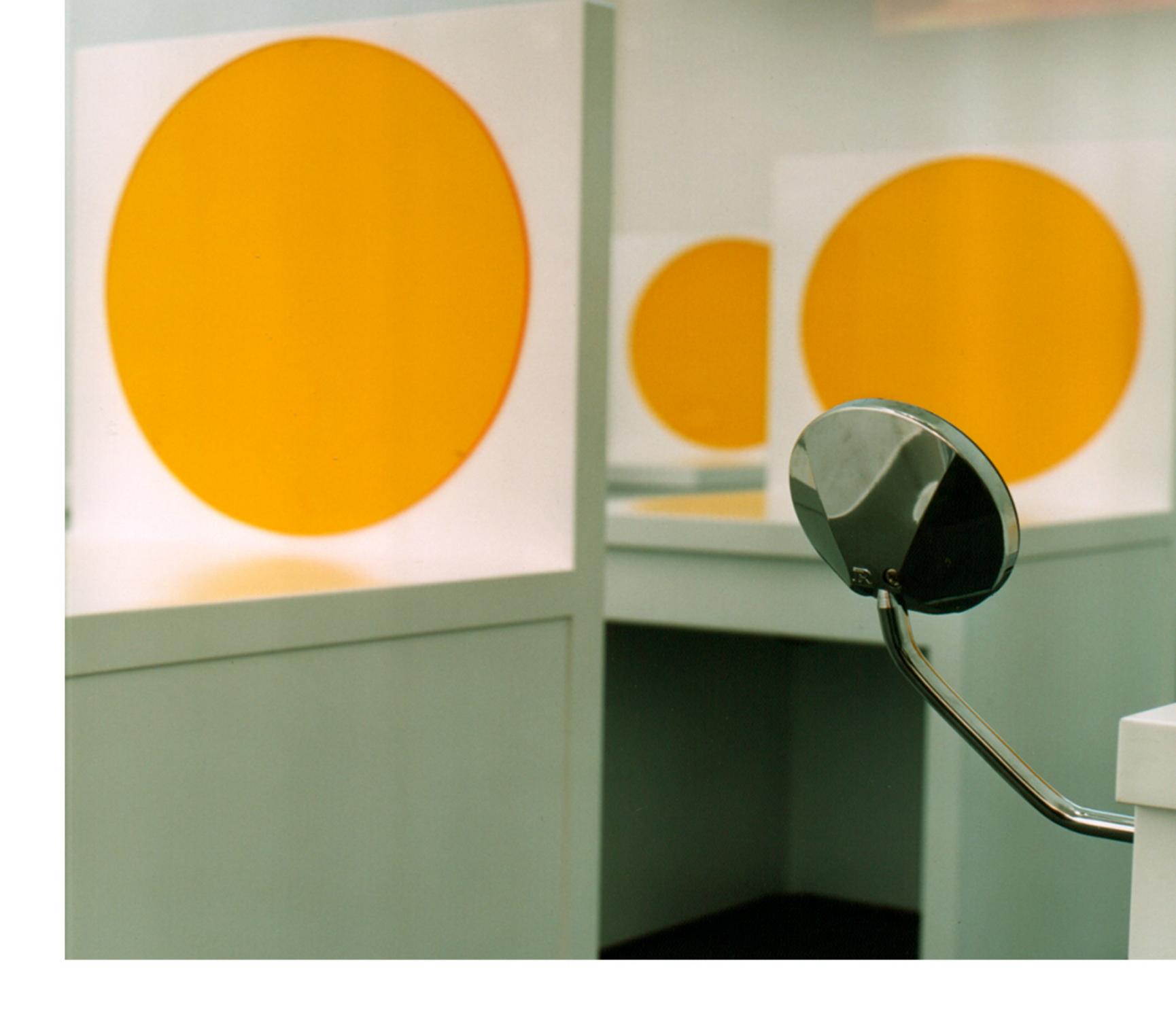
In 1983 de Barros published her artist book *Onde Se Vê* (Where One Sees). The dominant feature of this book is concrete poetry set in progressive fonts and layouts. These sophisticated and Pop-intellectual designs are intercut by a feminist photo sequence titled *Poem* in which a tongue sexually yet fatally interacts with the keys of a type writer, a visual pun on the word 'tongue', in Portuguese equivalent to the word for 'language'.

"There is no fixed rule in my creative process determining language priorities or hierarchies. At times, it's a word, a sentence, a line that bursts forth and from that verbal form I establish the visual and oral expression that I will ascribe to this 'content'. At others, the process is reversed: visual language imposes itself and the text is conceived after it. Sometimes I create 'pure' texts or just photographic images, visual sequences (videos) or just objects, object-poems and/or installations, where the various language forms blend into a dialogue (or in a 'trialogue'), so as to produce various meanings."

Onde Se Vê represented Lenora de Barros's transit from linguistics to concrete poetry to visual art. With a certain Duchampian flair, often employing irony and references to the feminine universe, Lenora de Barros began incorporating a series of generational procedures akin to Pop, Body, and Conceptual Art as in her newspaper art column "...umas".

"Between 1993 and 1996 I did"... umas", a weekly column published at newspaper Jornal da Tarde, in São Paulo. It was a space that we could consider today as a kind of "blog", in which I published numerous photo-performances, visual poems, and poetic texts proposing relationships between text and image, and dialogues with another artists and works. Many things that I did in these columns, afterwards, became works that I developed. It worked for me as a kind of laboratory for many experiences".

In the beginning of the 1990s Lenora de Barros engaged with an ongoing installation project: *Ping Poem*.



De Barros re-contextualized the readymade table tennis balls, rackets and table in a spectrum of installational modifications with a repertoire reminiscent of former historical languages in art. Part of the project was a set of prototype chair sculptures, homage to the 1960s progressive furniture style of Geraldo de Barros' design collective UNILABOR.

"The installation's soundtrack is made of musical samples and spoken words, with a beat resembling a game of ping-pong: "novo, de novo? novo, de novo? nada de novo no ar... nada de novo no ar... nada a ver com nada a ver com nada a ver... ... The expression "nada de novo no ar" (nothing new in the air) poses one of the show's dominant themes —there's nothing new in contemporary art.... The expression nada para ver, meaning (in Portuguese) to be entirely besides the point and unrelated to things at hand, has here a literal sense: there is nothing to see in this piece beyond a number of ping-pong balls with just those words printed on them." - Ana Paula Cohen, ArtNexus Magazine, São Paulo 2002



"I call "ping-poems" all my
work in which I express the
idea of "game" with the
language. With these works,
created between 1990 / 1994, I
engaged with the table tennis
universe: ball, rackets, nets
etc.. In "Ping-Poema to Boris",
for example, I explored a
relationship (or a "game") with
Russian Avant Guards."