

Without *Imago Mundi*, A Random Diversion Instead, takes as a critical reference the work of Lucretius ¹ ***On the Nature of Things* [*De rerum natura*]**, a philosophical poem divided into six books and considered one of Western culture's founding texts. A cursed author, motivated by the atomism of Democritus and by the moral philosophy of Epicurus of Samos, Lucretius declares the presence of man in a universe without gods and distances himself from an anthropocentric vision. He proclaims the liberation from the fear of death by asserting that the gods are no more than the illusions of fearful men. As Gilles Deleuze emphasized, the importance of this text is so great that, after its appearance, it no longer makes sense to ask what philosophy is for. Moreover he says: "it is with Epicurus and Lucretius that the true acts of nobility of pluralism in philosophy begin". ²

To reflect upon the present from and with Lucretius. As Nietzsche warned, to think actively is to act in an inactual way, against time and therefore in time, in favour of a time to come. Introducing the idea that atoms have no fixed directions, that chaos, imponderability and chance are part of the universe, that everything can be created from everything and everything can be created from nothing, Lucretius confronts us with the idea that the universe has no end or goals. No hidden force influences existence because everything ends with death. After death nothing else exists. All that surrounds us results from the continuous movement of infinitely small particles which we call atoms, and therefore creation is not a divine work. It is a source of happiness for man, to know himself free and aware of the potential of imagination and passion. To think of the diverse, the heterogeneous, as such, is the task in which the philosophies that preceded him failed, argues the Roman author. Contesting the knowledge founded on the authority of the ancients, Lucretius was found by several modern authors such as Erasmus, Machiavelli, Spinoza, Montaigne, Marx, Nietzsche, or, more contemporaneously, Deleuze, all generous readers of his work. Reflecting upon astronomy, matter, energy and emptiness, the natural history of the Earth, relativism of perception versus the real, the notion of simulacrum, bodily functions, or passionate and overwhelming love, the philosopher leads us to one of its main statements: that everything constituting the universe is formed by the same matter, be it the oceans, stones or men; each one integrates this cosmos in continuous movement. ***On the Nature of Things*** is also a classic in the sense that Italo Calvino attributed to this notion: "A classic is a book which has never exhausted all it has to say ... A classic is a work which constantly generates a pulviscicular cloud of critical discourses around it, but which always shakes the particles off." ³

Within the scope of the curatorial programme, one of the books out of the six that structures this work, as we have previously mentioned, was proposed specifically to each artist. These texts will be the basis of reflection for the exhibition project, but they will only constitute its starting point. This project does not objectify itself in any representation of the world, an *imago mundi*, but rather in a random diversion, without any kind of redemption. Where are we with Lucretius? What does he have to tell us? And us, to him?

¹ Tito Lucrécio Caro. Latin poet and philosopher who lived in the 1st century BC [94 BC - 50 OR 51 BC]

² Gilles Deleuze – *Lógica do Sentido*. São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1998, p.274.

³ Italo Calvino – *Porquê ler os clássicos*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1993, pp.11-12.