

*If you speak yet, everything is suspended;
and doesn't it prevail forever even after the words?*¹

*Making good use of time!
But what is time that I could make use of it?
Making good use of time!
No day without a line...
Honest and superior work...
Work like Vergil's, like Milton's...
But it's so difficult to be honest and superior!
It's so unlikely to become a Milton or a Vergil!*²

Kind of preamble

- "What is painting after all?"

- "A fragment of space endowed with its own unity. A living space that may be visited by visibility. A house: a home, a temple, a tomb..."³

"The discussion about painting in Portugal has been systematically settled on one of these two elective grounds. The aesthetical ground, with the sage and fastidious inventory of movements, trends, names and the veiled reference to the early History of Western painting (always saving a respectful delay of information).

The economical ground, that involves two vectors: to sell, sell, sell at all costs and the highest price possible, in order to reach material wealth and (the coloured by envy) admiration from colleagues and other fellows; on the other hand, to denounce the impasse of such an unbearable vanity and greed fair.

*A third ground – of deeper roots – continues, however, to meet proselytizers: the ground of revolution or action"*⁴

Portuguese painting: is spoken, seen, turn down or venerated. Though it has to instigate feelings, affections or healthy antagonisms. That sort of (non-imaginary) gallery of paintings of 20th century Portuguese artists is calmly crossed over. It may be watched, compiled in the Painting Collection of the Polytechnic of Porto. There you can meet authors who are close people, everywhere recognizable images, understandable or tough languages, i.e. challenges to anyone who wants to see beyond looking to the surface.

*"But your eyes proclaim
That everything is surface. The surface is out there.
And nothing can exist except what's there. (...)"*⁵

1 Jorge de Sena, "A Cidade Feliz", Poesia II, Lisboa, Edições 70, 1988, p.18 (Our translation)

2 At the upper Atrium of the Central Services Building, there is a full transcription of the poem "Apostilha" [Annotation] by Álvaro de Campos. The presented excerpt is translated by Teresa Rita Lopes, available in <http://de-campos.blogspot.pt/2006/03/lvaro-de-campos-shorter-poems-and.html>

3 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "Escrever, pintar, até desaparecer o mundo circundante", Sombras, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2001, p.286 (Our translation)

4 Egidio Álvaro, "A Pintura no esquema cultural", Revista de Artes Plásticas, nº 4 (Our translation)

5 John Ashberry, Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, available in http://www.scielo.br/readcube/epdf.php?doi=10.1590/S0103-40141997000200023&pid=S0103-40141997000200023&pdf_path=ea/v11n30/en_v11n30a23.pdf, lines 79-81.

The reason for painting, for the authors and for a collection favours the sensitivity of reasons and heterogeneous thoughts. They do not have necessarily to be decoded. They would rather get propinquity, effort of affections and thoughts as allies.

This study focuses works that belong to the Portuguese Art Collection of the Polytechnic of Porto. The presented pieces are from artists that started their activity in the 60s and 70s. These decades consist of a unique period - which is irreversible (in the right direction) -, concerning the forthcoming and prevailing panorama of Portuguese 20th century art, nowadays installed and transposed, as in the first decades of the 21st century.

*"The 60's emerged with the consciousness of a great openness concerning formal and subject-matter issues. In the field of national visual arts, there has been a pulverization of names and trends, actions and agents."*⁶

The precarious flexibility of the fascist regime that occurred in the 60s caused some society dynamics beyond the inherent constrictions. Nevertheless, a decade would still linger until April 25, when finally the democratic course was open and had impending consequences on the Portuguese art scene. Until then, however, artistic manifestations stepped up with varied initiatives and interventions, in the search for similar experiences mainly in Europe and USA.⁷

Still, the biggest boost to a change of the cultural situation in Portugal has turn up from a quite different venue. In 1956, Calouste Gulbenkian regulations have been approved by the Portuguese State, what allowed Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian's intents expressed in his will. Born in Istanbul, this Armenian engineer travelled to Portugal in 1942. Initially he had the USA as destination, but he settled in Lisbon. After his death, his strategic groundwork allowed the heightening of art, science, education and technology in Portugal that still persists nowadays. From 1960 on, his Art Collection has been exhibited at the Museum and a scholarships system for Art and Science has been implemented. The generation of artists who were experiencing their scholar life at that moment had the opportunity to benefit from these scholarships. They crossed frontiers, and consequently got in contact with international movements and dynamics. The destiny of many of these young people took its course to Art Academies, mainly in the United Kingdom, in France and in Germany. Socialisation abroad flourished side by side the dynamics happening in Lisbon and Porto, expanded among bookshop-galleries, camouflaged cultural associations, cafés round-table discussions, cine-clubs, theatre groups and similar communities. Inter-arts dialogue was already providing sui generis products, enriched by innovations perceived in direct speech. Fine Arts education was approaching bankrupt and announcing alternative strategies, simultaneously littered with lecturer-artists enthusiastic with the experimented models during the periods of the scholarships fruition.

For some of the current Portuguese historians, like António Rodrigues, the 60s were years of rupture. For other researchers, however, some doubts remain concerning the amplitude (e legitimacy) of the term, as - in a study on the decade – Bernardo Pinto da Silva points out:

6 João Pinharanda, "Anos 60: a multiplicação das possibilidades", in História da Arte Portuguesa, vol. III, p.602 (Our translation)

7 If in the late 60s Portuguese economy allowed a closer contact with international reality, on the other hand it also brought forward, in a more conclusive way, the failures of the official Portuguese culture, which had been – during decades – circumscribed to a consistently enhancement of symbols of the period of the Portuguese discoveries and imperial myth, ceasing the path with the world's artistic and cultural reality. Alexandre Melo, Artes Plásticas em Portugal – dos anos 70 aos nossos dias, Lisboa, Difel, 1998. (Our translation)

“... in contrast with the majority of the literature on the this decade, the lines of rupture have not been quite evident as we believe the lines of continuity seem to have been – if not regarding our own tradition, then regarding others; i.e. arising from abroad, offbeat, thus in art they do not have to apologize to emerge.”⁸

Whether factual or not that the 60s were years of rupture, the truth is that the artists at work - and from different generations - compelled a new rhythm to artistic production in Portugal, determining the consequences to be processed in the forthcoming decades. An identical double-dealing to what happened after the early 20th century Modernism has not occurred. That is to say, if we map the painters of the Orpheu group, those who have been definitely innovators in the context of the avant-garde movements, only a few can be found – when compared to the amount of writers, poets or thinkers. Thus, the four fundamental ones are considered: Amadeo Souza Cardoso, Almada Negreiros, santa-Rita pintor e Eduardo Viana. The course of their careers branches off in two arms, i.e. those who survived the fateful date of 1918, and those who have died. All have tied. Almada and Viana have lived the captious time. The first one until 1970, the last disappeared in 1967. They have left masterwork, imbedded with different oscillations and scopes in their paths and articulating diverse interests. On the other hand, it is my conviction that the generation of artists that started their activity in the 1960s have more and more allured followers until today and in the future. That is the difference. On an international basis, the years from 1960 shape the contemporary epoch, having in mind that there is an identity correspondence either chronologically and anthropologically or, in fact, aesthetically. In the Portuguese art scene, there are clear remnants and influences, close to different languages operating in other countries at the time and onwards: Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme, Arte Povera, Op Art, Minimal Art, Conceptual Art – in its diverse variations (and patterns); on the other hand, there is also land art, body art and performance art... coexisting with historically previous plastic options, exhibiting veins of Surrealism, Expressionist Realism, Gestural Informalism, Geometric Abstractionism...

