about Artur Lescher

Artur Lescher's sculptures have always sought spatial situations where they intend to pass unnoticed as subtle interventions. His preference is for one-piece objects, suspended and subject to the force of gravity, creating a tension and relation between the work and the space around it. Using different materials such as metal, stone, wood, brass and copper, he evokes familiar volumes and designs but removed of their usual function.

Lescher gained recognition after participating in the 19th Bienal de São Paulo, in 1987, in which he presented "Aerólitos," a work consisting of two 11-meter-long balloons, one in the biennial pavilion and the other in an external area, which converse with one another. In 2002, he created "Indoor Landscape" for the 25th
Bienal de São Paulo, comprising two regular-shaped modules set on the floor, one made of wood and the other made of tarpaulin and water, which create a space of attrition inside the building designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Recently in 2013, Lescher participated of projeto Octógono with "Inabsência" (In absence, 2013): an enormous dome descending from the atrium's ceiling, which dialogued with the initial Project of Ramos de Azevedo, architect of the building constructed in 1905.

Born in 1962 in São Paulo, Artur Lescher participated in the 1987 and 2002 editions of the Bienal de São Paulo and in the 2005 Mercosul Biennial, in Porto Alegre, all in Brazil. His works are included in major public collections such as those Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Instituto Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango – Bogotá, Colombia; Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museu de Arte Contemporânea – MAC-USP, São Paulo, Brazil; Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Instituto Cultural Itaú, São Paulo, Brazil; Museu de Arte Latinoamericana de Buenos Aires, MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museu de Arte Moderna de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA.

With **Inabsência**, Lescher involves us within an overall environment of detachment, of things within absence; things left unfinished. Everything is pertinent but nothing is articulated in the architectural history of this iconic building in São Paulo.

The pantographic principle
Isobel Whitelegg - 2013

Artur Lescher's exhibition brings together new and existing works under the sign of the pantograph. The origin of this word is the name of a particular form of 'mechanical linkage' – an assembly connected in order to manage force and movement. In the 16th century, the pantograph was invented as an early technology of reproduction that allowed for the simultaneous enlarge-ment (or miniaturisation) of an original image. Made from a system of jointed rods (two larger, two smaller) the pantograph linked the gesture of tracing a point over the lines of a diagram with the drawing of an amplified double. In this original purpose it may be considered the ancestor of the retro-projector, the xerox machine, the telescopic zoom of the camera or the zoom-function represented on our digital screens by the anachronistic icon of a magnifying glass.

The large work placed in the window of the gallery [Pantográfica (Para Anto-nio), 2013] recalls the form of the pantograph in a literal manner, and indi-cates its more common and recognisable present-day function as a system of spatial linkage rather than a drawing tool. In the day-to-day we are likely to come across pantographic movement in the bathroom (enabling a round mir-ror to be brought closer or further away from the face) or on a construction site (a scissor lift that raises or lowers a platform), or as the retractable mesh that forms a metal elevator door. Other works, however, share the principles of this invention's mechanism of extension and retraction rather than its literal form. They recall the pantograph as a mechanical body able to ad-vance and retreat, to shift its reach and modulate its density and thus to be perceived as alternately heavier or lighter: stretched out to encompass space
within its structure or compacted in to exclude it. Alongside the articulated sculpture Metaméricos (2008) and Meta-métricos (2010), Lescher introduces a new body here: the telescope. In Telescópica em si mesma (2013), a stunted telescopic form

appears in its alternate states, burrowed into the gallery wall/ triggered into spatial extension by touch.

The different objects within this exhibition therefore have a shared capac-ity to embody alternate states of expansion and contraction. For Lescher this is the characteristic that reunites them as pantographic in thought or in principle. In his view, the pantographic or telescopic image is analogous to a contained intensity: the way in which an object is more than its formal or material self; as in language, the way in which a certain word or phrase is a trigger, opening up an unpredictable abyss of signification or sentiment. Or as in history and the social realm, the way in which wider effects seem in retrospect to have shot out from the causal limits of what at first seemed inconsequential.

