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You have gathered this set of pieces, whose apparently disparate provenance I recognize, at least in the case of some of them. Would there be a name for this gathering?

Yes there is. I have called it *Arénaire* [Arenaria]. In fact, one of the pieces was given that very title – A bronze work that still bears the traces of its sand mould. The title points to a number of things, all of which interest me, in particular it designates that which lives in the sand or appears in the sand. It is related to the word *arena*, the Latin term for sand. However, I think that the title does not point to a specific object, but to the circumstances in which that object appears.

I believe that in botany the term designates certain sand-growing species, but it is also the way of naming a calculation that involves grains of sand...

...it is also the title of a treatise by Archimedes in which the procedure used to calculate an extremely large number, in this case the number of grains of sand in the universe, is laid out for the first time.

I see there is a lantern; I call it a lantern, but perhaps I should call it something else?

Another name for this particular lantern, I think not...

Or not yet?

I think not, in fact I did consider working on something along those lines but I gradually realized that I would hardly be able not to spoil the beauty of the word and that which it may simply suggest – A moving point of light, for instance.

For a while, I had turned over in my mind a small phrase, a commentary I had read about a clock made by a certain Peter Henlein of Nuremberg, *inventio in dies subtilior*, and, later on, I even pondered just the word *subtle*, which could have resulted in a curious bridge with a musical form that could have been interesting to link to this work, the *ars subtilior*, especially when that writing gains a circular nature, or the nature of a circular canon.

And you inscribe this lantern in a whole lineage of lanterns.

This will be the ninth lantern that I build and the one which is more formally distant from the others, although there are two others that are certainly close to this work, such as the lantern that illuminates the image of a drop of water and the one that shows the movement of sand inside an hourglass.

If I remember well, that was the first pair of lanterns, which at the time you called *Farol* [Lighthouse].

Farol was the title of the exhibition in which that work was shown for the first time. At the time, I enjoyed accentuating the idea of a moving mechanism that emitted a beam of light with a certain

scintillation, with a certain degree of magic, of enchantment. Later on, the word *lantern* occurred to me, which I found more interesting.

While it is easier to identify the object whose shadow is projected in this lantern as a clock – a clock mechanism, animated by a movement of revolution –, the others are just as well, although declined as an hourglass – which is literally convoked –, or as clepsydrae, in the drip-drop devices that you have meanwhile created.

Right from the outset, I began experimenting with the image of these three objects together. The different mechanisms always presupposed the attempt to show different forms of the measuring of time. As for the lanterns that use the hourglass or the clepsydra – which are very similar ways of measuring time –, in historical terms the clepsydra is perhaps the most relevant, although the former is clearly more symbolically present. The mechanical clock, although closer to the water clock, is a whole other story.

Personally, I like to imagine a strange genealogy based on some Etruscan funerary art, which extends to the whole Mediterranean, namely the so-called *soul-houses*, of which I found a sort of echo in some pre-Columbian art that I have seen recently, under the guise of small ceramic recipients – little bottles representing, among other things, some traditional architecture– up to, for instance, Marcel Duchamp's *À bruit secret*, in which I find a strong analogy with the medieval representation of a clock mechanism.

Therefore, in your various lanterns, if not in all of them, there are some of the elementary configurations which time measuring devices have gradually translated into, to the exception of the sundial – which is, nevertheless, somewhat present in the shadow projection. However, all of them share an absence of scale that would allow for an assessment of the measure of time; such is the case of the face, in the clock mechanism, of the hourglass containers – excluded from the field of the projected image to merely show the narrowing that unites them –, and also, in the case of the clepsydrae, of the absence of a recipient in which to measure the drop-by-drop accumulation of water.

What is shown is the architecture of those mechanisms. Their drawing. In this case, that architecture is perhaps more present because the mechanism is itself more complex and its parameters perhaps less concealed, maybe because they are closer to us, to our time. However, all of them can house an image, even if it is only revealed by a shadow. At any rate, it is never only about an image. When I am in the face of this functioning mechanism, there is a first moment in which the projected image naturally acquires a dominating presence and in which I approach it quicker, but then, there is a second moment in which one looks at the place where the image originates, in which the mechanism is not reduced to a mere projection device. I wanted it to be a place where, after a first reading, the viewer could return to and start all over every time the process ends. Therefore, there is something that is revealed through the image, which then points towards the mechanism itself and something that can be revealed in the mechanism and once again points back to the image, consecutively, in a movement that is in itself circular, between image and device.

However, now perhaps on a more allegorical plane, which would encompass the *camera obscura* in the parable of the cave, the viewer is also given the possibility of accessing the profile of this

system. Not only to the isolated projected shadow – the image, because the very origin of the image is what is at stake here –, like in a screen, or to the projection device, the projectionist's room, so to speak, or even the object whose shadow is projected – which in the cinematographic device is given only as deferred –, but to a certain disposition of this set of three and to that which unites or divides them, like in an architectural section view.

