



**MÁRCIA X, Ação de Graças, 2001**  
**Performance still**  
**Photo: Wilton Montenegro**  
**Coutesy: the artist**

**RIO DE JANEIRO**  
**ANA TERESA REYNAUD**

The landscape of Brazil's contemporary art scene is becoming a shifting terrain. Until recently the centres were easily identifiable as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. But lately, interesting shifts have occurred with the entry onto the art world map of the north east of Brazil, a region rich in local cultures that has modernized quite dramatically over the past few years. Bahia, sensuous and African - rooted; Pernambuco; where medieval Iberian traditions are re-interpreted; and Ceará with its arid, nomadic landscape: these are some of the main sites for this emergence. For the past six years, Heitor Reis, as curator of the Museum of Modern Art Salvador (a beautiful baroque building overlooking the sea) has been staging the Salão da Bahia, which not only provides exposure to local artists but has also given them International visibility.

The Salão de Pernambuco in Recife and the exhibitions held by the Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar in Fortaleza, Ceará, have had similar effects. On the more established side of Brazilian Art, internationally known artists Cildo Meireles and Artur Barrio have been chosen to represent Brazil in this year's Documenta. But again it is from the north-east that the winds of change are blowing most decisively. Pernambuco-born art dealer Marcantonio Vilaça, who died prematurely in 2000, had a global and sophisticated vision of Brazilian art. His legacy remains in the gallery Camargo Vilaça, São Paulo, now renamed Fortes Vilaça, which represents some of the most prominent artists on the Brazilian scene.

Adriana Varejão, Ernesto Neto, Jac leirner, Iran do Espírito Santo and Vik Muniz, in particular, have become successful on the international scene, with Neto representing Brazil in last year's Venice Biennale.

A recent and successful experiment in Rio was the project Orlândia. Artists Ricardo Ventura, Márcia X and Elisa de Magalhães took over a run-down house and temporarily transformed it into an artist-curated gallery for two extensive exhibitions, mixing an eclectic array of artists from several generations.

Tunga and Márcia X gave performances. Marcia has been working for years with installations which use mechanical sex toys, displaying herself in powerful performances with unflinching humour. Also an artist run initiative, the project Linha Imaginária [website: [www.linhaimaginaria.com.br](http://www.linhaimaginaria.com.br)] is currently re-mapping the artistic currents of Brazilian Art. Its organizers Sidney Philocreon and Mônica Rubinho, believe in reducing geographical distances with on-line representations which intend to present artists from the country's many regions and thus reflect the true diversity of Brazil's cultures.

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