After a wave of modernity - which had not have the expectable consequences, legitimated by the early 20th century protagonists: was it safely moving forward? – A second line of “Avanguardism”, establishing an artistic decision about Contemporary. Artist dared to get closer – in peer dialogue – to their international colleagues, although they realized they were peripheral, i.e. out of the circles of international art market. Only the artists who have settled abroad would assert themselves to come over the international scene. That is the case of Paula Rego – who carried out an experimentalism on a new Figurativity. Preceding her, there is the case of Maria Helena Vieira da Silva - connected to École de Paris. During Salazar’s period, as we know, she has opted together with Arpad Szenes for French nationality.

The semantic amplitude of contemporaneity embraces convergent fields, if we approach the concept in the scenario of Western art and culture. It is a matter of extension, duration, understanding and appropriation, soon questioned by António Areal, a rare quality self-trained artist and thinker. Here is an illustrative explanation:

“Thus, the inventor artist is engaged in a specific war: at the every-day time in which History is grounded, his works vindicate themselves as an established subversion; and his supremely moral reality relies on combat: from the normal asphyxia you must withdraw the effective share of action, which, in objectual form, will prevail.”⁹

⁸ Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, “Os anos 60 ou o princípio do fim do processo da modernidade”, Panorama da Arte Portuguesa no século XX, Porto, Ed. Serralves/ Campo das Letras, 1999. (Our translation)

The pace of Contemporary charges the creative, dynamic and innovating forces, overtaking an absence of convincing or lucid cultural policies that mediate half of this century. In the Portuguese museological scenario, different institutional public typologies have to be considered: national museums, municipal/local; national and municipal galleries; house-museums; cultural centres; (nominal) foundations connected to artists (heritages, archives, private collections). There is equipment originated by private funds, with mixed budgeting...; artistic collectives’ research and art centres; art galleries... All of them, cases and equipment, their protagonists and audiences, rule a fruitful intimacy, developed during these 50 years and beyond. They lodge collections, projects, activities, quite diverse artistic and cultural procedures. In some cases, both the mission and objectives are enounced and are achieved in a clear way; in other cases the situation becomes more complex. Focusing the case of the Collections, the situation in Portugal must be followed, therefore counting on the already undertaken academic research.¹⁰

Distinct typologies of collections must be considered: private with its own trust; private with public trust; public with direct trust, with shared trust, just to mention them globally.¹¹ Also to be considered are those that articulate themselves with business and bank institutions; those that are developed by private individuals; finally, the collections that belong to or are under the trust of higher education institutions – among which the case of inherited collections, which have different typologies – stemming from senior academies and schools. In the most recent cases, there are the collections with origin, at a certain moment, in the initiative of responsible institutional entities, accomplishing determinative strategies and purposes. Here applies the Painting Collection of Porto Polytechnic, which congregates works donated by artists, in a repositories and acquisitions. It would be possible to mention that this is a case pregnant of art, collectionism, museology, asserted by a public higher education institution.

We know a certain hybridism is pointed out in what concerns the nature and the substantive characterization of some public collections, in opposition to the most direct and coherent identity cause revealed in private collections, submitted to individual taste or motivations. Several researchers have pondered and argued about this question, namely, centuries ago, in Europe.¹² I believe, this rather manacheistic view demands cogitation.

⁹ António Areal, “Quem há-de ser contemporâneo?”, in Anos 60 anos de ruptura, Lisboa, Lisboa 1994 /Capital Europeia da Cultura/Livros Horizonte, p.29. (Our translation)

¹⁰ Adelaide Duarte, Ana Maria Cachola and Manuela Hargreaves are three researchers who, recently concluded their PhDs in this domain – (Private) Collectionism and/of Contemporary Art.

¹¹ In the case of public museums, it is worth acknowledging the legislative terms which establish them (Decree-Law, Law...), as well as the way they have been stipulated by the normative; in the case of private collections, equally significant, the aspects that configure them as such, consignations and implicit terms.

¹² Vd. Adelaide Duarte, “DA COLEÇÃO AO MUSEU: o colecionismo privado de arte moderna e contemporânea em Portugal” [FROM COLLECTION TO MUSEUM: private collectionism of modern and contemporary art in Portugal], Revista Vox Musei arte e património. ISSN 21829489. Vol. 1 (1): pp. 1731. “Assuming that collecting art may be an individual idiosyncrasy, which then are the main diverging vectors of the practise of institutional collectionism? LICHTENSTEIN (1995:2830) argues that “every genuine collection is necessarily private” because it has “the blueprint of its author’s taste”. According to him, those which are constituted as an institutional model are anonymous, objective and scientific collections. Private collectionism is seen as a “subject’s manifestation”, where taste finds the reflection of its face-author on the favourite objects. On the contrary, the institutional collection would follow style, schools or categories criteria. Is the view still up to date? Public access and museolization of particular collections seems to be determining. Which are the causes that lead the collector to leave the fruition of his property and share it with the public? Philanthropy, social prestige, tax benefits, the idea of permanence of the collection with the collector’s

From a certain perspective, i.e. a contemporary approach, museums and similar venues, freeze time – in the search for proximity and reactivation. Thus, they would make it flexible, fertilizing conditions for the observers to reconvert and stimulate it: the works, the objects, the artefacts or the ideas become closer relatives and stimulate new acquaintances. Hence, knowledge is definitely – in multiple typologies and categories – at the museums and their collections.

On the other hand, this supposed “freezing of the time” gets into the collections which, sometimes, do not stabilize or dwell. Collections, as everything else, are submitted to time(s), as much as to the spaces they are installed, stored, safeguarded or exhibited. This means that collections may be susceptible, and undergo structural changes, typological fluctuations, ramifications, divisions or agglutinations of heritages, or transit from owner to owner... between the public and private arena.

The case of the Painting Collection of Porto Polytechnic holds uniqueness. It is a Collection which is inhabited and lived by countless people that, on a daily basis, visit the different venues where they are presented. It would be a lingered tour to list the different places where they are shown, i.e. the various organic units of the Polytechnic - from Porto to Vila do Conde and Felgueiras – that lodge them, so that they can be watched. This is a museum, where the pieces are shared and perceived by diverse frameworks, enacting an aesthetical reception through spectators of thought, sight and word. The Collection embraces heterogeneous tastes, and includes a number of artists that count near three tens, including people whose activity is developed a long time ago and people who have an earlier action. Therefore, we can establish two cores, if we isolate paradigmatic artists in the Portuguese scene of the 20th century – some of them already dead – and those whose production is fertilized by a personal strong-willed conviction and in a notorious expansion.

