

STEREO SCULPTURE

a journal about 'Change'

Time is changing and there is no escape — we are all changing. Night becomes day, and days become years. Time passes with each tick of the clock. With each passing second there is change. Because it is fluid, change is difficult to define.

The natural world is shrinking, while cities are expanding. New urban structures are appearing. Within some of these megalomaniac cities, there exist small, but growing islands of slums. The favelas are changing as well - their structure, function and definition. Some favelas are being removed in order to construct new buildings, 'real buildings'. New slums arise in places that were deserted just a minute ago. Change is the enemy of all conservatives, but some changes are positive. Sometimes change is ambiguous; for everything that is gained, something is lost.

As elections draw near, governments propose introducing new services in the slums, utilities such as water and electricity and paving the streets. They do it in the hope that the large favela population will vote for them. Rio de Janeiro will host the Olympic Games in 2016, and the city is demanding improvements in the slums that are visible from the tourist zone in the southern part of the city. The city is building new medical and sport facilities here in order to ease its conscience in the eyes of the international community. They are 'cleaning up' the favelas and getting rid of drugs. But then the drug gangs leave the south zone and move up to the northern part of the city where they keep on trafficking. Does this qualify as change?

Everything changes, for better or for worse.



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The setting is neat and sober: two chairs standing side by side, two sofas facing each other. The sofas are covered in a bright orange fabric which gives the room a certain vitality and glow to the faded, peeling paint. A rusty nail, protruding from the wall, marks the spot where a picture frame might once have hung. It exposes a layer of grey cement, like an open wound, where it enters the wall. Alfonso and Vitalina smile from a photograph taken as a young couple. In contrast is a gaudy painting of a 18th century sailboat, floundering in a stormy sea, capturing for eternity the moment before capsizing. The saturated colors and glitzy embellishments question the author's sincerity and reveal it's cheapness.

The room's main protagonists are the TV and Stereo. The sofas and chairs are aligned to face the television from which the much-admired telenovelas are broadcast daily. The TV sits on what appears to be a makeshift stand constructed of two simple, iron-frame chairs. One chair faces the room, with the back leaning against the wall. The other stands next to it, turned — for no apparent reason — at a 90-degree angle. The two chairs support a large flat cardboard box on which the TV sits. The television is the same width as the chairs

TV DE ARTIGOS NÃO LIDOS

and looks much too heavy for the box. It is crowned with an 80's-style pyramid antenna. Three aluminum pilers point in different directions hoping to catch a signal. A cluster of wires escapes from the back of the set, searching for a nearby socket. My eyes follow one of the wires from the back of the set to the floor, and up again to a small DVD player on the ground.

Alfonso and Vitalina love music. The pitch black sound sculpture has five layers. On the bottom is a CD player, most likely broken. Above it is a double set of cassette recorders, an amplifier, and another CD player. A strange-looking turntable tops the plastic cake. The five layers are all integrated into a square-shaped sculpture. It sits on a pedestal made out of two immense speakers. The black plastic finish on the speakers has lost it's shine. The symmetric construction is spoiled by one of the speaker's membranes which hangs at a crooked angle, similar to the floundering ship at sea. (Repórter sem Beiras)

Stereo Sculpture, from: *Jornal de Artigos Não Lidos* Archive: 'Stereo Sculpture', *Jornal de Artigos Não Lidos*, March 31, 2011. This article is based on an interview with Vitalina — living in the Cidade Nova, Rio de Janeiro, August 2010. Written by Repórter sem Beiras.

Telenovelas — is the word for Brazilian TV soap operas



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