

PORTUGAL

Leonor Antunes
Fundação Serralves
Porto

At the heart of Leonor Antunes's magisterial body of work is a 'discrepancy' – in measurement, in form, in utility. I use the word deliberately, for its connotations of an error in measurement: a space opened up where there should be no space. While Antunes's architecturally attuned sculptures and installations are in no way errors, they have everything to do with measurement – and the fault lines and shadow worlds that this impulse incurs. But the discrepancy of her practice also exists in the fact that the Berlin-based, Portuguese artist can be so overt in her conceptual and formal concerns – which often refer explicitly to Modernist architecture and design, Minimalism and post-Minimalism – and yet her works remain resoundingly, fundamentally mysterious.

Such was the feeling instilled by Antunes's expertly conceived and installed survey at the Fundação Serralves, entitled 'Casa, modo de usar' (Villa, How to Use), which took over the Serralves Villa, a gorgeous Art Deco mansion that emerges like some pink Modernist plinth from the green manicured gardens that surround it. Inside, this pastel palette was immediately dispelled by Antunes's preferred hues – gold, black, grey, tan – and their corresponding materials: brass, rope, leather, rubber. In her patterned, geometric, ever-allusive sculptures, these materials manifest themselves as units of some obscure measurement: as scale, as weight, as length.

Opposite the villa's entrance, *The Sensation of Being Outdoors* (2008) hung lucidly in a corridor, its brass-tube triangles shimmering against the rope that both suspended them and fell laconically alongside. The triangles, a recurring motif, conjure the triage of symmetry, proportion and harmony that is the classical Grecian approximation of beauty, as well as the triangulation method developed during the French Revolution, which was used to calculate a universal unit: the metre. (Antunes refers to this directly in another work, *how to use #18 [triangulation map between Dunkirk and Barcelona]*, 2010.) Behind the glittering triangles, metal grids lay propped against the walls like 'prop pieces' cut out of a fence, immediately evoking the post-Minimalist Bill Bollinger's likeminded works.

Such unambiguous referentiality continued. A collection of four stunning works in leather, lengths of which were slit open like mouths, vents or blinds, or construed as propulsive units along the floor, conjured specific sculptures by Eva Hesse and Carl Andre. Yet the homage never sank into the derivative. Instead, the references provided a platform for Antunes's already inimitable touch and play with materials and historicism, manifesting itself in a black, ferocious wit all her own. But if her work often plays dark twin to past sculptures and architectonics, it can likewise be eerily prescient. A geometric floor work that takes over the villa's chapel is an incantation of Art Deco's mores and forms. Brass lineations threaded through a geometric floor of black rubber and tan cork shapes; rubber

lengths dangled above like reins. The work, tellingly called *discrepancies with C.R.* (2010), refers to Carol Rama, the Italian nonagenarian artist with whom Antunes has collaborated, the floor being a simulacra of one she found in Rama's Turin apartment. Though Antunes made the work before her show in the Art Deco villa, it looked like it was created expressly for it.

Another floor piece, visible from multiple levels of the villa, functioned as both flag and floor plan of another allusive (and elusive) house. A rigorous grid of knotted nylon rope, *villa mallet stevens* (2011) assumes the architecture of the space in which it is placed. Like the brass scrimms shimmering in nearby rooms, knotted rope works sketching out walls and ceilings, accordion screens unfolding and dividing the floors, and the copper and steel lamps illuminating these works like spotlights, *villa mallet stevens*, neither entirely inhabits the role of art object or design element, but subtly measures the discrepancy between the two. That this obsessive impulse to measure did not grow tired is indicative of the autonomous power and beauty that Antunes's work holds; this exhibition was no mere essay.

Perhaps the most explicit element of 'Villa, How to Use' – Antunes cops her title from Georges Perec's inescapable novel, *Life: A User's Manual* (1978) – was found in a room upstairs, where vitrines revealed a selection of archaic measuring tools that the artist has collected over the years. Overt as this installation was, it should register with little mystery or meaning. Instead, as is Antunes's wont and skill, the tools, under glass, took on the aspect of hieroglyphs, strange in spite of themselves. Potent yet obscure, like some lost language, they embodied the inexplicable pressure of the human endeavour to chart, to map, to delineate our days and the spaces we engender to make sense of them, to make form of the formless – and to then take its measure, and likewise, our own.

Quinn Latimer



ITALY



Francesco Candeloro
 2011
 Installation view

Francesco Candeloro
Fondazione Ambrosetti
Arte Contemporanea
Palazzolo sull'Oglio
Brescia

Francesco Candeloro's practice constitutes a philology of light; it informs the very making of his objects, their origin as well as their effects. Perspex panels are cut using a laser, and photographic emulsions – of cityscapes and physiognomies – are inscribed on surfaces by means of ultraviolet rays. These surfaces, in turn, transform light as it passes through vibrant, translucent panes, whether as free-standing sculptures, window fixtures or carefully crafted cubes pinned to gallery walls or set on its floors.

Candeloro's pop colours and materials recall the DayGlo flora and fauna of Gino Marotta, but his imagery is as relentlessly urban and architectural as the latter's is ersatz-organic. Incorporating images and motifs from a range of cities, the objects in this exhibition constitute a miniature architectonics in their own right. Each work comprises two coloured, rectangular planes from a steel base. One panel bears a photographic cityscape, and the other a cut-out of geometric motifs – arches, parallelograms or simple small squares – that frames its pair in striking ways. The excised design derives from the image or site itself, and draws out some aspect of its geometry or general ambiance: twin window frames evoke the structure depicted in *Segni del Tempo (Castel del Monte)* (Signs of the Time [Castel del Monte], 2010), while the pitched parallelograms of *Attraverso i Segni (Londra)* (Looking through Signs [London], 2010) evoke the less conspicuous geometry of handrails.

Candeloro's work also employs the even more fugitive medium of time. The filtering of daylight through transparent panels casts coloured shadows on walls and floors, in slow synch with the almost imperceptible arc of the sun or ambient light. A disembodied kineticism thus issues from solid objects. From the exterior of the Palazzo Panella, the twin cut-out, silhouetted spires of Candeloro's installation, *Luoghi dei Segni (Memorie dei Luoghi)* (The Sites of the Signs [Memories of Sites], 2011) – inserted in a single window – announced a subtle transformation of the building's façade. In the building's interior, meanwhile, the same Perspex →