The mechanics of articulated structure have emerged as a recurrent concern of Lescher's work in recent years. The title of an earlier series (Metaméri-cos, 2008) refers to the articulated bodies of segmented creatures (such as earthworms) whose simple physiognomy allows for finely controlled linear movements propelled by waves of contraction and expansion. Unlike the earthworm however, the structures that Lescher names 'metaméricos' do not have the capacity to move independently. They may move in response to manipulation but at the same time are adjustable only according to the lim-ited range of movement that has been designed into their struts and joints. The movement of the pantograph is similarly governed by the hand but at the same time its own contained internal mechanics force a tense and measured gesture on the part of the draftsman.

The pantograph thus works accurately because it has a fixed number of independent parameters ('degrees of freedom' as they are called in the language of mechanical engineering). The objects within Lescher's 2010 series Meta-métricos speak explicitly of such control and measure. These sculptures, like the Metaméricos, are constructed from linked segments. They approxi-mate tools for measure or drawing, such as extendable hinged rulers or the arms of a swivelling compass, but incorporate disobedient elements (bends, folds, extraneous parts) that insert additional degrees of freedom and extend towards the unmeasurable dimensions and intensities of the spaces they
traverse. Just as the pantograph – as a 'mechanical linkage' – is designed in order to carefully manage force and movement for the sake of accuracy or correct function, the term 'metric' suggests the productive management of space or time. As unruly sculptural tools, Lescher's Metamétricos are an
appealing disavowal of such limits. They speak to a human tendency to rebel against management, to define our existence as beyond measure and in ex-cess of explanation.

The desire to exceed human physical restraints however has drawn human history somewhat paradoxically towards the discovery of defined systems, theories, and mechanisms that might extend such limits. Christoph Schein-er, the inventor of the pantograph, not only allowed us to reproduce and amplify images with an inhuman precision, but was also the first person to conquer the physically impossible feat of looking into the sun and examining its surfaces. Scheiner's helioscope allowed an observer to stare indirectly at a body of light too intense for our eyes to see; it projected a detailed image of the sun, through a telescope, onto a piece of white paper that was sus-pended in a dark room. It is curious that the two mechanisms with which this sixteenth century Jesuit priest, physicist, and astronomer is associated – the pantograph and the telescope – are exactly those to which Lescher is drawn here; these same two elements are newly folded into his existing sculptural
vocabulary. The shared characteristic of each is not only their retractable form and proto-photographic function but their capacity for magnification, projec-tion and amplification.

Within the discipline of art history the pantograph has also been adopted as an idea or principle. It is used by the North

American scholar Donald Preziosi as a metaphor for the encounter with the artwork that takes place in the space of the museum. For Preziosi this is understood as an experience of
'magnification'. The viewer's expectation, when looking at the artwork, is al-ways that they will see more than the physical object of their gaze. The eyes' tracing of the contours of an artwork or artefact is also a search for amplified meanings, and a magnified imaginary is thus traced out (invisibly) in the pro-cess of looking. For Preziosi, when looking at artworks we expect more than "a mere conveying of historical or art historical information". We have a faith in the "inherent semiotic density" of what we are looking at and we believe that this particular confrontation between subject and an object will generate amplified intensities: greater understandings or deeper appreciations. Could it be that Artur Lescher's pantographic forms speak of this desire? The belief
that they are not only mere forms but also and at the same time forms of thought or vehicles of signification and that they will be perceived as such within the space of the gallery, where they are magnified within the imaginary of the viewer?

What is striking about Lescher's pantographs and telescopes is what is missing. We are presented with mechanisms for optical amplification in the absence of any object for them to act upon. The telescope points at nothing.
The pantograph enlarges nothing. Both stand only for amplification or projec-tion itself. In the work Ou ou (2013) we see proportionally exaggerated or di-minished spheres without reference to any original scale. We are encouraged to see the vehicle for magnification in the absence of the object or drawing to be enlarged by it. We do not see the overwhelming intensity of the sun;
it is rather that we see Scheiner's overwhelming drive to see the unseeable. As such the principles behind the pantograph and the telescope also bring to mind the title of Lescher's recent large-scale work for the Pinacoteca – In-absência - a double negative that indicates the absence of complete absence and thus the presence, contained invisibly within the artwork, of what cannot be seen.

