

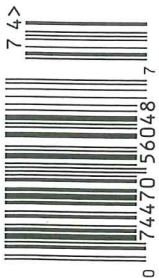
ArtNexus

No. 67 Volume 6 Year 2007



LEÓN FERRARI


**The 6th Mercosur Biennial • Albers - Moholy Nagy
Enrique Martínez Celaya • MDE07 • Regina Silveira
Cuenca Biennial • Diego Rivera • Fernell Franco**



744

744701560487

\$8 US



Regina Silveira

General BLAA exhibition view. *Equinox*, 2002. Polyurethane sphere. *Pulse*, 2003-2005. Light projection.

Museo de Arte Banco de la República

MARTA RODRÍGUEZ

"*Sombra Luminosa*," the first anthological show of works by Regina Silveira curated by José Roca, was presented at the Museo de Arte Banco de la República, Bogotá. In this exhibition, giant shadows seemed to be in a constant process of expansion and movement, as if ready to inundate and even devour the world. On the building's main white façade, a large number of black paw prints expanded like an explosion, advancing toward the sky and seeming to extend to other walls (*Tropel*, 1998-2007). On the upper section of the wall of the building's entrance hall, a small car left traces of its trajectory: giant tire tracks that devoured it and made it almost imperceptible, invading the architectural space with their dynamism (*Derrapajes*, 2004-07). A light bulb in one of the exhibition galleries, instead of projecting light, emanated a large shadow that became surreal and absurd, with outsized proportions; this great black stain in the shape of a droplet took over the entire space of the gallery (*Quimera*, 2005).

Shadows and traces are part of what Rosalind Krauss deemed the index, "that kind of sign that appears as the physical manifestation of a cause, examples of which are traces, imprints, and indicia," as well as shadows. For Regina Silveira, indicative signs imply the presence of time and possess a "phantasmagoric component that is their own referent or origin." As shadows are the strongest element in Silveira's work, objects are apparently minimized. Yet shadows would not exist without objects, so that between the corporeal and its phantasm an intrinsic relationship is established. As Leonardo Da Vinci said: "A shadow is the lack of light and a mere obstruction of light rays by dense bodies. The shadow is of the nature of darkness; light is of the nature of clarity. The former hides, the latter reveals. They are always joined together to the bodies. But the shadow is more powerful than light, because it deprives bodies of light entirely, while light can't ever expel all strength from a dense body."

The work of Regina Silveira speaks of the power of the shadow and, fol-

lowing Leonardo, the power of darkness, but what do her powerful shadows hide? As in Leonardo's case, Silveira's interest in shadows is accompanied by an interest in perspective. In *Desapariencia* (2001), the object of study is an easel that follows the principle of anamorphosis (which creates a distorted image that appears normal when viewed from a specific point) and is observed from a variety of angles and represented by an ink-on-grid-paper drawing. This work includes a small model that resembles the stage cube of which Francastel spoke or "the box" alluded to by Panofsky. Using the principles of perspective, the model constructs a perfect architectural space, with walls, windows, roof, and floor. Destroying the laws and logic of perspective, the easel drawing is placed in the model with an interrupted line of adhesive paper, breaking the illusion of reality. What is a solid body becomes a sinuous, malleable silhouette in its shadow. This work, like the others, plays with and reflects on perspective. "The interest in perspective in my work," says Silveira, "was al-

ways inscribed in a framework of wider investigations about representation itself, about the codified nature of visual images and the constitutive elements of illusion. What representation is and how we represent have been recurring issues in my work, although from different points of view.”¹

We know, thanks to Panofsky and Francastel, that perspective is inherently joined to the scientific and philosophical ideas of the Renaissance and that the roots of mathematics, humanism, and art converge on its formulation. We also know that despite the many changes since the inception of the modern world through the current moment—postmodern, media-dominated, etc.—perspective-based representation is still a useful tool that allows us to understand and figure the world. The single point of view in which it is rooted agrees with the position assumed by the Cartesian subject regarding the world, which implies a distancing that turns the modern subject into a privileged subject, the originator of the “image of the world,” of the universe of representation—an attitude that implies the notion of domination and an aspiration for truth.