In the former Lanterns that reading reproduced a rigorously established canon: Church – square – tower. This one, although from the technical point of view the device functions in a very similar way, proposes something which is slightly different, starting with the *trompe-l'œil* of the base, and by giving access to the image of an interior, which despite not being completely off-limits in the preceding lanterns, is now clearly visible and worked upon so as to bring together a certain number of references, some even from a not so distant past in the history of art, that somehow influence the way in which we see that interior. They create a lapse, as if for an instant the image could disappear and appear again. In which the interior itself becomes image with a presence equivalent to that of the image that is being projected right there. In fact, there is the clock mechanism itself, which assesses the image from the outside. The approach can be made from several points whose reading changes as the relationships they establish among themselves change. Obviously, the projected image tends to occupy, also for reasons of tradition, the place of destiny. The projected image is always the place towards which all others converge, which does not mean one could not retrocede.

You also propose showing another piece, of a similar dimension, a table displaying the last instalment of the skeleton, or *Gigante* [Giant] has you have been calling it.

Yes.

These two pieces, in the vicinity of one another ...

Yes. The relation between them was so obvious and strong that I even hesitated placing them side-by-side. Now that idea has vanished and I rather enjoy looking at them in such proximity.

As you know, a first version of this piece came out of the necessity of building a prop for a short filmⁱⁱ, and it was only after this work took shape that I gradually realized what I could have been dealing with. I confess that to a large extent it was through observing the casting process that I realized what that passage meant.

The word *Gigante* convokes an attribute of sculpture, something that concerns scale and that I find elementary, especially when applied to an object as peculiar as this one. We are – or unfold as – the measure, i.e., the one who sees is the assessment of what he is in the process of seeing.

Also, in its first configuration, in the film that you mentioned, one starts from a reconstitution of the human body – which is disassembled, from the feet bones up to the skull –, laying on the ground, in which the small intervals between the bones gave the skeleton a super-human dimension, so to speak. On the other hand, in the skeletons that appeared subsequently, and especially in this one, this could not be said as they are piled up, or simply scattered about, disarticulated, and in that sense the spacing between the parts now becomes absolute.

In a certain way there is here something that may be crucial in sculpture. Of that which was a body in transit you take the fossil part, on which weighs an ancestral agreement of untouchability. You also put these exhumed remains to the test of the foundry fire, reiterating the progressive paralysis – or instantaneous, although in that case the mythical outlines, such as Lot's Wife, or the victims of

the Medusa, are closer to the traumatic nature of photography – which the turning into statue somewhat represents. And precisely with this you now propose a game – I recall that you had previously examined the *talus*, a cubic bone of the foot and the ancestor of the playing dice – with a different movement, different rules, which could be those of infinite combinatory, or of still-nature, a sort of perpetual, albeit not autonomous, movement. Also, both *Gigante* and the lanterns, quote figures that more or less literally belong to that which has been called *vanitas*, although they could not be reduced to that genre.

That figure is undoubtedly omnipresent. It is the basis of the moving figure, in a somewhat obscure or secret way it is there, within the empty square, on the plane in which all that comes into the frame can be inscribed, even if, like in this case, it has a more extraordinary matrix. The figure dances and dances the eternal dance of bones.

Once more, we are not far from a mechanism with infinite possibilities, where composition depends upon randomness, although the randomness I speak of is of the domain of meteorological prediction.

On the subject of movement, and because it seems to be equally present in *Gigante* as well as in the lanterns, perhaps we could return to something I believe is not unfamiliar to you, that is, a chimerical mechanics that has been called perpetual movement.

Certainly, but it should not be forgotten that the impulse may be of an extraordinary nature.

Be that as it may, although highly tuned machines could keep that promise of infinite functioning, this should be considered as an impossibility...

Precisely. I deeply believe that it would not work, if it were possible.

Finally, next to *Gigante*, you placed *Terra Platónica* [Platonic earth].

Exactly. This piece is relevant to the reading of the whole. I like to imagine that it is through this portable element that the genealogy of the remaining pieces can be read; that it works as a sort of antenna.

To build it, I used some elements already present in the other pieces, even if this was purely allegorical in some cases. The glass part, supported by small brass stands, defines a complex form or surface, an hyperbolic conoid similar to the central segment of an hourglass, the narrowing zone, through which the sand passes.

This piece and *Arénaire* are the balance – like in a clock – of the other two; they define the places, the fields, where they both function. These are slightly different pieces, smaller, but invoking larger things; a miniature representation of something enormously large, whereas the others enlarge something that is infinitely small. These are two pairs of pieces that function by contrast, two of them enlarge and two reduce.

ⁱ « Every day (the craftsman of Nuremberg) invent finer things...». I have found the reference to Johannes Cochlaeus and his work *Cosmographia Pomponii Melae (1511-12)* in Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum, *History of the hour - Clocks and Modern temporal Orders*, The University of Chicago Press, 1996 (translated by Thomas Dunlap).

ⁱⁱ *Gigante*, film 16mm, colour 2006 in *A Marca do Seio – Assembleia de Euclides* [The imprint of the breast – The Assembly of Euclid].