Acácio Carvalho

“The objects, the voices, the reality, all these seductive things that attract us and guide us, that we pursue and on which we precipitate ...is this, however, the true reality, or is it just an imponderable breath hovering above the suggested reality?”¹³

The painting of Acácio de Carvalho persists in the relation of the author to the theatre. His scenographic activity enters into a fertile dialogue with painting. His canvases assume the status of scenographic fragments, a dramaturgy’s belonging placed among, perhaps, Samuel Beckett or Ionesco. Not that every piece of his production is an iconography that promotes a route to the absurd or the exhaustion of an ethical and existential experimentation. It’s rather, a striking proof of the communion and difference among human beings, for it addresses elements of strong intention and intimacy. Individuals and people who assume despairs, truths behind curtains that they draw back, dissimulate lies or genuine illusions. They promote visions of tedium, lassitude or desires eroded by really exact definitions, almost hyper-realistic of the painted / thought motives. These elements hold the meaning of words that, associated in an aesthetic sequence, convey parts of speeches, never broadcast by chance.

*“To humanly open bewilderment
I feel and understand: things are real
as my eyes that looked at them
the light, the darkness that exists at the right time.*

name connected to a public institution? Which trends are contemporarily scheduled in private collectionism?

13 Robert Musil, *O homem sem qualidades*, Lisboa, Livros do Brasil, s/d, p.155 (Our translation)

*Of looking at them too much, I can't see them any more
For the mutable light with the darkness close by
Always others confuses: ajar
Less than human, I'll only see signs.(...)”¹⁴*

Albuquerque Mendes

“The work of Albuquerque Mendes is a pictorial offering of a theatre of mutilated sensations, also of the artist's body, with the intent to bring the viewer closer to, not only art, but to history, or in other words, to life.”¹⁵

“L'Atlantique, soumis à son implacable volonté, restait aussi calme qu'un esclave prosterné. Les côtes escarpées que l'on voyait au loin se tenaient immobiles et roides comme pour une parade.”¹⁶

“Jamais les Portugais n'avaient ressenti pareille impression de puissance. En Europe, ils étaient trop petits pour défier quiconque et, aux Amériques, ils n'avaient jamais occupé que des côtes désertes ou presque. Tandis que cette fois, ils allaient combattre.”¹⁷

The two tondi were presented at the Exhibition entitled “Polar Star”, held at Galeria Brito Cimino in São Paulo, after being exhibited at the Retrospective Exhibition of Serralves Museum. In the sequel to a path that he has been travelling since the 80s, Albuquerque Mendes embodies his imagery in anthropological and aesthetic bases that meets the original indigenous cultures of Brazil.

The face(s) that prevail(s) in the set of both canvases, serving as support to predominantly figurative fables, result (s) of a social and aesthetic harmony with the historical myths of art. The multiple transfigurations that dialogue among (dissimulated, diluted or ironist) painted, static and almost hieratic faces and bodies correspond to scenarios seduced by the scenarios and the cosmological oneirism of the author.

Albuquerque recreates chunks of a history without timeline. The artist is interested in a Brazil that is not found in history books, but in the many stories that the country may generate.”¹⁸

In these tondi, there is a maximizing concentration of the soul in its embodied sense. The heads are in essence and substance faces, bearers of anatomical and physiological traits that condense almost excessive psycho-affective intensity, one could ponder ... On the other hand, painted portraits - denoting a certain state of soul suspension, remain in the gestation of alternate identities, domesticated either in pictorial terms, or in existential terms. It is the antinomian condition of the (almost) duality itself: the throbbing doppelganger that the viewer apprehends - perhaps introject and design, setting another identity. That act of injecting an alter-identity may arise or be stimulated by the recognition of appropriate traces of someone named or indicted. Gilbert Durand pointed out that in the primordial time, the androgynous contained the world in power to be in the continuity, it was the synthesis:

14 Jorge de Sena, “As Evidências” (1954), *Poesia*, vol. I, Lisboa, Edições 70, 1988, p.183 (Our translation)

15 Paulo Reis, “Estrela Polar” in *Catálogo da Exposição*, Galeria Brito Cimino, São Paulo, 2002 (Our translation)

16 Jean-Christophe Rufin, *Rouge Brésil*, Paris, Gallimard, 2001, p.524

17 Idem, *ibidem*

18 Paulo Reis, “Natureza e Crueldade”, *Catálogo da Exposição*, Rio de Janeiro (BR), Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, 2005 (Our translation)

"Le mythe de l'androgine «, tel que "la synthèse des leçons mythémittiques" tirées d'un vaste ensemble de textes philosophiques et ésotériques peut nous permettre de l'identifier, s'articule sur une structure ternaire très forte." 19

The physiognomic references are of double assumption. They evoke the complementary assertion of the human being, reflecting its two sides: nocturnal and diurnal, according to Gilbert Durand. Both dimensions converge in the self-portraits, which the author has developed for decades, performing masterfully a complicity (somewhat sinuous, who knows) with landscape motifs, still-life, three-dimensional objects and sculptures. The author takes possession of attributes, signals that outsource and acquire accumulated symbolic layers, denoting the strongest acuity and detailed evidence.

Given these two works, in the context of its production as whole, it should be noted the call / homage that the artist makes to emblematic figures of art history and Western culture, articulated with the exorcism of anthropological symbols, proceeding from Brazil - in a transversality and grip that has been running through his veins for decades. They are physical and mental journeys, converted into paradigms, a kind of aesthetic pilgrimages that guide the methodology of his creation with a remarkable sense of proportion. The performative acceptance present since the mid-70s, sets the final action in the pictorial captivation, (static, almost hieratic in some moments), however unexpected it may seem.

Having overcome the Cartesian dichotomy, "having solved" the Judeo-Christian Manichaeism, the reconciliation of the two substantive dimensions of man lives in Albuquerque Mendes: the human and the sacred (or divine) - close to what Almada Negreiros was referring to decades ago:

"The four parts are involved. Visually, beauty corresponds to the number made by the four right angles in the perfect circle: the good, the true, the beautiful and the holy. The four are of two ways, knowable, accurate, and unknowable, perfect. The four form the unit in the beautiful which is indivisible, a conciliation of the square and the circle, juxtaposing with the one "the square and the circle's division, which is not the same as dividing the one." 20

The Intrinsic note that combines the four words, the four concepts, is the performative substance of the artist that has always been present in his life and in his work.

Na In the work of Albuquerque Mendes one can find depurated and detailed reminiscences of a wisdom that he has been growing throughout decades. He established an almost virtuoso demand that serves aims subsumed to the mythical and symbolic anthropology, to the ontology and that often flows in psychoanalytic territories. Thus, analysing the skin of his painting, in which concerns the representation of faces that were invented and appropriated by his extensive visual memory, beauty spectra are defined which, in this case, compel me to evoke the aesthetic thought of Walter Pater, John Ruskin, conciliated a posteriori by Oscar Wilde. It should be noted how in the history of aesthetics, in the case of certain authors and privileged periods, he followed

heterogeneous principles that consigned the respective typology and canons, aiming to adjust ideas to externalizations of beauty.

The performance of the self, the performance of the Portuguese, the performance of the Brazilians. This sense of affirmation of the self, on par with others in the world, fits a cosmological design that appeals to the primitive valence of primordial elements that are evidenced in the imagery that attends his own. Every single morning (to paraphrase Pascal Quignard), every single face, every single race of Albuquerque Mendes' world is appeased in the pictures by the excerpts of landscapes. Faces [that are placed] among the hieratism or the almost imperceptible placidity that dangles the slowness of a minimum change.