Regina Silveira works from a critical distance with regard to this modern world, its tools, its certitudes, and its presuppositions. At a certain point in her research, she “sought for perspective to function as a kind of philosophical gaze on the world of appearances.” Her shadows break with the laws of perspective and the logic of rational representation; they investigate this world built by Western thought following the “logic of the index” identified by Krauss, the origins of which lie in the work of Duchamp, whose oeuvre “expresses a kind of trauma in signification,” according to Krauss. Similarly, Silveira’s shadows follow a logic inherited

from minimalism, which opened up new possibilities for perception with the insertion of art into the surrounding world. By going beyond abstraction, minimalism also helped viewers to understand new aspects of inhabited spaces, and the

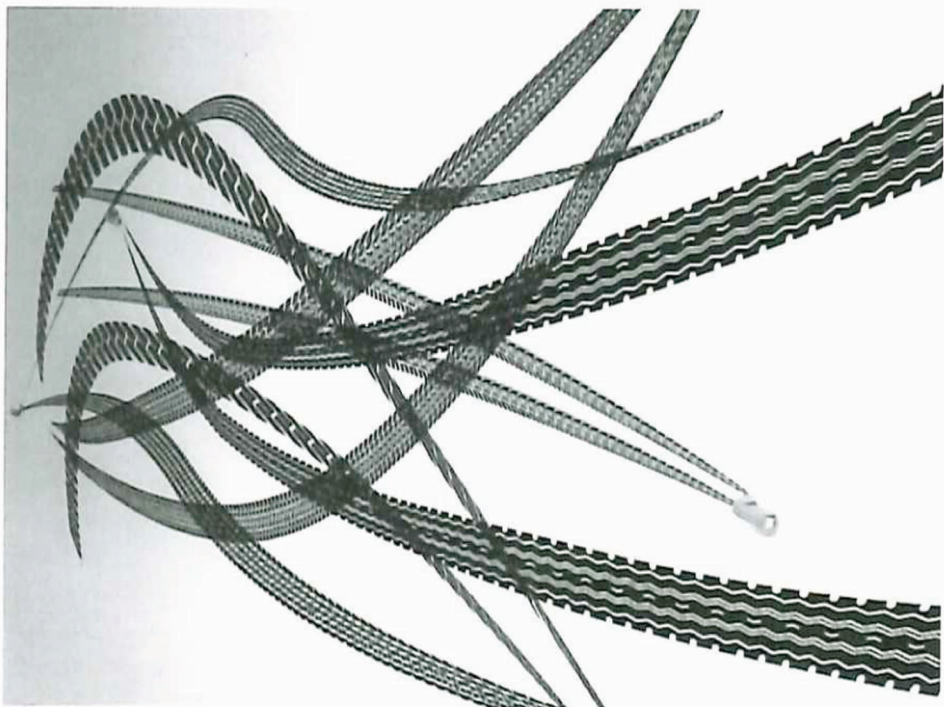
work of Regina Silveira continues to broaden this understanding.

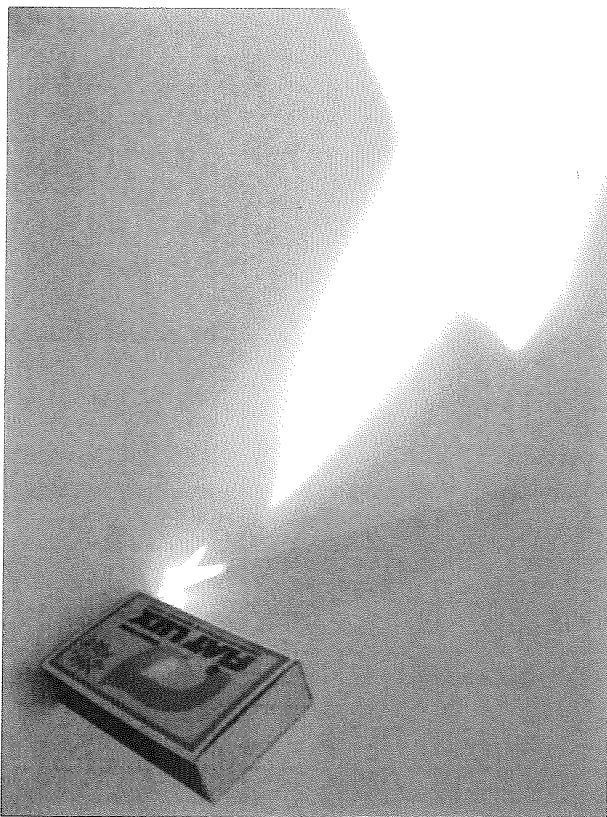
Regarding Silveira’s process, her shadows do not veil; like light, they reveal, and they belong to the realm of clarity alluded to by Leonardo. As the show’s beautiful title described,

Illuminaluz (Illuminate-Light), 2007. Three nights of public space intervention in Bogotá. Project of Galería Alcuadrado.

