

### Statement by the Artist

“In the Fábula do Olhar (2012/2013) project I delve into the universe of the homeless. The desire to portray them came from issues relating to the widespread use of images brought about by the availability of devices and the popularization of different types of cameras. The image devoid of any value, political or aesthetic, becomes pure information. The sensation one gets is that such extent and intensity of image diffusion has rendered audiences indifferent, and all images equivalent to one another. How is it possible to reestablish the exceptional statute of an image that brings the world to an end, one that is not its expression, and is at once its emanation, a form of intuition coming from elsewhere? The fascination caused by a few old photographs gave me a clue. The enchantment is sometimes due to the fact that one does not know where these recordings come from; they come from a universe without vestiges, or from another time – they create a suggestive boundary to vision, a chimaera-like cross-section of perception. Out of all my childhood photographs, one in particular set in motion this ineluctable game between reality and imagination, causing a strange incision in my gaze.

The photo-painted portrait of my first dress, made the pillars in my house yellow, dyed the white rocking chair pale blue, and under shades of grey in my hair a ruby ribbon shined, conjuring a strange magic in front of my eyes, a latency in the real. That memory gave me the idea of retrieving the profession of photo-painting, in this artistic experience, a near-extinct tradition in Northeast Brazil with a highly specific characteristic: to retouch the image with paint, adding accessories – such as suits, jewelry, makeup, dresses –, these new details granted some prestige to the character being portrayed. I decided to combine this technique with pictures of people who live on the streets, whose material poverty is confused with subjective, existential misery, looking for a way to remove that image from the information system, causing it to open up to the world in a way that we did not know beforehand, reiterating it via the art circuit. For a month and a half, I set up a photographic studio at two mess halls for homeless people in the city of Fortaleza: Refeitório São Vicente de Paulo and Casa da Sopa. I took black-and-white photographs of homeless people, recorded video statements of their personal histories, and asked a key question which directs and identifies the nature of the work: How would you like to see yourself or be seen by society? This question opens up the field of subjectivity of the individuals portrayed. Upon fabulating their condition, they make themselves into characters of the “Fábula do Olhar” exhibition. The Ceará state-born artist Mestre Júlio dos Santos, using the photo-painting technique, colored the black-and-white portraits, creating interferences on the photographs based on what each homeless individual said. The outcome is a fabulous-image that sets in motion this ineluctable game between the real and imagination.”

--- Virginia de Medeiros