

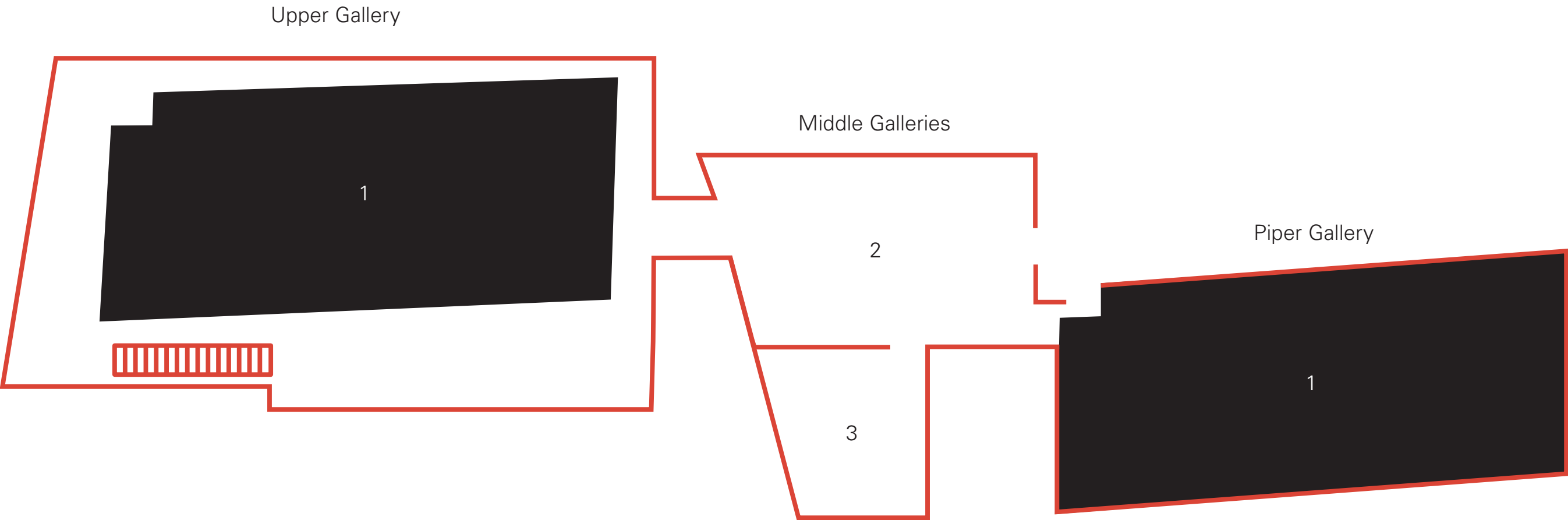
Upper & Piper Gallery

1. *The Family in Disorder / A Família em Desordem*, 2018, shoelaces, matchboxes, smoke grenades, cotton bolts, black plastic sheeting, brown paper, bricks, masking tape, hook and loop fastener tape, chalk, stones, metal barrels, topsoil, gaffer tape, hemp rope, notebooks, chicken feathers, poplar wood batten, carpet.
- Cinthia Marcelle with the participation of Aline Tima, Aaron Head, Chris Jackson, Kamila Janska, Andy Owen and Sebastian Thomas
- Process developed with VÃO and Scot Blyth

‘My work is not so different from the work of a stonemason or craftsman; one world is not so far from the other and the relationships between classes and people seem less marked to me. At least, that is how I live. I believe in that impurity. My creations derive from such blending in with the surrounding world; for me, art is not above anything and the artist is not above anyone. The improvisation with which we have to live, an improvisation in which lowly workers reveal themselves to be true artists, constitutes our common sensibility.’
– Cinthia Marcelle, 2017

The Family in Disorder questions territory and occupation. Marcelle’s work resonates with the land occupation movement in Brazil, which has been led by the homeless, disenfranchised and those pushed out by rising housing costs in large urban areas. Severe housing crises, manifesting in drastically different ways, are being experienced across the world from São Paulo to Oxford. This global concern regarding ownership and access led Marcelle to consider: ‘to whom does the land belong? Who is this space for? Who owns or has access to these public art spaces?’

The background to *The Family in Disorder* could also be understood as the global crises of late capitalism and the current instability in Brazil, dating from the 2016 impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (considered by many to be a political coup). Members of Congress often cloaked their justification for Rousseff’s impeachment in rhetoric citing the supposed ‘protection of the family’ from liberal values. The artist posed a series of open-ended questions in conceiving her work: ‘what is a family? Can we talk about a family of materials, a family of the institution?’