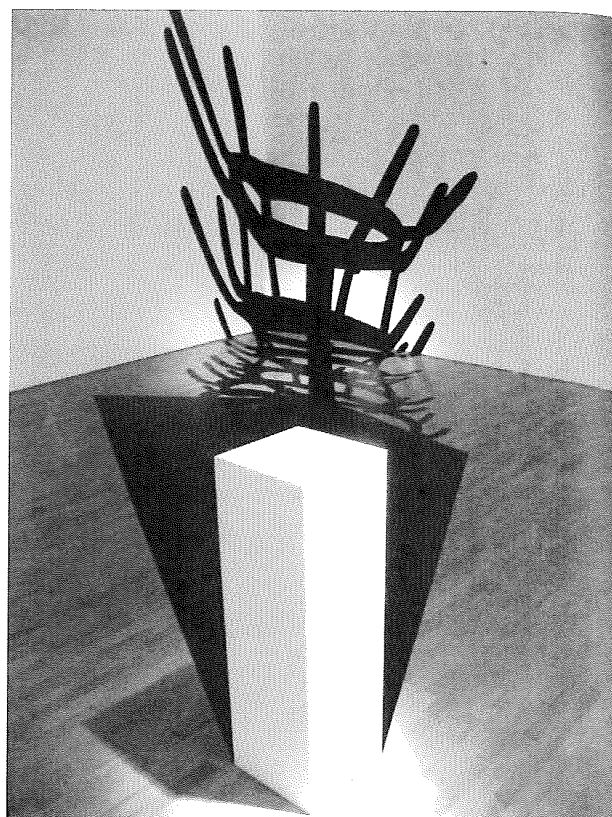


Derrapages, 2004-2007. Adhesive vinyl on wall, painted wooden toy cars. Luciana Brito and Fabio Cimino Collection, São Paulo.





Pulse, 2003-2005. Optical fiber, match box, light beam projector, metallic globe.
Courtesy: Galería Brito Cimino.



In Absentia, M.D., 1983-2000. Adhesive vinyl on wall and wooden base. Collection of the Phoenix Art Museum.

they are powerful “luminescent shadows” that reveal hidden aspects and illusory constructions of the world with a poetry that approaches mystery and the magic. The work *Double* (2003) resulted from Silveira’s study of the behavior of light on solid bodies. When one approaches the work from a certain angle, one can see a lighted white cube that appears with strongly contrasting light and dark faces. The opaque shadow is an entirely black plane that contrasts with the face that is awash in light; projected behind the cube is a strong black shadow that ends on another cube, following the perspective lines. From a certain distance, the second cube appears identical to the first, and the approaching viewer notices the large black shadow that unfolds between the two solids; careful looking reveals a false cube, nothing but a projection on the wall.

The powerful construction of this image and the apparition that surprises and misleads one’s perception is at once mysterious and magical. There were two other profoundly poetic and simply executed works: a small lamp projecting the word “light” downward (*Lucero*, 2003) and a match box that irradiated light in the shape of a star (*Pulsar*, 2005).

To conclude, Regina Silveira’s works seem to project with expansive force into the physical world—on façades, walls, and windows—but they also advance on the field of culture and particularly the field of art.² The work *In Absentia, M.D. (Porta-Garrafas)* (1983–2000) is a poetic tribute to Marcel Duchamp; a very strong light illuminates a wooden pedestal that supports no object, but the large shadow projected is one of Duchamp’s most famous ready-mades: the bottle rack. Here, the index occurs

in the absence of its referent, the powerful shadow that contradicts the laws of physics. The light and shadow name a phantasm or perhaps an illuminating presence that opens a trail for today’s art, including Silveira’s “luminescent shadow.”