The Nostalgia of the Engineer

Interested in the physical dislocation of the viewer in space and the construction of imagined realities, in The Nostalgia of the Engineer, Artur Lescher sifts through historical, philosophical, and academic sources to elucidate the lost language of the object.

Lescher draws on the surrealist and scientific compositions of Giorgio de Chirico,
Piero della Francesca and others to elicit an intuitive dialog with tradition, memory and perception. In this nostalgic space, form is painstakingly selected to substan-tiate and amplify the voice of the material in an attempt to restore the ancient metaphysical relationship between the artist and the scientist and reunite rational concepts of balance, equality and proportion with their abstract and philosophical roots.

Peeling away layers of meaning and mathematical relationships, Lescher stages an open-ended fable about the rigor of mathematics and invites the spectator into this space. What the visitor experiences first is the formalism and precise elegance of the objects themselves, their abstracted odes to industry, the capabilities of machinery, the purity of precision. Yet these objects, functionless reductions of geometry and mathematical principles, bare the subtle but unmistakable traits of the draftsman's analog tools: the compass, ruler, scale, and needle.

These objects, transformed beyond the pragmatic, intervene in the gallery space and become the protagonists of various fictions. Without an imposed sense of direction or purpose, the presence of the spectator alters the narrative course of the objects on a physical and philosophical level. Juxtaposed, conflicting, and of competing size, the object and the viewer engage in a dance of relational geome-try, two rival protagonists on a tragic quest for meaning.

In this complex dance, the work comes full circle; the drawing is revealed as the room, which is in turn the tools it is drawn with. By entering into and occupying this space, the spectator unwittingly assumes the role of the actor—the engineer lost in a nostalgic, personal search for mathematical perfection armed with per-fectly formed tools blunted by their own beauty.

Liquid Properties
a conversation between Artur Lescher, Adolfo Montejo Navas, and Alexandra Garcia Waldman

Artur Lescher – I like the image of one plane against another. This difference of layers is seen clearly in water. There are those ships marked with red lines. The meeting of the air with the water actually forms a mirror – to the eye above it's one way, but to that below it's another. The work Linhas Rojas comes from that contact between two surfaces, from that limit that creates a line, a tension. It has a Spanish name because the curator of the exposition Cromofagia was the Argen-tinian Victoria Noorthoorn. But, in truth, they are red lines that demarcate this meeting of planes. Later, these lines began to take on their own life, as if they had been taken from architecture, becoming autonomous. From there came the works that led to Metaméricos, which are segments of lines, that can be articulat-ed according to my will. As if the work had become animated, had its own life.

Adolfo Montejo Navas – As if the line took on a role, a character.

AL – The line can take on an organic role as an animal. It not only removes itself from a pre-existing function, it's a little like cancelling out the programming of that line, leaving it open to the imagination, to humour, to a figure, to a drawing or to anything else one can imagine. In this sense, the line is a possibility of a drawing. It is a drawing as well as drawing potential.

Alexandra Garcia Waldman – Is Metaméricos a work that touches on architec-ture?

AL – The Metaméricos are an escape route for architecture. I used to work with architecture, with one architecture inside another, an architecture that was useless, paradoxical and contradictory. Just as in Se Movente, which I exhibited at MAM-SP (Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo), which also proposed a dialogue with a particular idea of Lina Bo Bardi's museum. Linhas Rojas was the piece with the greatest approximation to and adhesion with architecture.

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Liquid Metal
Paulo Venancio Filho - 2010

A fluid, imponderable ridigity dominates the space with the magnificence of the natural phenomenon itself – in order to

compete with nature, scale is essential. But that which is mobile and time-determinant, where things are never what they once were, is also immobile - a locked machine, reduced to the expectation of action, held in suspense, waiting to be started up and placed in motion.

