

## *2 sides / 2 lados*

*There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.  
(Moby Dick - Herman Melville)*

When I made some pencil marks on a piece of paper I didn't know what they would become. When I decided to laser cut them I didn't know what the result would be. Einstein said that if we knew what we were going to find we wouldn't call it research. If that applies to Science, it applies even more so to Art.

My work involves making marks. Not just drawing on a surface but also physically changing it - cutting grooves, incisions; like ploughing a field. In this work, *2 sides / 2 lados*, I moved from cutting panels or walls with laser or gouges to laser cutting paper and using it as a stencil to transfer the original marks to the wall. This work consists of a book and two site-specific wall drawings.

My current practice is concerned with finding a way of synthesizing the duality generated by site-specific works, to produce work which involves a site-specific element and a broader element, but whose elements are integral - there no longer being an original and a copy or a site-specific version and a documentary version. All are part of the work in its entirety - yet they are independent.

*2 sides / 2 lados* is a mixture of drawing, wall drawing and book art. Passing from one technique/material to another the initial marks undergo transformation. Each technique leaves traces of its process on the final work. Pencil on paper responds directly to the gesture of the hand. The drawing is subsequently scanned and transformed into vectors which are cut by laser on a piece of paper folded over itself 20 times. A ray of light traces the lines and cuts the paper leaving burned edges on a white surface. Some irregularities appear and can be seen in the sequence of the pages. The defined all-over cuts on the first pages disappear towards the middle of the book and from there regain intensity towards the end. The first half mirrors the other half.

The same marks are transferred to a corner wall of Pinacoteca do Instituto de Artes, Porto Alegre, Brazil and later to a corner of the Triangle Space at Chelsea College of Art and Design, London - two academic institutions establishing points of contact through practical art-based research. One copy of the book was used as a stencil for making the wall drawing in both places. The upper part of the wall drawing mirrors the lower part - one wall mirrors the other wall of the corner. The walls in Pinacoteca mirror the walls of the Triangle Space. However, due to the nature of the work, the mirrored images have some distortion.

This concern with the surface involves not just what is added to it but also what is removed from it. The initial drawing is cut from the paper leaving it with voids - the marks appear by their absence. And those marks are remade by the hand on the wall, leaving slight irregularities due to the drawing material.

*2 sides / 2 lados* uses an invented script. We may not know Japanese, Arabic or Cuneiform writing, yet it may hold great fascination. How do those forms of writing manage to be so compelling? The rhythm, the formal and aesthetic distribution of signs on a surface (into a surface in cuneiform writing) can convey a pulsation with which we form a dialogue.

Some people make great efforts to leave their marks, even risking their own lives to write signs meaning so much to some but despised by others on the wall of a five-storey building. Graffiti has a hidden textual meaning and the action is more important than the text. Maybe we are all trying to say we are alive, we are here, we are leaving some traces on the surface of this planet.

*2 sides / 2 lados* was devised to travel. The transport of artworks is fraught with problems and filled with histories. Brancusi's problem with *Bird in Space* involved a notorious misunderstanding of an artist's work when in 1926 the US customs insisted on labelling a version of the sculpture as "household goods", which led to its liability for import duty. In the mid-70s Dieter Roth cut some of his canvases to fit in his suitcases when travelling from Iceland to London. These works are now part of the Tate collection. To send a work of art abroad from Brazil is a very bureaucratic process requiring a permit issued by IPHAN (National Artistic and Historical Heritage Institute).

One of the many qualities of a book is its transportability. We can carry it from room to room, we can put it in a pocket and even into an envelope to send it easily to the other side of the world. The book *2 sides / 2 lados* together with the template and instructions for the wall drawings can travel easily from Porto Alegre to London.

When the second wall drawing is done the work will be completed. A few weeks later the unique part of the work will be destroyed. The book and the template for 2 more possible wall drawings will remain.

This work comprises a book and 2 places and a "translation" from one side to the other.

Maria Lucia Cattani  
2009