

**Ricardo Lanzarini: *Bahia***

January 25—March 3, 2007

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 25, 6 to 8 PM

Josée Bienvenu Gallery is pleased to present *Bahia*, Ricardo Lanzarini's first solo exhibition in New York. There are no heroes in Ricardo Lanzarini's drawings, no saints and no geniuses: just crowds of insignificant people. His works are composed of tiny figures drawn with ink or pencil on paper. Frantic characters dressed in extravagant attire swarm around the white pages like colonies of industrious insects. The eccentric cast portrays the frustrations of the human condition with a great deal of humor and delicacy.

The minuscule characters seem to have lost all hope without ever losing patience, wit, or elegance. They wear a variety of costumes and hats—Arabian robes, circus outfits, exotic fezzes; silly berets and military helmets; fluffy turbans, tiny minarets, upside-down trumpets, and minuscule towers. The characters are involved in a variety of curious scenarios, including salacious, comical, and sometimes explicitly erotic scenes.

Kafka meets Beckett, Carroll, Bosch, Daumier and Borges in an endless succession where anonymous characters wait patiently for nothing to happen, resigned to their nameless condition. These opaque multitudes are prepared to squander all their time standing on endless lines, waiting to resolve some inextricable bureaucratic matter. The artist himself seems determined to lose all his time, drawing with extreme detail in a manner that is usually left to statistics studies.

The exhibition revolves around *Bahia*, a pencil on paper drawing composed of 110 sheets. This large-scale drawing (215 x 166 1/2 inches) is a place of open-ended stories that have been devoured by History. It is a procession of tiny bust sculptures, reminiscent of chess pieces. Despite its extravagant attire, each head is paralyzed and mutilated, condemned to perpetuity. The drawing is a web of impossible dialogues between motionless characters; it maps the outline of the serpentine bay of Montevideo.

Also included in the exhibition is a collection of Job rolling paper booklets of miniature drawings of the artist's typical cast of characters. The figures appear within the pages unexpectedly on a material used for smoking, clandestine messages to be inhaled and enjoyed.

Ricardo Lanzarini was born in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1963. He received a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim foundation in 2001. His work was included in the VII Havana Biennial, Cuba; *Talespinning*, at The Drawing Center in New York in 2004 and the Pontevedra Biennial in Spain in 2006. His work was included in *Vitamin D, New Perspectives in Drawing* published in 2005 by Phaidon Press.