Artur Lescher's sculptures have always sought spatial, border situations where they intend to be just subtle interventions in space. His preference is for one-piece objects; he likes to subject them to the force of gravity by suspending them, to make clear not only their weight but also their limits. And it is at those limits, at the fine, pointed edges that he strives to cause a degree of unforeseen and unusual tension: attaining balance always through the most unlikely point, even at the smallest point possible. The fact that the objects are almost always made of wood or metal is already indicative of a kind of choice: either natural material, or machine material. Between nature and culture, in the transfiguration of one into the other, lies this work: Machine River. Indeed, if machine implies motion, then rivers are surely among the greatest machines of nature. Nature hides its mechanism and its components: a river is indivisible, unique, seamless. Rivers are also somewhat hypnotic, compelling one into a state of contemplation, to resign oneself to that which simply passes by - passes by and never returns. A river can absorb us for hours, it is the place where one perceives the passing of time, the perfect interaction between matter, space and time. Every work of art aspires to command such power, to lead one into complete and total absorption. While the monumental size seeks to embody the natural phenomenon, the moiré effect of the wire mesh reflects the ripples of the water. We could say that the minimal degree of ascesis here is not entirely accounted for in the industrial appearance, and the suggestions of nature also reflect another physical, natural, and even
metaphorical, presence, and that, between you and me, is not exclusive to Artur Lescher's work. All that is sensitive, of nature and of culture, can also be manipu-lated in the vast domain of abstraction.

The rigid but flexible wire mesh, with joints few and far between, resembles a continuous, uniform and seamless conveyor belt, which once in motion will
remain so forever. In a way, the mesh represents a continuation of the "drawings in space" that Lescher had been producing. "Drawings" that were sculptures that could be folded and form a linear sequence of joints. As if the joints sought to make up for the rigidity of the materials (metal or wood) and transformed them into lines that could be folded, shaped and potentially manipulated.

The balance of the plates by their edges, at the point of smallest contact, the risky stability and repose of the pointed objects while suspended or scarcely touching the ground by the point of a needle, demonstrate a process in which the sculpture wants to contradict or suspend its properties of weight, stability, self-sustainment etc. while not abdicating from its weight, stability, self-sustain-ment etc., which often leads one to think that that the sculpture is upside down.

As far as I know, never has a Lescher sculpture attained the dimensions of Ma-chine River. Lescher calls Machine River a drawing. If so, it must be the heaviest drawing in the world. And never before in his work has the suggestion of mobility been associated to such a heavy structure. Doubtless these two facts are related. By its appearance, Machine River is as fascinating as it is frightening, one is not entirely sure what forces it may produce. Before our own eyes everything seems to move on the glittering, metallic surface, and at the same time we feel its pow-erful, crushing presence. Two dimensions, nature and culture, that seem to have reached the limit. If so, then this is a faithful portrait of the world: increasingly more mobile and also increasingly more immobile.

Artur Lescher´s Machine-River
Paula Braga - 2008

Machine-River is an impressive engine-like installation that triggers philosoph-ical issues regarding time and matter. The piece is made of a stainless steel mesh that flows down across the floor, streaming through steel cylinders. The flux of this machine-river is frozen, it remains still. However, as one passes, as one moves, the mesh causes the optical impression of movement. Is it really moving?

The interaction between the work and the viewer bestows a “quasi-body” sta-tus to Machine-River, a state some Brazilian artists from the late fifties strived to confer to materials. Lygia Clark once said about her most famous sculptural work, Bichos (Animals): “When someone asks me how many movements a Bi-cho can perform, I answer: I don´t know, you don´t know, but it knows [..] It’s a living organism, an essentially active work”

Artur Lescher reactivates the neoconcrete faith in the expressiveness of ma-terials. He does not submit materials to efforts unsuited to their natures but rather plays with their dimensions – time included -- to expand our knowledge about them: paper becomes fluid, stone is transfigured into a lake, and a stationary heavy mesh of steel flows in graceful movement. His works suggest that under the proper conditions, matter assumes unsuspected new qualities. The special conditions that will release the movement of the steel or the hu-midity of glass are achieved through the form Lescher gives to the materials: a body ready to interact with other bodies. The interaction alters time, allowing for the animation of matter in unusual ways. Lescher, in fact, works closely
to the idea of animation: he associates a character to each kind of material, trying to understand the will of iron, the humor of wood or the way copper in-
teracts with other characters placed in the landscapes he builds. Stone may have will, he says after Nietzsche, but in a time, for a duration we can hardly perceive.