Middle Galleries

2. *Truth or Dare / Verdade ou Desafio*, 2018, 6 minutes, looped, single channel video, colour, sound
- Truth or Dare* is animated from photographs of a concrete triangle, found by the artist on the ground in South Africa. The artificial movement of the triangle is suggestive of the moving hands of a clock or a sundial, before gradually assuming the guise of a lost compass trying to find its magnetic field. The triangle was a discarded item, intrinsically mysterious; its original purpose is unknown.
- The triangle moves at a dizzying speed, then slows down, only to speed up again – trying to find a stable, fixed point. It begins pointing north, and ends the video pointing south, moving both clockwise and counter-

clockwise. The material quality of the video is matched by the textures of its soundtrack. When a human shadow obscures the clean geometry of the triangle from view, the video mirrors the tension between organic and man-made materials seen in *The Family in Disorder*. The video embodies a poetic simplicity by suggesting the confluence of the human body, the industrial object and the natural environment, a strategy that is central to Marcelle’s interdisciplinary practice.

In this indeterminacy, this state of slippage, there is an inversion of previously stable positions, to occupy the space between chaos and order. *Truth or Dare* invokes the game spin the bottle to pose a challenge. The Portuguese word for ‘dare’, *desafio*, can also mean ‘challenging’ or ‘defiance’: this sense of a motivated

struggle is paramount. *Truth or Dare* is caught in a state of suspension. When the ‘compass’ stops, it does so in an upturned state. It is a physical inversion, suggestive of the non-hierarchical mixing and movement of people and materials throughout the three gallery spaces.

3. *No title*, 2017–18, six drawings, pencil on paper


All works courtesy the artist, Galeria Vermelho, Silvia Cintra + Box4 and Sprovieri Gallery


The artist would like to thank: Anna Juni, Eduardo Brandão, Gabriel Zimbardi, Isobel Whitelegg, Marília Rubio, Julia Rebouças, Patrícia Mourão, Pedro Durães, Pedro Veneroso, Sara Ramo, Gabi Ngcobo, all the Modern Art Oxford team and the artists that agreed to participate in this experimentation.

Please ask our Visitor Assistants if you have any questions. The work in the Upper Gallery is fragile: please do not touch the materials.

Exhibition partners and supporters are:

Flavia Nespatti
Catherine Petitgas
Sprovieri Gallery, London
Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo
Silvia Cintra + Box4, Rio de Janeiro

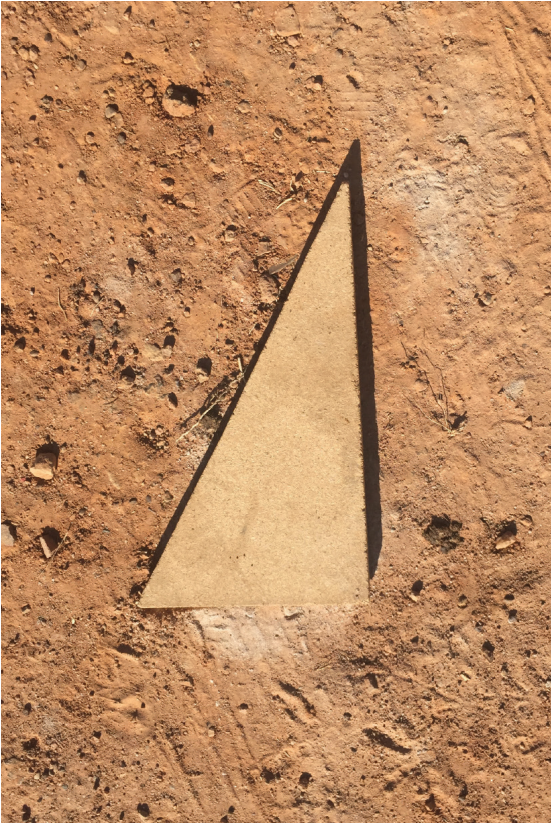
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EXHIBITION NOTES

MODERN ART OXFORD



it represents a more diverse range of Brazil's cultural heritages. The students argued for new and better ways of teaching, and they understood that this must involve a process of decolonisation, articulated through peaceful protest. Education and labour are habitual concerns in Marcelle's wider practice: past works like *This Same World Over* (2009) and *Education by Stone* (2016) are informed by efforts to achieve new educational models in the face of abstracted human labour, while *Dust Never Sleeps* (2014) challenged the supposed neutrality of the 'white cube' gallery space, and by extension, the institution's power structures.

"An uprising takes place when people start to gather and move and appear and act in ways that seek to dismantle the regime or the power responsible for their subjugation."

– Judith Butler⁴

As curator Gabi Ngcobo wrote in the publication accompanying Marcelle's *Hunting Ground / Chão de Caça*, for Brazil's pavilion at the 2017 Venice Art Biennale: 'In the recent student protests in Brazil, and South Africa alike, there is an active call for quality decolonial education [...Cinthia Marcelle's] work speaks to the idea stressed by Frantz Fanon that the project of decolonisation "cannot come as a result of friendly understanding" – because creating new configurations of knowledge and power is a messy process'.⁵ This messiness is precisely what the audience – and the artist – must embrace as part of *The Family in Disorder*.