Álvaro Lapa

Art and magic, a means between Man and Nature. Art and reality, a duplication. Going back and forth over the valley like a map we can't escape: Abstract rectory of a form addressed to what people might think outside, in the streets.²¹

At this point, at this moment, in this spot, in this colour, in this figure, in this intention of quality and feeling, the sense of actuality will be inscribed, as well as the field, the way energy developed the elaborate concept. (...)

This is a long and slow process, one that has always emerged from the side of the existence of the most elementary particles; hiding and showing the growing complexity in the simply body of the spot, the colour, the figure, which the presence of the elementary matter may organise.²²

Álvaro Lapa was influenced by António Areal²³, who was also an autodidact and a philosopher that "emerges from an artistic background where academic faction is hostile for him, but his work is soon recognised by the critics, who assign him an unquestionable value in Portuguese modern art. Practising a voluntary anti-aestheticism, so typical of a post-surrealist experience, Lapa gives to the images he produces an extraordinary emergence power, a value of apparition, playing sometimes with sentences and literary content."²⁴

His first solo exposition happened in 1964, at the bookshop-gallery Buchholz, in Lisbon, following Rui Mário Gonçalves' invitation. The introductory text

21 Abdul Varetti [Álvaro Lapa] in Catálogo da Exposição, Centro de Arte Contemporânea/ Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis, Porto, 1978. (Our translation)

22 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "Álvaro Lapa", Abstract & Tartarugas, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 1995, p.73. (Our translation)

23 "Here it is one of the rare Portuguese authors who are not bound to the competitive career of nominations for the "dear" pantheon of artistic merit" Álvaro Lapa. His work comes from other intentions, and focusing on them under the raw light of a revealing analysis to the public would be like doing a scandalous favour, which I refuse to.

If 6 people can identify the short sentence that is presented as a denomination of one of these paintings ("Homem sem esforço, sem propósito, sem utilidade") [Man without effort, purpose, usefulness]), this exposition will have been a stentorian event. I nonetheless doubt of that possibility. What can I say? These are works which are not flattering to the fine aesthetes, which do not promote themselves to acclaim or intrigue and which condensate a silence of strictness that is somewhat solemn. But their presence at a gallery has a condition of inevitable mistake. Will there be 6 people capable of identifying it?

An approximate meditation on these works would be processed within an exact objectivity that is method, truth, wholeness and glory of the endless permanence of the immediate." António Areal in Catálogo "Álvaro Lapa", Galeria Bucholz, 1969. (Our translation)

24 Sílvia Chicó, "Anos 70-80", in Panorama da Arte Portuguesa no século XX, Panorama da Arte Portuguesa do Século XX, Porto, Ed. Serralves/Campo das Letras, 1999

19 Frédéric Monneyron, L'Androgine décadent – mythe, figure, fantasmés, Grenoble, Ellug, 1996, p.7

20 Almada Negreiros, "A lira, primado da Luz, primado da vista", Ver, Lisboa, Arcádia, 1982, p.184. (Our translation) Almada considered, in an onto-anthropological perspective, that: "Beauty is, transcending the knowable, the perfect ideal that brings the symbol of life and harmony in health, today, in the present, at the present time of the eternal inseparability of the sacred and sensitive." (Our translation)

by António Areal placed him in the frame of what would be henceforth "his protesting and somewhat aggressive poetics".²⁵

In a particularly broad sense, he was a pioneer of an aesthetic and technical consignment which would later be adopted by some Post-Modernist artists: his activity articulated between thought and pictorial visuality expanded to a series of exhaustive works over the years, as is the case: *Criminals and their Properties*, *Notebooks of...*, *The prophecies of Abdul Varetii*, just to mention a few.

An artist is someone who dares to fail. Abdul Varetii was a great artist in a Beckettian sense. Even before I had found Beckett."²⁶

The "criticist/ironist" dominant presence in his work demanded of him a posture of austerity which permeates his aesthetic, from the beginning, with an ethic condition that is absent from any personal concession before external determinations. His pictorial materialization came from a rationalising emergence articulated with an instinctual dinamization, which are effective accomplices:

"From a book that is in Trocadero Museum": when we are in love, we give hands or we do not, we are asleep or we are not" (enunciated in a dream) "... The pictographical writing is not literary in its tradition nor in its means. It can be indirectly (e.g., using letters), without being a literary form. (...)

*For the painter, the spectacle is image, where conscious is broadened/brightened In the remains of the function-memory of what was the best, what was worthy: giving them life. (...) In the fortuity of my work I notice an unceasing verbalization = everything may serve as a word.*²⁷

His painting is, therefore, an ideological mission, a socio-aesthetical activity and an ethic necessity.

"In Álvaro Lapa's works, the discovery of art relies furthermore on a life's experience and its moments rather than on the unification of an aesthetical context of familiar and pre-set languages. The works connect through an individual and idiosyncratic dialog with cultural references which are by him challenged on a restrict and cautious selection. Through the development of a personal ethic which connects reason to invasion of a seemingly spontaneity of his "mental images"²⁸, Álvaro Lapa's painting can be said auto-reflexive."

In a certain interpretation, the majority of his works have self identity, and in meaningful cases, applicable self-portraits. The idea/concept of a self-portrait foresees a figure/figuration (intended and/or decided) by the artist itself, be it in a picture, a painting, a drawing, a sculpture, a video or a performance... What keeps it back, seduces the spectator's attention (receptor) by focusing on aspects such as the inherent dramatic intensity, the clarification of internal sensations through actions, the emphasis/priority given to effective intimate dimensions which value different missions: symbolic, mythical; religious/sacred; social/ideological; aesthetical/artsy; historical/documental; imaginative/... transfigured...

The self-portrait is weak on carrying intentions out, for if to some authors it is a strategy, for others is just a plastic answer. It protects narcissistic obsessions/depths or is exercise to lucid-visual chronological records.

25 Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, "Os Anos 60 ou o princípio do fim do processo da modernidade", *Panorama da Arte Portuguesa do Século XX*, Porto, Ed. Serralves/Campo das Letras, 1999. (Our translation)

26 Álvaro Lapa, "Mallarmé", *Textos*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 2007, p.158. (Our translation)

27 Álvaro Lapa, *De um livro que há no Museu Trocadero*, cited in *Catálogo da Exposição Retrospectiva Álvaro Lapa*, Porto, Fundação de Serralves, 1994, p.19. (Our translation)

28 João Fernandes/M^a de Fátima Lambert, "Porto 60/70: os artistas e a cidade", *Porto 60/70 Exhibition: Os Artistas e a Cidade*, Porto, 2001, p.30

In the "O Rosto da Máscara" exhibition (CCB, 1994), the self-portraits of Álvaro Lapa include the "Corpos Clandestinos" subthematic. By the artist's will, this group of works contains the 1972 "A pintura do corpo" text, followed by paintings of the "Milarepa" series (1969), and 1971/72 studies, conclusive and self-portraits (deliberated and intended as such). Yet to underline is the display of Chinese ink without paper drawings of the "Oral" series (1980/90) which can be related to the semblance of "alfabetos estruturais" of Ana Hatherly (see *Operação I*) or the rice paper drawings of Mira Schendel (of Swedish origin).

