

# ON A SPECTACLE FOR ONE

The Brazilian Sisters first charmed me at a New York City art parade, where they were performing what can only be described as an homage to a Jackson Pollack drip painting. Clad only in white hot pants and high-heeled boots, they were using each other's flesh as canvas. By the end they were drenched with paint. The final result was not a mess, but a rather thoughtful piece with evidence of craft. They performed with sincerity, a dash of pride, deadpan irony, a strange elegance, and a certain far-out candor. They were passionate, irreverent, and reverent all at once, riding the thin line between a complete lack of preparation and brilliant improvisation: my dream subjects. I introduced myself, and after a few conversations and brainstorming sessions, we agreed to collaborate.

Our work together over the ensuing months was frenzied, inspired, and unpredictable. We formed ideas, changed our minds, adjusted bodies, drank maté, fixed costumes, made attempts and mistakes, regrouped, drank more maté, reformulated, then found inspiration. We shared the same off-the-cuff, chaotic instincts.

Some people delight in adorning themselves and the Brazilian Sisters are just such people. Intelligence, fun and not a small amount of sophistication drive their imaginative use of found and recycled costume material: milk jugs, computer mice, elastane, traffic cones, paint, aluminum foil, and tape—lots and lots of tape.

Susan Sontag said, "...the act of photographing is more than passive observing. Like sexual voyeurism, it is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening." So, animated by my enthusiastic prodding from the other side of the camera, the Brazilian Sisters gave it their all.

They steadily took on a dreamlike, almost mythic dimension. I started to confuse the tangle of decorated arms, heads, legs, and feet. Soon, I was set upon by the Brazilian-Japanese performance art version of the tricephalous Chthonian Greek Triple Earth Goddess, Hekate, if she was also a semi-nude, helmet-clad, six-armed, six legged, six-eyed, six-breasted, thirty-fingered, East meets West, destroyer-fertility goddess. It was thrilling but no small wonder that we eventually performed the simple act of wrapping them up in a ball of electric tape.

Through all of it they remained Brazilian *sisters* with their veiled sibling code: the flow and arrangement of hands, the quick but meaningful glance, the competitive twist of a thigh, the positioning of a breast, the calculated elevation of a posture. Their familial passions often bubbled over into fervent but good-natured exchanges in Portuguese, whipped up by wild gesticulations and laughter, including my own. In the midst of all of this it was somehow decided that I would be adopted in as the Brazilian Brother—a considerable honor.

It is their willingness to risk that has always attracted me to artists. With *A Spectacle for One*, I hope to present and celebrate the frenetic energies of and personalities behind the risk-taking spectacle that is the Brazilian Sisters.

— Paul Assimacopoulos