Machine-River is part of the artist´s investigations into fluidity. In Waterfall, from
2006, aluminum plates pour from the wall. River, from 2006, touches the point between object and body. In fact, its organization, like in Machine-River, suggests a cycle, possibly going from the object to the body. Like the water from the river that evaporates only to become rain and river again, Machine-River suspends steel, elevating it to a status of animated matter through a phenomenological process. A glimpse. Then the cycle closes, it´s once again steel to our perception. And we return to bewilderment.

Dreams
a conversation between Artur Lescher, Adolfo Montejo Navas, and Carlos Gamerro

Adolfo Montejo Navas – I’ve also remembered what you mentioned before about Joyce and the movement of the valley, of the river. Afterwards, I started thinking that he always dives into the waters, into the depths. Joyce plunged into the waters. There is always a sort of return to something that is without form, something, you could say, pre-form. For this reason Joyce’s book is al-most gibberish. So, at its root, this pre-formal element is also closely associat-ed with art as art also invents language. Poetry does the same.

Carlos Gamerro – It should be taken into account, exactly as you have said, that Joyce’s proposal, more than a text-river, was to write dreams, to write in the language of dreams, to create a language that did not exist, that was similar to the language of dreams. What was done before Joyce, was to re-

count the dream from the waking memory using waking language. And he said
“no, I want to find a verbal language that functions like dreams - to write a book that is in itself a dream”. I believe that there is actually a kind of return to the pre-form, protein, fluid that, in this case, is also the unconscious. In a certain way, he found it in this flow of the river, as Finnegans Wake is not a text about a river, but a text that is a river. I don’t think, Artur, that this is far from what you have tried to do – rivers of different materials, the majority of them non-liquid. To make a river of metal, wood, words and to seek in these perhaps hostile materials the forms, the fluidity, the movement of the river.
I don’t know if what you do and what Joyce did are so different, each in your own art, with your own technique.

Artur Lescher – It’s strange that you mention this because I don’t know very much about Joyce. But the fact that he wanted to write dreams fascinates me.
I have always wanted to do that, I want to build images as if they were dreams. In my process, there is dreamedup work that has come to me ready-made. I dream the discussion of the work, its conceptualization. I have difficulty in fixing the dream precisely because of this experience of leaving the dream and only then remembering it. There was a period when I practiced this a lot, writing down all my dreams. But when I wrote them down, I realised they had changed. So, one task was the dream, another was to remember the dream. Yet another was to write the dream. Three different things. When I produce a work, I like that it appears as a dream image, without much explanation. When one analyses a dream, whether Freudian or Jungian, one can see that those images or words come from some-where. They have an origin, a crossing or a relation that gradually sheds light on the reason for it. But I want to build an image that is the image of the dream, an image that I feel or that the spectator becomes involved with and has an experi-ence of – that is experience that I have when I read literature or a good theoreti-cal text.

AMN – Ultimately, we are talking about how things can have imagined qualities. Words can be imagined. But, speaking of dreams, works that are really visual arts are chimerically dreams. Formally. Works of art, including the works of literature in their final form, are chimeric dreams of language and the world. What is curious is to unite language and the world, as this is surely an impossible union is it not?
But this is what we are dealing with.

AL – I always try to relate the production of a piece to the production of a dream. What we dream is, in a way, our own individual construction. We create that image and realise later which are the elements that can generate a grouping of images or the narrative of that dream. What is impressive about a dream is how the image was formed. The experience that I enjoy with the work is seeing the image of the dream. It is an exercise of building with the particular repertoire that I have. But we were talking about Joyce and dreams... The work with the rolls of steel cable and gravel came from a dream I had about relaxation, that ideas do not need to come from the tension of materials, from the relation of the pieces with the envi-ronment. They can also come through relaxation. Allowing things to flow in space also has this evocative power. And I dreamt about a piece very similar to this, which was the unravelling of a roll of steel cable and as it unravelled, it drew itself and it created life as a drawing tool.

Irony
a conversation between Artur Lescher, Adolfo Montejo Navas, Alexandra Garcia Waldman, and Bernardo Ortiz

Alexandra Garcia Waldman – Artur’s works are related to industrial processes, but they have a strong human element.
Is this meant to be humorous?