Although not given a better proof since 1969, the embodiment assumption of self identity is seen on a first iconographic interpretation.

In the "Milarepa" series (1969) a black silhouette appears to set the space of a negativity which in following paintings has been identified as an almost "detail" (which, together with Daniel Arasse, would make us consider...)

That this silhouette replaces the absence of an identified body. It is almost the shape of a nestled body, centred on itself, in a self-gnosis pose which should be understood as an identity. Such would assure the designation of other identities: Gauguin and especially the author's own image (in different versions). Milarepa has lived in the XI century, in Tibet and is known by his achievements on Buddha's mission and its principles: "Tu renonceras au bruit et à l'agitation qui gouvernent le monde. (...) Et tu réaliseras avant tout une résolution terrible de méditer pendant toute ta vie."²⁹ Milarepa fought the asceticism by advocating the abolition of self awareness and time consciousness. Both concepts playing a relevant role on the construction of the tranquillity of the "self freedom" concept.

To Álvaro Lapa, the black figure, ascetic and divested, in pictorial terms isolated in a context of metaphysical landscape represents the symbol's embodiment of continuity, eternity and span. They are stern, cleansed images in which their iconographical elements were erased, seducing a strict and stoical copyright identity. And if according to the pictorial identity you agree that they lead to an authentic presentification, becoming conveyers to the conversion of essence into existence of the different identity references, then: Milarepa becomes Gauguin. Álvaro Lapa had called on the embodiment of his painting. The latter a symbol to essential philosophical principles of his work:

"The Gauguin. It is called antiphrasis. The Gauguin would leave his land to discover a land which already did not exist. I, leaving my homeland, Évora, the South, came to a non-paradise where any paradise have I found. But, if paradise exists, it has to be there. It is an antiphrasis one way or another. Gauguin means not-Gauguin, already not-Gauguin, nevermore Gauguin, Gauguin himself included. It is the author who has been overshadowed by Van Gogh's curse."

In the recent painting (2005), *Presidiariamente* acrylic in canvas iconic symbols displayed in the painter's works for decades are, in continuity and intendedly, brought to life. That small black shadow is an emblematic figure to the visual recognition of its language and adjustment of its pictorial and semiological inspiration. It has a diversified existence, as if it were a tribal community. It displays an irrevocable ideological burden in the author's thoughts. Subsuming the ontological principles, morphology plays an important role in ownership, which never allows one to question the author's identity. Nowadays, another reason resides on the railing which idea is immediately understood as a prison. The latter effective or fictitious, ever symbolic and complainant on declaring the orders and precepts loyalty which shape the author's thoughts. He the creator of complicity between his visual and written discourse. It is a prison shut in an undefined horizon, an ideological contrast between what is seen and what is thought; a subversion of the imprisonment sense, passing by

29 Milarepa, *Ses méfaits, ses épreuves, son illumination*, Paris, Fayard, 1998, p.189

physical attachment, beyond dominant ideological fields. Its door to freedom further highlights the meaning to the wilful and voluntary closure which hurts faith-defenceless individuals in societal and humanitarian terms.

Ângelo de Sousa

"... I mean, I would draw like I was already seeing the sculpture..."
(Ângelo de Sousa - our translation)

"There were iron sculptures and those, in general – because iron was ugly and would rust easily, - I started painting them. It was possibly even that which led me to painting the sculptures (...)"

(Ângelo de Sousa interview with Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, 1992 – our translation)

"It's a complex structure, painted blueish green and orange red. I like those colours, it has nothing to do with the fact that those are the colours of our national flag."

(Ângelo de Sousa in conversation with MFL, Sept. 2007 – our translation)

With Ângelo de Sousa, individual reason and the perception of one's own body affirmed the creative process, extending to multiple plastical supports and different means and registers, over more than 40 years of work. Between them all, some common and recurring elements/substances cross-pollinate, progressing and moving towards a diversifying unity.

The sketches and the mock-up models long for the fate of one day becoming adults, strolling openly through the streets. The Ângelo de Sousa sculpture that belongs to the Politécnico do Porto's collection is revelatory evidence of this, showcasing the work of one of the most exceptional artists of the portuguese 20th century climbing to the 21st century, as Almada Negreiros would put it. Incidentally, the first exhibition by this painter, sculptor, photographer, film-maker and teacher, born in Mozambique, took place precisely side by side with the master Almada Negreiros, in the Divulgação do Porto gallery in 1959. Both of them masters in the art of drawing, which in the case of Ângelo, presided over both painting and sculpture. He took part in the first collective exhibition of *Árvore* in 1964, in which he integrated the board of directors, displaying his work for the first time in the Cooperative in 1966. The activities of *Minigaleria* would start with a solo exhibition of his in 1972, upon invitation from Etheline Rosas, following several presentations of his individual works in Porto and Lisbon, and also those that comprised the 4 *Vintes* collective, with Jorge Pinheiro, Armando Alves and José Rodrigues. He was founder and member of 21G7, a collective that assembled engravers with the aim of publicising and dignifying this technique and art, in favour of a public and theoretical recognition that, by then, was hard to achieve. The group adopted the designation of 21g7 because 21 would be the number of collectors they were striving to enlist to buy the engraved works, g stood for "gravura" (the portuguese term for engraving), and 7 represented the 6+1 artists that formed the collective, with the 7th, the "artist to come" riddled with references to hermetic symbology, in the context of Pythagorean aesthetics: António Quadros, Armando Alves, Ângelo de Sousa, António Bronze, Manuel Pinto, José Rodrigues and that which would never arrive... Also worth mentioning are his incursions in Ceramics, which he exhibited individually in 1963 in the aforementioned Divulgação gallery.

His sculptures were made more readily available to the public, and in a more comprehensive way, in SNBA (Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes), in Lisbon during 1972, in the sequence of other displays more focused on his paintings.

In 1975 he is one of the artists present at the inauguration of the unforgettable Centro de Arte Moderna (CAC), based in the Soares dos Reis national museum,

under the supervision of Fernando Pernes who would later become the first artistic director of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, also in Porto.

His work as a photographer would be presented in several exhibitions from the 1970s on, of which we can highlight the ["18x18 – Nova fotografia"] exposition that took place in the CAC in August 1978 and where we could see 9 b/w elements, photographic works from the emblematic Mão [Hand] series, which grant us one of the keys to understand the folds of the mock-up models and sculptures, as well as the organization of the paintings compositions, deceptively monochromatic and aligned by segments of straight lines bent in several directions.

The evidences revealed in Ângelo de Sousa's works coincide with (but are not limited to) common denominators, finding equal reasoning and reflexes within his photographs, paintings, cinema and drawings, foreseeing a clear-headed and paradigmatic enunciation which comprises:

- The lines versus drawing;
- The colour versus painting;
- The fold, pleated on the surface of things: from which "an interiorization of the exterior, an invagination of the outward..."³⁰ arises
- The "skin": both in the dimension assumed by Merleau-Ponty – the inside and the out-side of the skin, and Didier Anzieu's understanding – an analogy of the "I-skin" for the urban, public reconfiguration, reflective of the identity of the self as a singular entity and a gregarious one.