By disrupting the conventions of a solo exhibition, Marcelle and her six artist-participants have instigated what she calls 'a collective force, which proposes new forms of living, and creates new ways of learning.' They are using the raw materials that have recurred in Marcelle's practice over the last decade, but in completely new ways (potentially outside of her control). Embracing chaos, *The Family in Disorder* is an exercise in letting go of traditional notions of creativity and narrative. As the influential Brazilian art critic Mário Pedrosa once said, 'art is the experimental exercise of freedom.'⁶ This work experiments with how we might live and work together in public space.

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Cover images: Cinthia Marcelle, *Truth or Dare / Verdade ou Desafio*, 2018. Images courtesy the artist, Galeria Vermelho, Sílvia Cintra + Box4 and Sprovieri Gallery.



The Family in Disorder: Truth or Dare Cinthia Marcelle

In the Piper Gallery, the unbranded materials are neatly stacked in regimented rows of distinct categories, presented in bulk quantities

By positioning identical black carpets of the same dimensions, shape and orientation in each space (precisely replicating the floor plan of the Piper Gallery within the larger Upper Gallery), Marcelle provokes a feeling of déjà-vu: in effect placing one space within another. In the Piper Gallery, the black carpet stretches fully from wall to wall, end to end, whereas those same dimensions fail to reach the perimeter of the Upper Gallery. The limits of one room are rendered a second time as freedom, as an abstract shape floating against excess space.

Marcelle's work takes into consideration the context of Oxford as a city and an institutional place associated with education, research and debate. The artist first visited Oxford in early 2017. This new installation has materialised from that initial site visit, and her desire to respond to Modern Art Oxford's gallery spaces, and their distinctive architectural quality. *The Family in Disorder* reacts to the building's two possible access routes into the upstairs galleries, and which half of the work visitors encounter first involves an element of chance. The artist noticed that the open light-filled space of the Upper Gallery has an external quality which connects with the city, versus the contained, inward-facing nature of the Piper Gallery. This led Marcelle to envisage a scenario that would work with this duality: ultimately producing a mirror image of chaos and order.

For this exhibition a new site-specific installation by Brazilian artist Cinthia Marcelle, *The Family in Disorder*, is presented alongside the premiere of *Truth or Dare* (all works 2018), a video created following the artist's residency in South Africa. Together these works introduce UK audiences to Marcelle's practice, which uses actions and gestures to reflect on labour, materials, social structures and the environment. The artist has described this large-scale work as 'an experimental proposition to reinvent, relearn and reorganise.' Making use of a tactile group of materials, both natural and industrial, her approach is both poetic and rooted in the everyday.

"My work comes from a fusion with the world: at the origin of my creative process is the belief that art is not above anything, and the artist is not above anybody – everything mixes. We can only reinvent the world from within."

– Cinthia Marcelle

The school occupations in Brazil, begun in 2016, are an important education-based protest movement. Secundaristas (secondary school students) have occupied their schools to fight for new educational models: in particular, their desire to decolonise the curriculum, so that

The Upper Gallery evidences the remains of the group's artistic exchange. A set of ground rules was agreed prior to any action, including a ban on using external tools to work with the materials. The rules were informed by the nature of the physical materials, rather than notions of social hierarchy or visual expectations. The work is grounded in contemporary progressive political efforts to move beyond patriarchal and colonial structures within public society and discourse. By building, dismantling and re-building new structures within *The Family in Disorder*, the processes of the work are informed by the collective action of various protest movements and uprisings. This intersection of loosely related associations resists locating the meaning of the work in any fixed position, but acknowledges the political nature of its gestures.



Cinthia Marcelle, *Education by Stone / Educação pela pedra*, 2016. Installation view, MoMA PS1. Photo by Pablo Enriquez, Cinthia Marcelle. Image courtesy the artist, Galeria Vermelho, Sílvia Cintra + Box4 and Sprovieri Gallery.

and carefully calibrated to span the carpet's entire width. Here, this structure seems to operate as a barrier, an ordered but impassable frontier. In the Upper Gallery, that same group of materials seems to have detonated in the space, creating a sense of chaos and impurity. This disordering in one room of *The Family in Disorder* is the result of dialogue and confrontation. Marcelle chose to hand over this half of her installation to a group of six artists and technicians, and invited them 'to occupy the space' with its materials. This decision, entirely new to her practice, destabilises the expectation of individual creative authorship, in favour of collective decision making.

⁴ Judith Butler, 'Uprising' in *Uprisings*, ed. Georges Didi-Huberman, Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2016, p.28. ● Gabi Ngcobo, 'No Retreat No Surrender No Retreat No Surrender', in *Cinthia Marcelle: Hunting Ground / Chão de Caça*, Venice, 2017, p.71. Quoted reference to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961 (2004 edition), Grove Press, New York, p.36.