

# surface

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## Blue Notes

The Brazilian artist Marcos Reis Peixoto calls himself Marepe. His name, like his work, is assembled from spare parts, and he pronounces it with the lilting, laid-back accent that is unique to Bahia state, where he lives. Marepe, 33, gleans his visual vocabulary from a hodgepodge of Brazilian cultural traditions, festivals, and religious symbols, and he often appropriates mundane objects, such as tin pans and cotton candy. For example, he ordered a roomful of cheap, shiny, supersized plastic Christmas ornaments from a São Paulo store display catalog. Then, working in a one-room studio in the house he shares with his mother and sister, with a backyard view of the local soccer stadium so close he can hear the cheers for the home team, he created 17 "magical little creatures" by gluing the ornaments together with two-part epoxy. When he finished them, he arranged his futuristic menagerie on the floor as if in conversation, and sat with them, Dr. Doolittle-like. He speaks no English, but Marepe's childhood was illuminated by a black and white television and a steady diet of American cartoons, citing *Woody Woodpecker* and *Penelope Pitstop* as favorites. In September at the Istanbul Biennial, Marepe will install an acoustic instrument that can be played simultaneously by six people, and is struck by tossing coins into it, like a wishing well.

Timothy Jack Ward  
with Fernanda Arruda



Untitled, 2002, Christmas Ornaments, 17"x9"x9" Image courtesy Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo and Anton Kern Gallery, New York