Pablo Accinelli, detail from „Duración Interna", 2018

"Buenos Aires, the great destination city of South America, is sicker than ever. Precisely because it has natural health and youth, it has suffered in its lightning growth the accelerated assault of its errors. Today it is one of the great capitals of the world. A formidable destiny awaits it."

   Le Corbusier, 1947

Drawn to the basement of the Museum of Latin American Art (MALBA), visitors enter a room whose silent palette feels like mist. Cities like Buenos Aires or São Paulo, because of their social and architectural characteristics, constitute the ideal weave for a labyrinth of uncertainty; more so in a contemporaneity mediated by a historically unprecedented immediacy and horizontality in information flows. Pablo Accinelli (who lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil) confronts viewers with an installation shot through with the idea of the algorithm. Just like in the fog of a classic film noir work, we are guided through the current installation by a series of unveiled pieces that act as mere clues for an otherwise hidden scheme.

Everyday objects are arranged in order to spell out grammatical operations. The rooms at MALBA are inhabited by certain recurring elements: paper clips, for example, hang at different points around the room. These simple objects function as units of measurement, as they entwine and form chains that calculate the height from floor to ceiling. Depending on the exact position in the room, at a certain link of that chain, a closed padlock appears, dividing the height equally into sixths.

A deck of cards is printed as a two-dimensional poster where the edges of the cards are micro-perforated in order to be able to die-cut the cards or simply restack them. Paper clips are drawn between the cards. Accinelli creates a space by means of repetition and unfolding, by the use of rule and the emergence of anomaly. Padlocks interrupting a chain of paper clips, cards lined up between a geometrical arrangement of shot glasses, and paper clips drawn on contiguous cards from a spread-out deck – they all could work as a playful gambit; or they could be a devious scheme to obstruct those precise geometrical orders. Shrouded in the monotonous microtasking of sequential arrangements, those same objects are presented as either programmatic structures following the logic of their own sequence, or as disruptive elements suggesting a system of continuity/discontinuity that invites spectators to discover the pattern, while also inviting them to confront their own sense of restlessness in working to decipher the enigma. The aestheticization of technologies and objects of daily life seems to challenge Le Corbusier's concept of "Machines for Living in": sacks of cement, arranged according to the geometry of a square, form four individual beds for standardized bodies. The dusters' feathers caress the walls, hanging from circlips. Industrial elements do not appear as readymades, but rather as parts of an environment the artist intervenes in and relaunches for potential industrial use. Just like design prototypes, the pieces have a latent purpose.

"Could art be useful?" Jack Smith asks himself in "Capitalism of Lotusland": "… art must not be used anymore as another elaborate means of fleeing from thinking because of the multiplying amount of information each person needs to process in order to come to any kind of decision about what kind of planet one wants to live on before business, religion, and government succeed in blowing it out of the solar system."[1]

A ventilation system is embedded into a wall, bringing in an actual urban-industrial breeze. Recurring motifs such as grid-like configurations suggesting city blocks, construction materials, and architectural tools reveal an engagement with the city and its architecture. A coded alphabet tattooed on the walls refers to the "Pichação" (a system of graffiti writing found on the buildings of São Paulo). "Alfabeto (tipografía externa)" (Alphabet [External Typography]) was developed by the artist, with the help of a programmer, based on an algorithmic string that eliminates from the grapheme the traces of the previous one. Next to it hangs "Duración interna" (Internal Duration), a structure in the form of the scaled-down façade of a rationalist building. Its edges are slots with cards poking out, only their backs visible: truncated columns, drinking troughs or water tanks, white cubes or cylinders; all constitute enigmatic spatial units. With unblemished white outsides, the "Relación interna" (Internal Relationship) sculptures exhibit the natural expression of the raw materials they contain. These pieces are a direct reference to the works of Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica, whose architectural allusions and metaphors mixed with their artistic thought in the splendor of a specific form of Latin American modernism that emphasizes the territorial conjuncture. According to this logic, form follows the particularity of the environment. In 1947, Le Corbusier failed to recognize what might be the most specific feature of Latin American cities: their organicity. It is an architecture with curved lines that introduces the environment from the

„Pablo Accinelli: Nubes de paso", MALBA, Buenos Aires, 2018, installation view

outside to the inside while looking out on the somatic flows of the vibrant, chaotic, overflowing landscape and society. This inside-outside linkage, based on a functional relationship that runs across all of Accinelli's works, determines the lexical-semantic proposal of the installation and generates the pieces' titles. Taking the names of the works themselves, the relationship to the internal represents an inner correlation that implies that there's also an outer one. From a grammatical perspective, the external relationship could be thought of in terms of the cognitive information underlying its use within a system. If the internal relationship refers to the logic of its morphology, then the external one refers to the quality of the morphology in its ability to serve a purpose: namely, its functionality. The perception of duration as proposed in the titles of the works insinuates a scope reinforcing the notion of continuity.

Interferences or anomalies exist only in the framework of a system, and inversely, the algorithmic manipulation of the media only becomes visible through the discovery of these errors. The pieces are conceived as functional instruments. The installation is presented as a casuistry, providing the viewers with a sense of reasoning. The

visit turns into an inquiry. As in an escape game, with no didactic biases and detached from the cynicism of the post-truth age, through artistic experience as tool, Accinelli turns the spectator into "a truth seeker" and invites us to imagine an everyday culture more efficient in its criticism and argumentation. Returning to the film noir metaphor, the installation twists around causality. The repetition of certain elements (paper clips, closed padlocks, cards) weaves an enigmatic web that leads us through space. Phenomena intertwine, like an unbreakable chain in pursuit of a critical response, perhaps to discover, in the end, that the object of one's search is, in fact, "the great secret."

This enigma might be what sustains urban experience, like a dandy who understands city life as a way to organize flow; not as a stimulus but rather as a strolling that enables experiences to cross along the way.

"Pablo Accinelli: Nubes de paso," MALBA, Buenos Aires, August 8–November 12, 2018.

Note
1   Jack Smith, "Capitalism of Lotusland," in: Wait for Me at the Bottom of the Pool: The Writings of Jack Smith, ed. by J. Hoberman/Edward Leffingwell, New York 1997, p. 11.