

**SATURDAY, 18th DECEMBER 2010**

**O ESTADO DE S. PAULO**

**CADERNO 2**

**RUMOS ITAÚ CULTURAL DANCE PROJECT CRITIC: HELENA KATZ**

### **THE STRANGE MIX OF PIRANHA AND LAND TURTLE**

“But no crusaders came to us. They were fugitives from a civilization that we are eating up, because we are strong and as vindictive as the land turtles.” Oswald de Andrade (Anthropophagic Manifesto, 1928)

A dramaturgy of migration. This said, it sounds like a life-long task – which it just may be. But for the moment, to start working on this dramaturgy, Wagner Schwartz, a Brazilian artist who divides his time between Uberlândia, São Paulo and Paris, proposes Piranha, a study he presented in Rumos Dança 2010 (“Directions of Dance 2010”), sponsored by Itaú Cultural.

The choice of the piranha deserves consideration. A fish that is strange in its very appearance, that lets you see more teeth than seem to fit when it opens its mouth, and that bites very, very quickly. A fish that carries excess in its small and slim body be it in terms of number of teeth or in the number of bites. It doesn't look dangerous, but it manages to project its lower jaw with its sharp triangular teeth forward and tear off large pieces of flesh with each bite. It never lives alone and always disappears in an instant.

A twisted model of a combination between maladjustment and ambivalence is offered here as the reverse of the reverse of the reverse of the reverse (Caetano Veloso, Sampa, 1978) of a phenomenon produced by the technical development of computers and the Internet: that of the quantity of information to be digested at ever-higher speed. There is neither the time nor the need to focus on each item. A fleeting contact is enough, a light brush with the surfaces that produces some kind of association. Because the avalanche of data doesn't stop and demands unceasing updating. The enigma of the sphinx has changed to “devour me or you will devour yourself”.

Wagner Schwartz's Piranha establishes a combination between this admirable new world and our entry into the decade of the centennial of the Anthropophagic Manifesto that Oswald de Andrade read in the house of Mario de Andrade and published in the Anthropophagic Magazine, 1928. There he already talked of “immigrants, swindlers and tourists” and said that “we are lazy in the world map of Brazil”. Now, 92 years later, the symbolic image of the Anthropophagic Manifesto has been designed: it's the one with which Wagner Schwartz begins the second movement of the triptych of Piranha, the one of a body that bends itself backwards so far that it becomes a fishhook. Without a front, a back or a side.

The body-fishhook inaugurates the second part, but it's only in the third that we will understand that it was also about a body question mark. Because in the third, the brilliant graphic work of Maurício Leonard will clarify visually that the fishhook and the question mark connect themselves in the form shared by the body-inversion.

The triptych builds itself around the necessary reflection on the role of legends in the world of migrations, and offers three opportunities for dealing with the word-image relationship. It begins with the information, in a projection that occupies the whole stage, saying that the spectacle will begin in 15 minutes.

Then, the light of the audience goes on and little by little some start chatting, and others reading the program. So without further ado we become the producers of the sub-titles of that situation, pouring words and more words into the environment. In exactly 15 minutes the light goes out.

Wagner Schwartz enters and begins to subtitle the tale of the piranha with his body. Exactly 15 minutes later he leaves the stage, and we are left with the true graphic artifice of Leonard.

With the tasks of concrete poetry, providing the musical score, networks, materially spacing the piranha with the fishhook interrogation. But, as has already been said in the first image of the body-

fishhook-interrogation, this Piranha does not fish nor externalize questions. It jumbles the interrogations in themselves, and winds the fishhooks around themselves. And in this way he transforms this Piranha into the Caribbean revolution that Oswald de Andrade proposed in his manifesto, the one that would “unite all the efficient revolts in the direction of man”. Now we can stop playing the part of Indians full of good Portuguese feelings, which is the way the colonizers wish to continue seeing us.

Now we already have the anthropophagic vaccine capable of preparing us for the journey into the world of migrations: this is the mix of the land turtle and the piranha.