

Divortium Aquarum Art Installation at CCBB

March 6, 2012 | Filed under Entertainment | Posted by Nathan Walters

By Nathan M. Walters, Contributing Reporter

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL – Divortium Aquarum (Watershed), Brazilian artist José Rufino's new installation opening this week (March 6th) at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Rio de Janeiro (CCBB), is the first in a schedule of exhibitions at CCBB focused on Brazilian contemporary artists. The series, being exhibited in the CCBB's Contemporary Room, is intended to raise questions of Brazilians and the role of the Brazilian artist in presenting identity.



Divortium Aquarum exhibit at CCBB, photo by José Rufino.

Rufino's work has been focused on these issues for the past three decades and Divortium Aquarum is the perfect piece to start the series, metaphorically presenting Brazilian history crashing through the walls of the CCBB.

The installation's title, Divortium Aquarum, is a Latin term referring to the separation of waterways, a theme that is more than appropriate for the CCBB.

"Past these walls," an excited Rufino states, pointing to the walls of the CCBB, "you have Guanabara Bay, an estuary, all of Rio is a collection of waterways. I want visitors to feel the movement of Rio's rivers coming through the wall."

Rufino was excited to bring the installation to the CCBB because of the museum's location and because the Contemporary Room lent itself to

creating the feeling of a flowing river. The collection of antiquated expedition boats and canoes, some collected in Rufino's state of residence, Paraíba, but additional ones recovered in Rio for an expansion of the piece, literally flow out of the room's wall, creating the sensation of a rushed stream headed in different directions.

"I wanted the piece to be a bit 'esculhambado' (messy)," states Rufino. While the flow of the boats creates this feeling, on the opposite wall stands a re-creation of the artist himself, outfitted in seafarer's garb, perched atop a sea-worn post.



Divortium Aquarum at CCBB, photo by José Rufino.

There is a calm in this part of the installation, the figure meditatively waiting to either embrace the force of the stream or unaware of its presence, the reposing monolith a firm but vulnerable focus of the stream's energy.

The materials used in the piece are worn with the history of Brazil. The boats and post have a brute texture from year's of use, a sensation the artist was focused on creating.

Even the bottles that line the wall, all of which were recovered in Rio, are filled with water directly from the Rio dos Macacos (Monkey River) and historic ichnography of Rio de Janeiro.

The concept of memory and existence is integral to Rufino's work and is well represented in Divortium Aquarum. However, this piece seems more organic, and, as the series intends, pushes the issues of Brazilian identity and Brazilian artists.

Rufino mentions, "Now is an exciting time in Rio for artists. There is a great community here and the rest of the world is looking closer at what Brazilian artists are doing."

Domestic and international collectors are more involved in the Brazilian arts community and Brazilian art appreciators now have more options of viewing the best the country has to offer at

constantly-improving venues such as CCBB. Those wanting to understand more about the beautiful and complex history of the country should plan a visit to the CCBB to check out Divortium Aquarum exhibition.

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José Rufino | Divortium Aquarum

From March 6, until April 22, 2012

Tuesday thru Sunday 9AM until 9PM

Free entrance