

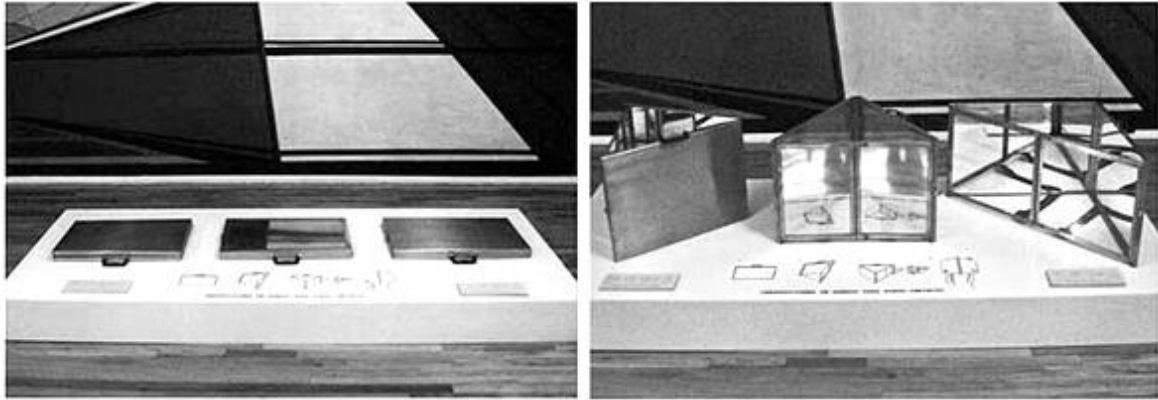
Instructions to assemble a *Porta-Infinito*

Between reflections and shadows

By Cuauhtémoc Medina *

In a lucky combination, the projects of Regina Silveira and Fabiola Torres-Alzaga confront the spectator with the experience of unfolded and volatile territories, the deployment of spaces that we could call "prismatic" because of the manner in which they question the physical continuity of the visual field. Despite the radical difference of ages, latitudes, methodologies of both artists, their works coincide in putting devices that intervene in the operation of our visuality, alluding to the two optical phenomena with which the West has historically negotiated the status of the image: the silhouetted of the shadows and the simile of the reflections. Shadows and reflections are not in these works the original referent of the notion of "appearance" and of the dangerous disjunction between the image and the thing. No matter how different their tactics are, Silveira and Torres-Alzaga use a simulacrum to introduce an additional dimension to the phenomenological space, a splitting that (like Baroque anamorphosis) floats and undulates above the representation, putting in crisis the stability of the perception.

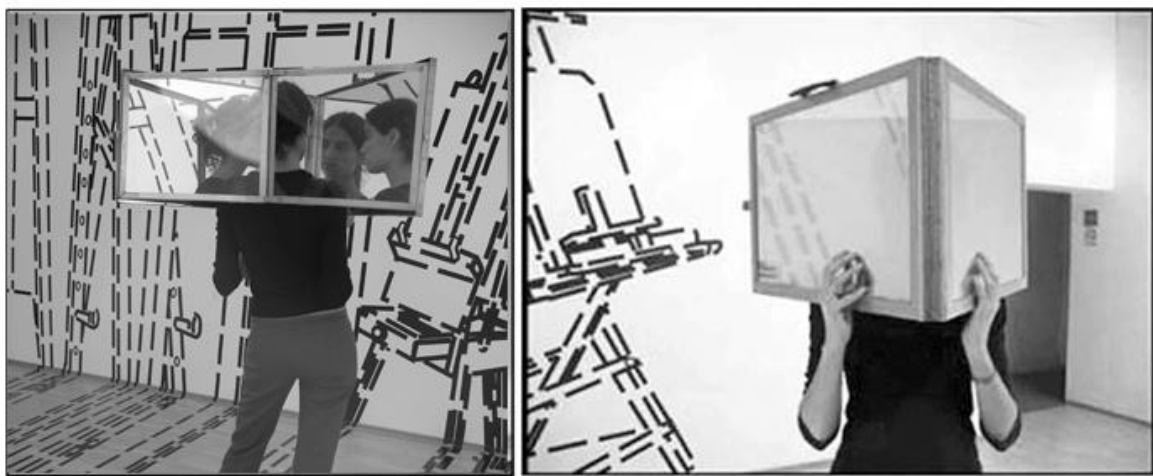
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Porta-infinitos (portable-infinities), 2004

The three models of *Porta-infinitos* (*Portable-infinities*) (2003-2004), developed by the young artist Fabiola Torres-Alzaga, graduated from “La Esmeralda”, are really amazing. A hybrid of mask, kaleidoscope, helmet and portfolio, *Porta-infinitos* (*Portable-infinities*) are ingenious articulated devices that are opened by means of straps to create a kind of portable "environment". Its operation is largely equivalent to inhabiting a kaleidoscope. These helmets are constructed as prisms of mirrors that, when placed on our shoulders, completely block our sight to immerse ourselves in a private utopian, funny and frightening world, by the multiplication of our image and the fragments of our surroundings. Thus, instead of observing the horizon, its user can only observe the *aleph* point of the infinite progression of the reflexes.

Porta-infinitos could be seen as a synthesis of the various modern and postmodern traditions: a cross of Robert Morris's mirror cubes, the Duchamp-Fluxus object-suitcase, and above all the mirror-mirrors that Lygia Clark developed for his *Sensorial Masks*, *Glasses* and *Eyeglasses* dialog from 1968 to 1969. But such conjunction is made, however, with modest and delicate humor, more as a contraption than as a messianic object. Because at the end of the day, these objects are contemporary lounge games: It would not be difficult to find them under the Christmas tree, as a cheap and portable substitute for transcendence.



*Critic and historian serves as chief curator at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporaneo (MUAC), one of Latin America's and Mexico City's most progressive contemporary art institutions (under the auspices of Latin America's largest university, the National Autonomous University of Mexico). Medina, who holds a PhD in History and Art Theory from the University of Essex, has also curated exhibitions for Manifesta, Tate, London, and the Venice Biennale.