Artur Lescher – Yes, I think it is. I invest a lot in the construction of the work, seeking precision. What interests me is creating paradoxical relations. If I work with wood, which is in the realm of craftsmanship, I like to put it in a machine from the metallurgic industry with a hard cut, as if it were iron. In this way, the work both is and isn't what you see. Otavio Paz, when he speaks about poetry, says it is necessary to join one word with another until a spark is created, some-thing like bringing one strange word close to another one, provoking an implosion that reaches something new. So, my technical and poetic operation – because poetry is also technical – produces this. These contradictions should be present at the same time and, perhaps this is the place for irony, the right place for irony.

Adolfo Montejo Navas – This urgency to create, produce, manufacture and conceive seems at its root to lead towards a formal irony, as if the form itself were not enough. The form of his works is exaggerated, refined, and rigorous to the extreme. The feeling we get is that production is at the frontier of form, at its limit. It cannot entirely escape those boundaries because of its form, but it seeks other images that are not merely form, but that are also its fruits, that form is asking for something else, knocking on another door. The door of its imagination, the door of literary or poetic language. Forms are coming out of them.

AL – There is a passage in mythology that's very interesting. Apollo is the archer and his symbol is an arrow that flies in a straight line. Someone takes aim and imagines a short, fast connection between one thing and another. I think that this fantasy in a way is also what allows one to imagine constellations, by joining un-expected points that then start to form a figure, a reality. To return to the Apollo mythology, the worst battle he had was with the serpent Python, which, in a way, is a curved line – the serpent itself is the oscillating line. The mythology manages to bring together this question that, actually, is not exactly a contradiction. One is part of the other. In the temple of Apollo, the priestess who foretold the future and who had access to another world for her prophesies was called Pythia. When Apollo kills Python, he appropriates this universe. A lot of people read my work as Apollonian, as a straight clean line. But I think it's good to know that Apollo is actually not like that. Behind him, there is the question of the oracle, of Python, of those subterranean currents. That information is also there, although perhaps not on the surface.

Bernardo Ortiz – How do you relate to geometry?

AL – I like geometry in its most synthetic form, always at its minimum. But, I see more clearly now that geometry has a mathematical aspect, belongs to mathe-matics, it is a precise science that has a relation to our body. A gaze has geome-try. I don't know who it was that planned our eyes to have their own geometry. But, when we look we are exercising this geometry. And our gaze is elliptical, a gaze that cuts the plane. Our vision is always making cuts, just as an ellipse is a cut of a cylindrical form. And it's strange to see how the organic geometry of our eye reacts, interacts with the geometry of pure forms when they are built. There-fore what interests me is exactly this double bind, to find this organic geometry, recognizing that our gaze is this hybrid of geometrical with organic.

Liquid properties
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Artur Lescher – I like the image of one plane against another. This difference of layers is seen clearly in water. There are those ships marked with red lines. The meeting of the air with the water actually forms a mirror – to the eye above it's one way, but to that below it's another. The work Linhas Rojas comes from that contact between two surfaces, from that limit that creates a line, a tension. It has a Spanish name because the curator of the exposition Cromofagia was the Argen-tinian

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Artur Lescher – I made a piece with chemical processes in which one can see the reactions of the elements. One molecule of salt and one of copper produce some-thing new. I think that the grammar of the work is precisely this, how one thing influences another and produces another entirely unexpected one. How it catches fire, explodes, how something is depressing, cheering, makes one laugh. I think that this is the nature of dealing with things. But, I really don't see the difference between doing this with words, with chemical elements, with wood.

Adolfo Montejo Navas – This is a strong statement against the autonomy of artworks, which was proposed by modernism. It escapes the formalist stamp of approval in order to make this image porous, with a greater level of contamina-tion, with more connections. It is absurd to want to stick to the work, making it an introduction to other discourses like the word, which are more obvious, stron-ger, with more substance, more value.

AL – With Paisagem Protegida da Natureza, a piece I did for the 2002 Bienal de São Paulo this became even clearer. In English, it was called Indoor Landscape. In spite of the work having a discourse and grammar built from the relationship of the materials – I still believe that they have something to say and are laden with meaning –, there is the operation of when this enters the universe of culture, which is not the same as the universe of nature, and the kind of friction that it creates.

