Your title for this exhibition is “The crumbs of childhood”. Is this a quote? If so, where does it come from?

The title of the exhibition comes from a chapter of a posthumously published book, “Eternity Regained”, by Marguerite Yourcenar, an author I deeply appreciate. I have the habit of finding titles of works and exhibitions in the books I read, songs I hear or movies I watch.

In this case, I thought the title would go well with the concept of the works; there are six in a not very large space. I was thinking about a child who plays alone in his bedroom and just for a little bit with everything all at the same time.

So both the title and the scale of many of the works point to the theme of childhood memory. Are these memories at all autobiographical?

Yes, but in the sense that an autobiography is always a creation, a fiction.

The two video works share a sense of emphatic repetition, but are sharply contrasting in subject and in their emotional charge – ‘Mes enfants, mes enfants’ shows an intimate, restricted world, whereas in ‘Macaxeira’, a video shot within a derelict building, the viewer sees beyond the space and the fragments of ceiling seem like clouds or stars in the sky. What are the ideas behind these two works?

‘Macaxeira’, which in English means ‘manioc’, is the name of the neighbourhood where the textile mill that belonged to my grandfather and to my father was located, in Recife, the city where I was born in the Northeast of Brazil.

I was back there recently and visited the ruins of this place, which is so important to...
The work 'Fortaleza, fortitude, fortress' was motivated by a phrase I recently heard from my mother. She is celebrating 80 years of age and she told me she no longer feels as strong and courageous as she used to. So I decided to use these paper sheets to convey the surprise I felt after hearing this, transcribing the different meanings of the word Fortaleza (in English it holds meanings such as 'strength' or 'fortress') and of other words I associated with it. The pink paper, which I had kept for years, as well as the white letters are a reference to my mother's gracefulness. I understand that the memories evoked here are not only mine, nor from my childhood only. They may be with us since childhood, but they are also memories from today and tomorrow.

The concertina graphite drawing 'To see what is left' has a fairytale quality. Are these specific houses or do they come from the imagination?

The little concertina houses are fruits of the imagination. They indeed make us think of the little houses of children's stories, but also of real small houses, which we can find in any country. I've seen some of them here in the English countryside.

They are models of the little houses I want to build in wood, also very small, and that I may set fire to later.

The meanings of this choice of material are numerous, nothing too precise.

The blue-painted ceiling reminded me of the sky and the plaster plaques seemed like beautiful clouds. These colours, also the green, made me think of the lime-washed houses in the Northeast, which are extremely beautiful; the quality of the paint is gorgeous but this traditional style is unfortunately disappearing.

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The other works on paper include the 'Caran d'Ache' diptych and the 'Fortaleza, fortitude, fortress' texts. What kinds of childhood memories do these works evoke for you?

For some time I wanted to work with my Caran d'Ache pencils and pastels, but this has only recently started to happen. When I was a child they were expensive and hard to find, and this made me shy, because it differentiated me from my schoolmates, which I didn't want to happen.

Here I recreate the image of the cover of a pencil box I've never seen before. I love the fact that the box is covered with flowers; on the boxes I had as a child there were always images of snow peaks in Switzerland.

As I already mentioned, when I was a child I was interested in the patterns of fabrics that I saw when I visited the family factory with my father. At home I used to draw the patterns, often depicting flower motifs, but I felt a bit ashamed, because I thought it was too girlish. This idea persists today, does it not?