NOTES

1. All quotations from Regina Silveira were taken from the written materials that accompanied the exhibition.
2. Alcuadrado Gallery concurrently showed a series of light interventions by Silveira on the façades of various city buildings.

MARTA RODRÍGUEZ

Art critic and member of AICA. Professor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia.

noamericano culto, versión europea, 1974, was first exhibited. Vigo was also a proponent of mail art as a way of communicating through distance that represented a circulation space renewed and not commercialized.

An important place in the show was reserved for the work of Juan Carlos Romero, from *Espacios virtuales* (1960) and the early-1960s xylographs questioning the limitations of traditional supports and pushing optical-kinetic investigations, to *Violencia* or *De la realidad nacional (al compañero Mújica asesinado el 11-5-74)*, a tribute to the Third-Worldist priest assassinated by the Triple A during the Isabel Perón government.

The third gallery of the Recoleta show presented testimonials about the Third Tandil Festival of the Arts and the Art Critics Colloquium of September 1970. The material on exhibit referred specifically to *Excursión, Compañía de excursiones S.R.L., atendida por sus propios dueños*, a performance by

Luis Pazos, Héctor Puppo, and Jorge de Luján Gutierrez. The documentation referred to an excursion during which the participating critics were given a round-trip ticket and driven around in a bus that played Beat music and was accompanied by a clown, while a photographer recorded the event. The critics received flyers about consumer art and art-and-life, as well as paper bags with apples inside—also given out at the Recoleta show—and banners reading, “To live is to accept all temptations.” After the excursion reached a barren field, several actions took place, which were to be completed by the critics. Shortly before setting off for their return trip, they received a newspaper with headlines that read: “Art is not a theory; it is an act of freedom.”

It was fun for these La Plata artists, who sought new connections between art and everyday life, to close their show with a banner-like mural representing a soccer team

with the heads of the critics attending the colloquium, critics who were right in awarding First Prize in Visual Experience to the then-emerging artist Víctor Grippo. These playful events took place as the culmination of previous actions by Pazos, Puppo, and Luján Gutiérrez, who would later form the Escombros group. This multiple-operation approach enacted the period’s theoretical and aesthetic debates, according to Lic. María de los Ángeles de Rueda, who wrote another essay accompanying the exhibition.

In closing, it was only regrettable that a larger space would have allowed for an exhibition design better suited to the importance of that period’s art from La Plata.

Nelly Perazzo

The 1970s in Brazil: Brazilian contemporary art revisited (or visited thoroughly for the first time)

Instituto Tomie Ohtake
São Paulo, Brazil

From early September to the end of October, the art audience in São Paulo was privileged to see a significant ensemble of works produced by Brazilian artists during the 1970s. Curated by Glória Ferreira, a professor of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the exhibition “Anos 70: Arte Como Questão” (1970s: Art as an Issue) provided a unique opportunity to con-

front one of the most experimental periods of Brazilian art and made one rethink one’s place and contribution to a redefinition of art in an international context.

Departing from Hélio Oiticica’s definition of art as “an experimental exercise of freedom,” the exhibition gathered around 100 artists and their works, from a period that

began with the launch of the Nova Objetividade (New Objectivity) in 1967 and ended in 1981, the year of the XVI Bienal de São Paulo. The show was also part of a series of exhibitions that have been organized in recent years by the Instituto Tomie Ohtake and approach Brazilian art history from the 1950s to the present.

Lygia Clark. *Nostalgia of the Body*, 1973. Therapeutic objects. Bed reconstruction.



Lygia Pape. *The Circle of Pleasures*, 1968-2000. Interactive work with white bowls and coloured liquids.



In addition to the selected works, Ferreira also dedicated a section of the exhibition to the documentation of artists' activities during that period and presented a series of contemporary publications and magazines, all to serve as a platform to artistic debate. The show occupied three upper-floor galleries inside the institute's building and used the open mezzanine to present a selection of works as well as display stations. Here, the visitor could listen to long plays recorded by artists (such as *Sal sem carne* by Cildo Meireles) and also leaf through photocopies of some of the magazines, like *Malasartes*. This section helped the visitor to sense the atmosphere of the time and provided context for the selected works.

