

SANDRE PEREIRA

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Finding myself once again in the position of writing about the work of this friend, I thought, first, that I could not refuse, because Sandro Pereira has never ceased to be that endearing “Sandrito,” and second, that I had to accept the challenge of saying something new, because “Sandrito” is now Sandre. Though small, this is no simple task, for it is not easy for me to say anything new after nearly thirty years of acquaintance in which, mediated by tenderness (perhaps the primary material with which Sandre works), both affection and critical insight have constantly coexisted.

Let us review. As was to be expected, the first thing that caught my attention was what Sandre shared with so many fellow travelers of the 1990s: self-referentiality. I have nevertheless tried to go further by proposing that, in this obsession, he places himself in the position of a specimen—that is, as a subject, he is capable of observing himself as though he were an object. From there, it was but a small step (though it took me many years to take it) to the concept of the “autobiographical essay,” and another step to that of “autofiction,” or imagined micro-narrative—the way in which, through the representation of small events, Sandre draws us into his delightful world.

Yet, in the absence of the grand ideas or reasons that activate the modern notion of the “work of art,” there arises the temptation to situate his pieces on the side of craftsmanship and even, why not say it, on the side of the toy or illustration. Indeed, the simplicity of his handling of materials, combined with the absence of “complex” ideas (what kind of complexity does tenderness presuppose?), invites a sharp division between the practice of art and that of craft. However, it occurred to me that, through his work, Sandre precisely challenges that boundary and that hierarchy, because if art refers to the capacity to renew the meaning of things by producing a certain level of disturbance in the treatment of issues that pertain to the human dimension of life, it is undeniable that my friend fully enters the realm of contemporary art. His simple narratives reactivate metaphors that everyday use tends to dull and wear out, thereby contributing to the inscription in History of intuitions about the world that, by lacking anything exceptional, seemed definitively destined to be forgotten.