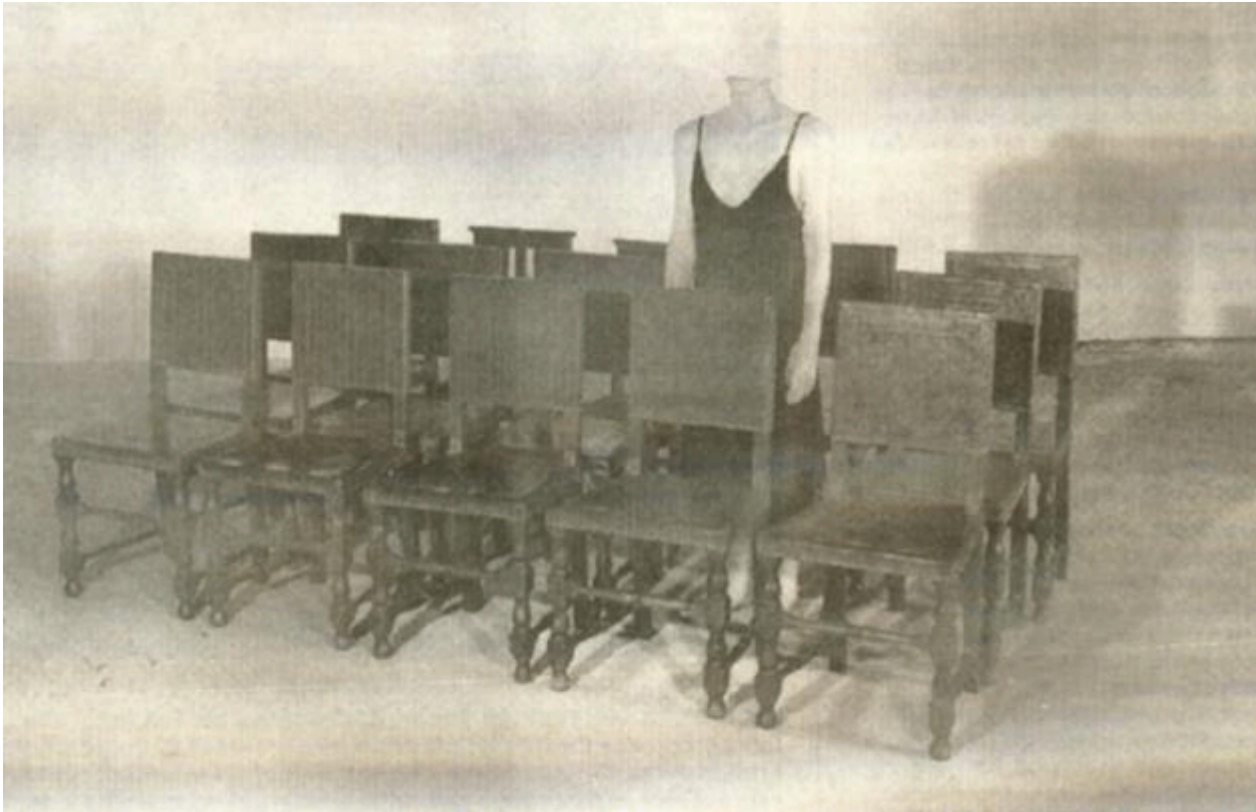


SEANKELLY

Johnson, Ken. "Julião Sarmiento: 'Some Limits of Reason'", *The New York Times*, April 15, 2005.

The New York Times

The Listings; JULIÃO SARMENTO: 'SOME LIMITS OF REASON'



Sean Kelly Gallery, New York

Over the last two decades, this Portuguese painter has stayed true -- obsessively, some might say -- to his signature image of a sexy woman in a simple black dress, her head cropped at the chin like that of a store window mannequin. In his latest paintings Mr. Sarmiento enlists this enigmatic figure in the service of an oddly academic exercise. Drawn on expanses of loosely applied white paint in a schematic, sometimes smudgy black line, the woman appears sitting on, standing among or kneeling under various pieces of furniture. Lines about sexuality and transgression from an essay about Georges Bataille by Michele Foucault have been silk-screened onto the surfaces along with titles like "Kiss Me" and "I Love You." One typically portentous and grammatically doubtful caption reads, "Sexuality points to nothing beyond itself, except in a frenzy which disrupts it." Mr. Sarmiento has also translated his headless woman into three dimensions in the form of life-size sculptures -- translucent shells of flesh-colored cast resin. She crouches under a table naked, stands in a real black dress among rows of antique chairs (above) and otherwise enacts the role of an alluring but inaccessible love object. Mr. Sarmiento's art exudes a certain poignant yearning but it is frozen by its own icy elegance. Might the headless woman be an unconscious symbol of arrested creative development? Maybe she needs a little sexual frenzy to warm her up and get her moving. (Sean Kelly, 528 West 29th Street, Chelsea, (212)239-1181, through April 23.) KEN JOHNSON