However, the presentation of the documentary elements and the display of certain artworks tended toward the traditional, and one felt that some of the pieces had been "museum-ized." Such was the case in the display of Lygia Clark's therapeutic objects, placed on a reconstructed bed built to the same measurements of the original one that she had in her practice office, according to the object label. In the third room of the exhibition, a little boy was tempted by Lygia Pape's *Roda dos prazeres* (literally "The Circle of Pleasures"), with its series of commercial white bowls containing different colored liquids that one should have been able to take out of the bowls with an eyedropper and spread on adjacent saucers. The boy was very eager to take the initiative, but his mother forbade him to do so. Though the label stated that this was an "interactive work," the museological aspect of the exhibition played its role in the constraint of the works and the audience participation with them.

In any case, the curatorial effort faced a challenge to present such works and remain as faithful to them as possible. If the result was a "museum-ized" display of the most radical experimental art of the 1970s, one may suppose the aim was to be as neutral as possible. It certainly raised the question that museums and institutions dealing with contemporary art collections have faced regarding the display of such experimental works inside a museum space. For instance, should one treat the everyday objects composing an installation that is built following an artist's instructions in the same way that one treats a fifteenth-century painting? If one relates to these works as the artist originally intended, would one have to necessarily depreciate such installations, even if this meant jeopardizing the conservation of the objects that constitute them? These questions have yet to be answered and they reveal our attitude toward art, through which we end by defining art—an issue that was much debated and questioned by the artists during the 1970s and that makes a "museum-ized" attitude toward their art even more contradictory.

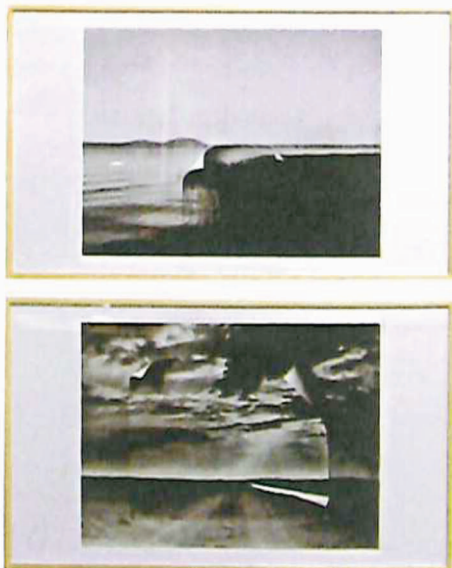
But the greatest merits of the exhibition were to display works belonging to private collections and are thus very rarely seen and also to state that Brazilian art in those years went beyond the well-known names Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark and Cildo Meireles. In the past decade, these names have been the beacon of Brazilian contemporary art, and though one shouldn't doubt their huge influence, one finally realizes that their work was not isolated and that art was produced outside of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The exhibition revealed the

presence of many artists spread all over the country, connected by a net of exchange that involved not only Brazilian artists but also international ones. It was also enlightening to see the exploration of new media in the production of their artworks, such as reproducible media (photocopy machine, photography, mimeograph, etc.) and video and film. Another important aspect was that, though the political agenda was very strong in works of this period (the country was experiencing the darkest years of military dictatorship), this issue was essentially related to a deeper investigation of the nature of art and its role in life.

The greatest pleasure of the show was the opportunity to come across some lesser-known artists and some practically unknown ones. In the first room was the video *Marca registrada* by Leticia Parente (1930–1991), in which the camera framed the artist from the waist down as she sat on a chair, held her left foot with her hands, and sewed the words "Made in Brazil" on its surface with a needle and string. Parente began her artistic career later in life; she worked for many years as a chemistry teacher, and as a university professor she became one of the first woman scientists to have a seat in the Brazilian Science Academy.

In the same room, there were two series of prints that tackled painting and its traditional role in the art canon. In *Técnica do pincel* (Paintbrush Technique), by Julio Plaza (1938–2003) and Regina Silveira (born 1939), the artists made paint-stroke interventions on reproductions of some of the most emblematic works of the 1960s, such as one of Warhol's Marilyn Monroe

Clovis Dariano. *Landscape Over Landscape*, 1977
Photomontage.