Still to consider, now in differentiating terms – regarding the actual nature, matter, technique and expression chosen – in accordance with the aforementioned, the following, manifesting themselves as to:

- The inscription in space/surface, in the case of three-dimensional or two-dimensional work;
- The topological features of the inscription space – sheet of paper, canvas, platex, aluminium, acrylic, photographic proof sheets, movie reels...;
- The internal or external adjacent architectures – the other works in the same series/time period or from some other series/ time period;
- The implicit intentionality in the motivation to produce work.

*Should I keep my vision whole, even if it means I'll hold a truth that is incomprehensible?*³¹

The small mock-up models, and the drawings they were based on, dating from the end of the 1960s, beginning of the 1970s, served as a jumping point towards a monumental scale that would not consign them all as effective. Some of these aluminum models were transposed to painted iron sculptures, set up in public spaces.

Visit the sculpture installed in the public garden beside the Santo Tirso city council, na example of a piece developed from a mock-up model from the 70s. This work is part of Santo Tirso's international sculpture museum (Museu Internacional de Escultura de Santo Tirso).

In October 2006 a large three-dimensional piece was set up in Avenida da Boavista, next to the San José building. It was an order addressed to the artist by architect Eduardo Souto Moura. Therefore, Ângelo de Sousa retrieved one of the pieces conceived in the beginning of the 70s, granting it an adequate

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli, Leibniz et le Baroque*, Paris, Ed. Minuit, 1988, p.12 (Our translation)

³¹ Clarice Lispector, *A Paixão segundo G.H.*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2000, pp.11-12 (Our translation)

scale for its positioning in one of the busiest arteries of the city, a sort of axis connecting the sea shore to one of the most iconic squares in town.

"...I thought it was boring that they should be the same colour on both sides, although it was easier to paint them using just one colour. Painting both sides was difficult because you had to pray that you wouldn't stain the other side, that you wouldn't make a mistake. It took twice as long or more..." (Ângelo de Sousa – our translation)

The piece was transformed into a monumental iron work, weighting around 18 tons, built in hollow boxes to assure the sought rigidity, painted in two colours: blueish green and orange red. The paint was applied after the plates were bent so that it wouldn't crack.

By the time of his first, small sculptures, back in the 70s, Ângelo de Sousa chose to paint the bent iron plates, as he considered them "na ugly material", prone to rust easily. At first he used enamel paint, common in construction work, as a sort of "undercoating".

The works of this period were exhibited for the first time in Lisbon, in the Bucholz gallery. In some cases, they were later built on a so-called monumental scale.

Referring to those sculptures, we should stress that the formal-material and spacial exploration developed by the author, regarding the versatility of the (singular) elemental modulation of each piece, and according to the movements of each around its own axis, derived from the conception of the linear model of construction and from substantial and systematic plasticity.

Each piece, each one of the objects, is an achieved unit, in which the permissiveness of the product to be finished subsists and coexists, and through which it is possible to rebuild the nature of its collateral diversifications. These are neutral forms, in which stretches along horizontal axis dominate, presenting themselves bare in their existential simplicity, by analogy with the phenomenological perception conditions that may be improvised by the observers.

Seeing both the paintings and the photographic and cinematic experiments from the 60s and 70s, the common denominators are evident. Either when the artist registers – in self-representing terms his hands in gestures of flexibilization of movements, or when he addresses segments of urban or landscape architecture, the study of linearity and of the "fold" are recurring conceptual topics.

Ângelo de Sousa made use of the precedence of the drawing, by means of a thorough and almost extreme assumption of the line, not only as the attainment of the stroke, but as the flexibility of the externalized rational thought, embodying in space the permeability of the pluri-dimensional perception. The forms represented above reveal themselves to be variations and implicit serial sequences that correspond to an almost obsessive and inexhaustible morphological improvisation, both in the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional fields. The sculptures painted from both sides subvert indifferentiality, the perceptive illusion of Moebius. Ângelo de Sousa developed, as we can see, several two- and three-dimensional studies, exploiting the multiple flexibilizations and appropriations of lines in space. He balanced between dispositions tending towards closure and, almost in opposition to this, towards boundless expansiveness. Both have revealed themselves to be innocuous, versatile and generators by themselves of others and more direct and indirect resolutions.

Depending on the position, the placement of the observer, the passer-by or driver, the piece assumes visibilities and configurations (morphologies) quite differentiated. If you confront the piece heading towards avenida da Boavista, it resembles a geometrically irregular arch, a sort of portico reminiscent of symbolic Greece.

The morphological and spacial exploration visible in this monumental piece is a statement of the versatility of the (singular) elemental modulation that is equally present in the models and small format pieces executed in the 70s.

Each piece is a whole, of polysemic valence – considering the plurality of contemplation and reception on the observers' part; capable of generating "movements" along its axis, deriving from the conception of the linear model of construction and of substantial and systematic plasticity.

Each piece, and likewise each object, is a concentrated unit, in which the individuality of the product to be finished subsists and coexists, and through which it is possible to rebuild the nature of its collateral diversifications. Forms of neutral value, in which stretches along horizontal axis dominate, presenting themselves bare in their existential simplicity, by analogy with the phenomenological perception conditions that may be improvised by the observers.

By the end of the 80s, circa 10 years after the experimented pieces of Ângelo de Sousa, we can find similar morphologies and functionalities in Pablo Palazuelo, as in "Les Rives", showcasing a functionality of the foldings that is traceable to the Portuguese author.

Finally, we should bear in mind that the projects developed by Ângelo de Sousa follow a coherence and fidelity towards his aesthetical convictions, while also showing the ability to adapt to the circumstances of the space and time in which it came to be perceived, transporting effective applications to the aesthetic, architectural and sociological spheres.

António Fernando Silva (Xai)

"(. . .) / Never reaches the window of the soul."³²

The act of the artist that involves his own body as a physical agent to maintain a lasting and sure thought. The duration of the act composed of other demanded acts that only finish and find closure when the intention of the previewed drawing is fulfilled. The drawing asserts itself, then, in a primordial state, reverberating in the visibility of the creative process: expanded in its genuineness and spontaneous character that is expansive. It is not depleted in the fate that serves an intermediate phase on behalf of another artistic object (categorical), it is not drained within a state of "transformation" – although all the dignity of that significance is also present. The drawing is not/stays not as a mere preparatory study for the definitive work. The drawing embodies a supreme category, in presence and consistency, both aesthetically and artistically andgnoseologically. The drawing rules the constitution of a line that the body moves: both the author's and the observer's bodies – underlying and crucial for its captivation and sequentiality in the act of seeing. [« J'ai découvert que dessiner n'était pas seulement/regarder, mais aussi toucher. » Jan Fabre] In this sense, "seeing" a drawing will actually be "drawing", by the movement of one's own body (the observer's), a sole act of visual perception:

*"Je dessinais avant même de marcher.
Sur tout et sur n'importe quoi.
Je dessine encore, chaque jour,
avec le même plaisir,
sur tout et sur n'importe quoi.
Mais aujourd'hui, je marche :
je marche dans mes dessins. (. . .)"³³*

³² Leonardo da Vinci, Aforismos (326), Madrid, Espasa Calpe, p.64 (Our translation)

