

## The Space Between

Túlio Pinto is a global contemporary visual artist who defies labelling in a world that loves to categorize and order. While in the mind of a gallery director, curator, or collector, he may get tagged as a sculptor, he is in fact a man with ideas and the acute abilities to think laterally and creatively. He does not make objects in the way we think of art as being made by the artist. Túlio draws upon dreams, childhood and adult experiences, and navigates and bumps up against new borders constantly redefine him. He gathers materials together which often do not have extant relationships to one another or without specific meanings. His work punctures known and comfortable territories and remaps borders through ideas of balance, tension, materials that would normally not touch each other, and displacement. His studio is his mind, not a physical space, where he creates art that gives a visual voice to ideas and words which can't always be easily spoken.

The very essence of his aesthetic core is based in fundamental mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Minimalism tenets of embracing fabricated commercial materials without imagery or evidence of the artist's hand and of producing work which interacts with the surrounding space. Like in Richard Serra's *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* 1969/1986 and *Torqued Ellipse* series, Túlio accentuates the physical properties of the materials. Unchained from the traditional pedestal, his work protrudes into the viewer's space and creates an interactive relationship with the viewer who can freely walk around the work often creating a tension and uneasiness about the work's potential to collapse. Unlike Serra however, Túlio's work has an almost poetic sense created by combining materials like hard steel and delicate blown glass. And, unlike the Minimalists and Post Minimalists, Túlio addresses contemporary art issues of tension and harmony, the power of the human mind and human choices, and displacement whether it is physical, mental, or emotional.

In *Unicorn and Blue*, his solo exhibition at Baró Gallery Jardins, Túlio presents a combination of recent and new work created for the exhibition. As an alchemistic magician, he transforms materials into new forms and situates five works in the gallery's main space thereby offering opportunities to interact with the work to the viewer whose phenomenological experience with the object becomes crucial to its meaning. A unifying thread of each of the five sculptural works is the materials – commercially made, organically shaped glass bubbles, sheets and cubes of steel, and a blue rope that creates a harmoniously chromatic intrigue with the gray and oxidized steel and the lines of the edges (*arestas*) of the cubes.

Strikingly different from these works is the video shown in the gallery's viewing room which was made during Túlio's 7-week artist residency in the large desert metropolis of Phoenix, Arizona, USA during the months of November and December, 2015. He had the idea for the video before coming to Phoenix and brought orange balloons and clothing with him. He purchased the unicorn mask locally before the shoot and collaborated with Phoenix-based artists in filming. The rugged desert environment of the Superstition Mountains east of Phoenix with the unicorn tethering orange balloons provides a surreal, almost absurd, visual juxtaposition. But, in fact, it provokes the same feelings that Túlio's physical works

do – tension and harmony, child-like surprise, uneasiness, and the elements and vulnerability of materials that normally don't belong together in the natural world. The carnivalesque aspects of a unicorn walking with orange balloons in the desert and the economic use of industrial materials including a blue rope define a setting for viewing the work of Túlio Pinto - the space between. The space between provides a non-threatening haven for viewing the work and for having personal experiences with it.

Ted G. Decker  
Director/Curator/Co-Founder  
Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art (phICA)  
January, 2016