This was the first exhibition in which I began to name the works. It was not when the first names appeared, there had already been some. But in this exhibition I wanted to name every single piece. In Paisagem Mínima, I wanted to create this provocation between the object itself, the material, and the title that could evoke an element of the landscape. The spectator is perturbed by this vision and it takes longer to understand what is going on. An image that I like for the piece is that of a trap, when the work “binds” the spectator inside a code that the author does not have complete control over. They feel slightly imprisoned, trying to leave the labyrinth that the work has formed. Those constructions have a little of this logic.

Alexandra Garcia Waldman – Minimum Landscape also has a strong relationship with architecture.
AL – The context of this exhibition was important, but before that it was the architecture, the material construction of the space that interested me. One of the works comes down from a line in the ceiling, takes shape and almost – but not quite – touches the ground. It fluctuates in the space. And so I come back to the aquatic theme. This piece creates instability in the spectator insofar that it pres-ents contradictions. Apart from insinuating itself as a vertical axis for the space, it is unstable and oscillates with the displacement of people, with the wind. It is as if this work had taken away all the stability of the construction. What interested me was this superficial tension that exists in water, the space between the work and the floor. This created a tension in the space of the room. Several of the pieces in this exhibition articulate the wall with the floor, provoking this layer, this cut. Even the piece Well, which is a sheet of glass in the ground, reiterates this character of a mirrored surface. A black mirror that provokes an illusion for spectators when they enter the space, but that reflects everything around it, as if it were a reflect-ing pool. It very much reaffirms this condition of a river surface.

Bernardo Ortiz – Did you not name the works before?

AL – Rarely. I had a problem in giving names to the pieces up until that Biennial, because I found that names created a shortcut to the work and I wanted the spec-tators’ experience to be as direct as possible. But from 2002 onwards, I started to think that the name could be an extension of the work, to produce precisely that effect of deviating from an original idea and that this could actually enhance the work rather than diminish it. I then began to realise that behind the works, there was a narrative that flowed through time. The idea of this book is to draw a line between these works. And this idea began to get clearer with some works that I started to call Rio. The first one was called just Rio. Afterwards, I made another that I called Mr. Man’s River. The last in this family for the time being is River Machine. But, in fact, those works have nothing to do with rivers. They are exactly what are. I have always worked with the truth of materials, they appear just as they are. But giving them names was another step.

AMN – For me, it is surprising to hear that you were somewhat afraid of using words, yet wanted to have an imagery that sometimes only words can have. It is very much a surprising feature of Artur’s poetics. He is bringing the works to ground (here it should be ‘to water’, but it is to ground), as if the works wanted to get specific feedback.

Artur Lescher’s sculptures have always sought spatial situations where they intend to pass unnoticed as subtle interventions. His preference is for one-piece objects, suspended and subject to the force of gravity, creating a tension and relation between the work and the space around it. Using different materials such as metal, stone, wood,

brass and copper, he evokes familiar volumes and designs but removed of their usual function.

Lescher gained recognition after participating in the 19th Bienal de São Paulo, in 1987, in which he presented “Aerólitos,” a work consisting of two 11-meter-long balloons, one in the biennial pavilion and the other in an external area, which converse with one another. In 2002, he created “Indoor Landscape” for the 25th Bienal de São Paulo, comprising two regular-shaped modules set on the floor, one made of wood and the other made of tarpaulin and water, which create a space of attrition inside the building designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Recently in 2013, Lescher participated of projeto Octógono with “Inabsência” (In absence, 2013): an enormous dome descending from the atrium’s ceiling, which dialogued with the initial Project of Ramos de Azevedo, architect of the building constructed in 1905.

Born in 1962 in São Paulo, Artur Lescher participated in the 1987 and 2002 editions of the Bienal de São Paulo and in the 2005 Mercosul Biennial, in Porto Alegre, all in Brazil. His works are included in major public collections such as those Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Instituto Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango – Bogotá, Colombia; Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museu de Arte Contemporânea – MAC-USP, São Paulo, Brazil; Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Instituto Cultural Itaú, São Paulo, Brazil; Museu de Arte Latinoamericana de Buenos Aires, MALBA, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museu de Arte Moderna de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, USA.