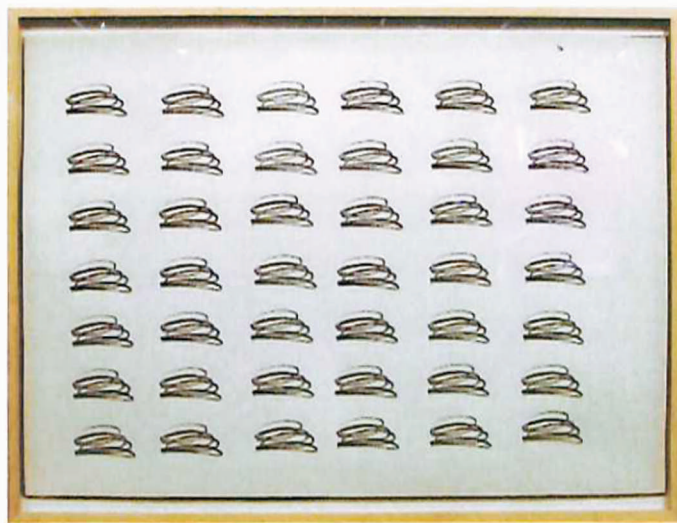


Julio Plaza and Regina Silveira. *Paintbrush Technique*, 1974. Silkscreen and ink on paper. Intervention on emblematic works of the 1960's. MAC-USP.





Leticia Parente. *Trade Mark*, 1974. Video. Andre Parente Collection.



Carmela Gross. *Stamp*, 1978. Print on paper.

portraits, in order to question the procedure of painting. In a similar vein, the work *Carimbo* (Stamp) by Carmela Gross (born 1946) featured six different gestures of brush strokes stamped on the surface of various sheets of paper.

The use of photography in those years was also notable. In *Paisagens sobre paisagem* (Landscape over Landscape) by Clovis Dariano (born 1950), the viewer encountered five landscape photomontages. The artist juxtaposed one photograph over the other, as in a collage, but at the same time he peeled the upper one away; this process was photographed, and the final work was the photographic documentation of the process. One might compare this work with that of Sergio Porto, titled *Reflexions*, in which the artist placed mirrors in different positions by the seashore and photographed

the landscape and its reflections on the mirror. Both works dealt with the illusion of realist/documentary photography and also the photographic crop while approaching the issue of the two-dimensionality of painting.

The last room also presented a rarely seen work by Hêlio Oiticica: *Helena inventa Ângela Maria* (Helena invents Ângela Maria). Here, a series of photographs on Eucatex were installed along with a loudspeaker, from which a love song by the Brazilian singer Ângela Maria was heard. There was also a reproduction of Oiticica's notes on the work and his letter to his beloved friend Helena; in the photographs, she laid in bed, performing as a mistress. Again, one could read this work as a comment on the nature of painting.

In short, "Anos 70: Arte Como Questão" was a summary of how Brazilian artists during the 1970s dealt with the issue of "art as idea as idea," to use an expression of Joseph Kosuth. It also revealed how much is still to be done by Brazilian researchers in order to understand this period, as many works and artists on display had never been studied. Some of the artists were only shown in the 1970s and never seen again. It is a pity there was no exhibition catalog published as a first attempt to record their deeds.

Ana Magalhães

Between the Patio and the Garden

Galería de Arte Contemporáneo y Diseño
Mexico City

The city of Puebla was selected to present for the first time in the province of Mexico a selection of the large Jumex collection, currently comprising around 1,600 works of art. The site for this exhibition is the Galería de Arte Contemporáneo y Diseño, in itself an interesting building, located as it is inside an early-Twentieth Century textile factory. The architectural restoration respected the original concept, with high ceilings, large picture windows, patios and corners created by the brick walls.

The curator, Michel Blancsubé, says that putting the show together was a challenge because of the gallery's amplitude, with about 1,000 m² of available space, well beyond the exhibition space for the Jumex Collection in Ecatepec, state of Mexico.

Unlike other shows culled from the collection, where the work of many artists is presented and the sheer number of works on display can be overwhelming, in this case, and despite the available space, *Entre patio y jardín* comprises 39 works, so that their ar-

rangement in open spaces or in enclosed areas created specifically for each one of them is ideal for the generation of a certain intimacy between the viewer and the art. The exhibition space could even be thought of as another work of art, as the abundant light and the outside gardens seen through the large windows stand as yet more painting inside the gallery.

As usual in Jumex Collection shows, the space is modified in order to create small exhibition areas customized to the isolated, indi-