

## **Experiencing cinema**

by Nancy Dantas, 2005

According to the artist, "'Experiencing Cinema' comprises the intermittent projection of photographs onto a volatile screen, that is, a smoke curtain, which only appears for a few seconds, deforming, distorting, bringing thickness and movement to static images. Smoke and images simultaneously appear and disappear, prompting a feeling that the image is the effect of an ephemeral materiality - or almost immateriality - of the curtain. This work pays homage to the illusionists and creators of moving image. 'Experiencing Cinema' was conceived as an experiment in the archeology of cinema and particularly refers to the first *voyages of image*, produced with elementary projectors and magic lanterns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries".

The ethereal, ghostlike images that appear projected onto a thin, shifting curtain of smoke, prompt Massimo Tortelli's words in *Figuras do Espanto*: photography is that marvellous art that transforms a ray of light into a magic pen which clenches the physiognomy of those dear, to the friend long lost, with ineffaceable signs; that pious art that preserves the comforting images of those who have left us, brought back to life with their sincerest gaze and the very light their eyes once reflected (Frade, Pedro Miguel, "Os Limites de uma Perturbação": Asa, Lisbon).

Rosângela recovers the power photography has of challenging the inexorable and relentless passage of time, which her work consistently addresses, with the immortal image. Whereas time dissolves and dissipates memory, like a cloud of smoke with a gust of wind, photography maintains the ghostly shadow whenever substance has already vanished. Rosângela Rennó's installation re-enacts the profoundly moving experience and surprise of the first viewers of photography, with her restaging of the art of phantasmagoria. According to Pedro Miguel Frade, in his poignant text 'Os Limites de uma Perturbação', photography establishes a regime of proximity with relation to the remote by means of a multifaceted process whereby the object is substituted with its image, or the subtle confusion between the person and his or her effigy, confusion such that also takes the light reflected by the sitter in, retaining and fixing images which do not belong to the sitters themselves, but are always somehow *theirs*.