³³ Jan Fabre, Umbraculum, Paris, Actes du Sud, 2001

The lines that give the drawing its substance by means of the artist's movements and the corporality that absorbs them create rhythms in space. The three-dimensional installation, drawn by Xai when he approaches specific architectural spaces, as was the case of *Fábrica Social*, evoke the grills that entangle architecture conceptually. The possibility of crossing physical space is a challenge that the perceptive field will celebrate. The suspended lines play with the rigidity of the drawn lines in a more conventionalized terminology. From this stems a defying motivation for seeing beyond the stare: "...it would mean to "raise the glance", a proverbial ascending learning", an "ascending recognition", a word devoid of any particular authority as an exhortation or a summoning; (...)"³⁴

Cláudia Melo

*"Summoning place like a very ancient poem.
Place of apparition. Dialogue of the visual and of the vision.
Where from the visible emerges the apparition. (...)"*³⁵

The work of Cláudia Melo established itself from the compulsive search concerning the introspective vigilance circumstances of the myself-me, as much as that which the others-not-you-other exert over the self that is me. This concatenation of conceptualizing bases rips the less unsettling beliefs that accept the fact and the nature of being. The condition of a personalized existence implies a surveiled conscience, as one can sense from the mediated iconographies that the artist uses both in two-dimensional and three-dimensional supports. Under the aegis of a body taught to replicate, accommodating (or internalizing) the physicality of a pendant tradition of so many women found in the cultural history of lunacy transformed in philosophical and sociologic approach... Here's how the artist's been reincarnating them, in na act that is a kind of "cover", a performing reenactment so that the analytic and societal ambiguities are impeded from dissolving them in chronology. The history of lunacy and its derivatives is na alluring stage for whoever projects, introjects and returns to the other who is not named a dignity that is sometimes taken from him/her, while he/she is at the same time withdrawn from freedom. It's the dictatorship of reasonableness: the 1st excluded, one might say. Following a method filled with argumentative instances, envisioned by Michel Foucault reviewing the establishment advocated by Dr. Charcot ("iconographed hysteria of Salpêtrière"), self-referentiality is not the desired dimension, nor even the scope preferred by the artist. It's not a matter, therefore, of seeking the consignment, the (reaffirming) "own" identity summoning that depletes itself. It is not a work developed through a direct or immediatist bias; it is instead a matter of choreographed elaboration by a converging significance – towards which the human condition of those hysteric women flows, focused on as paradigm and vertigo.

It's about showing (Schauen) – at all times and by means of content, concepts and matter shaped as matrix substance that holds kinship to the different series produced. In the case of the 3 photographic images of a series that is still in progress, the "three stereotyped acts", thus referred to by the artist, occur, "being" the sequence of a choreographic thought that was, furthermore, performed. In that action turned into product one may say that the situations for registration and extrapolation were unfurled. The immersion of the action of the artista/person in a collective space – which is a garden open to the heterogeneity of people and groups – allowed for different interactions, reactions that were absorbed within the more distanced layers of the work. Perhaps as objects of an invisible condition by the exercise of an initial aesthetic perception. By being assembled in light boxes, na evanescence illusion is created that delivers

an ambiguous romanticism, obfuscating the tragic, framing it by promoting waves of sensibility and thought. The luminous evocation itself – to "guard" them – opens the way for a state of transcendency that is on a par with the state of suspension of a fertile and hysterical trance. Hence, heading towards the light – self-knowledge that the wraith-like condition may drive.

Psicoário (DSM-IV) explores issues of identification/identity, through the assignment of a designation or of a defining feature, usually confining.

The investigation in this work starts with the concepts of obsession, psychosis and control.

The flexibility of matter reveals fluxes and refluxes, dispersion and concentration.

Fluxes and refluxes expand and concentrate again in na accumulation of strengths and non-strengths, which formerly together disperse, and then when dispersed, condense, keeping the shape-enhancer source unknown.

*The index is hereby proposed by the (DSM-IV) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, a manual of classification (of mental disorders), where the reliability of the diagnosis is advanced through the phenomenological position, constraining and globalizing that reveals a numbered, labeled, taxonomic self."*³⁶

The piece embraces the threads of time, fulfilling a resolute purpose that the artist expands, corresponding to an incessant and compulsive theoretical and critical search. A methodologic crescendo passes unscathed through the primordial phases of her work: Incorporation Archive Phantasmagoria Exorcism Catharsis... accessing some existential poetics that updates the articulated beliefs of the threads of Lygia Clark, the fluency of the lines and cables of Eva Hasse and the weavings of Rosemarie Trockel... coinciding with them in their vigilant lucidity.

Costa Pinheiro

From the mid-1950s onwards, Costa Pinheiro has been one of the active members of KWY³⁷ together with René Bertholo and João Vieira (whose works are aforementioned), amongst others.

It was through his career set in the "Reis de Portugal" (1964/66), "Citymobil" Project (1967/75), "O Poeta Fernando Pessoa" (1974/81) and "La Fenêtre de me tête" (1983/89) series that Costa Pinheiro became known. Recently, the "Elas e Eles" series was exhibited in Lisbon and in Porto.

It was in 1969, in Munich, that Costa Pinheiro developed the first City Mobil / Art Project studies and designed a small scale city model. The pieces position on the pre-set surface was in agreement with a recreational logic. It enabled a sociological and anthropological enjoyment and manipulation by the author, according with the historic time demands, and focusing on emphasising the real irregularities. In his objective and conceptual phase, Costa Pinheiro simulated toys of colourful woods seen in sci-fi ironical contexts and invented codes to poetically speak to the "universonautas".

³⁶ Text provided by Cláudia Melo (Our translation).

³⁷ In the late 1950s, long before the Gulbenkian grants, a group of artists from Lisbon associated to Galeria Pórtico began the artistic emigration moving between Paris and Munich: Lourdes Castro, René Bertholo, Costa Pinheiro, Gonçalo Duarte, José Escada, and Christo and Jan Voss later in Paris. They named themselves after the initials KWY ("Ká Wamos Yndo") and their activity proceeded during the 60s, namely, with the publishing of a magazine. Their focus was on steadying the connection between European artists and capitals.

³⁴ Peter Handke, *Ensaio sobre o dia conseguido*, Lisboa, Difel, 1994, p.11

³⁵ Sophia de Mello-Breyner Andresen, "Landgrave ou Maria Helena Vieira da Silva", *Ilhas* (1989), Lisboa, Caminho, 2005, p.68 (Our translation)

Altered by its inhabitants, the hypothetical project to build an utopic city was designed bearing in mind the same concerns set in the complete painting. It complied with the ironic and ludic values (precisely) found in a now allegorical, now sign language. Perhaps that city was populated by mythical and historical figures, creating the bond between the 3 different timelines: past, present and future. Perhaps that city was the futuristic, utopian and critical view of historical myths.

Thus, the Kings and other Heroes (in their mystification) are significant symbols to introduce that paradigm. Namely, in idiosyncratic portraits of Fernando Pessoa, authority which is displayed in the painter's work, even when their presence is not directly explicit, perhaps:

*"Because painting is also like dying, I mean, to face the final truth, the final mystery, the moment when thoughts cease."*³⁸

Fascination, celebration and obsession by the discoverers and the sailors – taking Diogo Cão as an example – accurately translates one of Pessoa's main features. Similar to a specific ideological attitude hinting at the devotion to nationalism, it shapes to the distant irony of modernist frames³⁹ – ideologically dated and dubious in a post-colonial era. Effectively, the "chosen heroes" are cultural parents of Mensagem's main characters. Moreover, even if the work of Pessoa cannot be taken as an unfounded apology; it was an effort made on the crisis using the magical value of words and ideas. Calling on the fate to work towards the change of Portugal's destiny through what it seemed to be the final mystic exhortation, a convenient utopia was intended. Thus, in the contemporary efficiency, the iconography of Costa Pinheiro identifies his pictorial and societal framework. According to Jürgen Claus:

*The Kings (Die Könige) displayed for the first time in Munich, 1967, still had the nature of a painted anthology. The strongly compressed figures under their royal name, arranged with their emblems and insignia, resuming: meanings. Today (year 2000), I guess he would dedicate himself to each figure, a space of pictorial and graphical resonance, which on one hand it would limit more, but on the other it would be more disturbing and unsettling.*⁴⁰

We could also agree on, that in the works of Costa Pinheiro, portraits do not derive from inspiration (as it is tradition) but rather from the image which leads to the historical figure – and not the opposite. The portraits of the Kings turn into symbols, according to the painter himself those "dead figures", for they need someone to play and manipulate them – as with the suits in a card deck.

In 1990, in the formerly Casa de Serralves in Porto, the "Os Reis: 1964-66" series was exhibited. In Germany, Costa Pinheiro displayed in an individual exhibition: "Entre Reis, Poetas e Navegadores", at the Landestrost Palace (*Neustadt*).

38 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "Costa Pinheiro", Paisagem com muitas figuras, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1984, p.34

39 The nationality ideal as an utopic/conceptual motor for the country's reinvigoration has become a reference in both mythic and poetic policies reflections of Teixeira de Pascoaes in *Arte de ser Português* or of Fernando Pessoa in *Mensagem*. The ideological positioning of Almada Negreiros should be understood in the merging of the anthropological and social perspectives of artistic and cultural origin, compliant to what witnessed in the texts about the matter. The most significant are "Ultimatum Futurista às Gerações Portuguesas do século XX", "Histoire du Portugal par Coeur", the several articles of SW: "Portugal no Mapa da Europa", "As cinco unidades de Portugal", "Prometeu, Ensaio espiritual da Europa", "Mística colectiva", "Civilização e Cultura", "Portugal oferece-nos o aspecto de..."; and the "S.O.S." and "Portugal" dramatic plays. The latest approach to painting, frescos, drawings...namely of the artistic works maturity should not be underestimated.

40 Jürgen Claus, "António Costa Pinheiro: o Eu poético no espaço das imagens", KWY's Exhibition Catalogue – paris 1958-68, Lisbon, Cultural Centre of Belém, 2004, p.231

As part of this series, the painter addresses the many and audacious men who have decided on the sociocultural politics and expansion of a dissatisfied and keen Portugal: Afonso de Albuquerque, Diogo Cão, Bartolomeu Dias, Gil Eanes, Pedro Álvares Cabral... all those explorers of unknown Oceans who brought the foolhardy fablelike legends and unsustainable knowledge. They were the main characters of the Portugal which desired to be an Empire and who were portrayed in previous paintings subject to mythical-historical themes.

Diogo Cão e os Outros (2001) and Diogo Cão e os Outros - 2nd version are included in the Navegadores series which serially integrate to the series in the Mar Tenebroso album, which in turn is related to the Os Reis series. Looking ahead, they flow to the past-historical anonymity of the Elas e Eles series, exhibited this year in Lisbon and in Porto.

Domingos Pinho

« Déus ha creat tos huls per ço que ab els lo veges en los creatures qui. Il representen als vulsde ta pensa ; e Déus há creat ta memoria per ço que ab ela lo remembres; (...) e Déus há creades les tevas mans per ço que'n faces bonés obre."

Ramon Llull, *Doctrine Pueril*, « *Dels. XIII Articles* » – *1st De un Déu* »⁴¹

It was tradition in the occidental painting to depict similar or emphasized traces of nature's perceptible dimension (landscape), of things (still life), of bodies (portraits, allegorical, mythological, religious, historical figures,...)

The work of Domingos Pinho develops in the late 1950s. In 1963, his first individual exhibition is held. Over the following decades until nowadays, aesthetics which branch a critical ability of pursuing the view and emphasizing the details that the majority ignores, are recognised. Thus, we shall meet the phase of gesture expansion which the exercise of recognising the perceptible elements of the landscape is intentional and complies in a strong chromatic range. On the other hand, the hyperrealist aesthetic held in his work has, for several years, highlighted the need of isolating fragments of what can be seen. Taking advantage of intellectual lenses to zoom in the particles, details, objects' fragments, artefacts, architectural elements...to create unexpected and enigmatic images. In such cases it happens the opposite of what formerly said. Nothing is promptly ready to be seen in the immediacy or at a glance; it requires to decipher something which is excessively detailed, excessively improved. Nothing is to be recognised too fast. The visual and conceptual recognition of painted works is developed through the act of looking. To look means to identify, to learn, to disengage and (re)organise – depending on the painter's view – those trying to display their character, preserving their individual substance.

The series concerning the landscape's aesthetical experience – analytical, reflexive yet deeply subtle and personal – happens through its disintegration into isolated parts seen by the eyes. When recollecting images which are part of a broad field of perceiving, the painter intends on capturing the spectator's attention towards a different visibility. Not one of the reality, but of the pictorial imagination. The action of painting is so impregnated of substance and assurance that external references enjoy an artistic and aesthetical liberation which is explained by the process dynamics.

According to Jean-Marie Schaeffer in *L'Art de l'Âge Moderne*, the essence of art would lie on its self-referential elements. In painting it would be created

41 "God has created your eyes so you can see Him in the creatures which represent the flights of your thoughts. And God has created your memory for with it you remember Him: (...) and God created your hands for with them you produce good works." (Our translation).

by colours, shapes, light, which would enable the setting of an own and self-sufficient language. Reflecting on the matter of when painting emphasises the real nature, becoming self-referential, Kandisky would say "two dynamics work following a similar model."⁴²

The images of Domingos Pinho's works validate the possibility of that self-referentiality, for they show the predominance of a picture's independent structure designed from the validation of its intrinsic and sufficient conditions. Although natural visibility is accepted, it first acts as an analogical experience of creation. The work creates itself, requiring a specific formulation which recognises its power of expression: nature does not express itself on painting, nature is created by it.

The internal logic of the painting's images can hold the aesthetics evaluation, protecting its autonomy without damaging its strength of pictorial synthesis. The introspective weight of pictoriality is intrinsic – it is recognised by the painter's purpose and direction – in line to a failure of the own natural elements shaped in excessive reality. The painter's accruing knowledge contributes to a better acquisition of the images' internal structures. The following formal topic extroversion of "natural" figurability (in hyperreal status) obeys to a compositional coherence, a aesthetical synthesis which includes the imagery themes inherent to the order of the imaginary artist's creator.

From between elements of the everyday environment, Domingos Pinho chose those which keep their feature beyond traditional perspectives. It assumes the signs feature, even if based on a direct visual perception. It celebrates what is seen and is not usually appreciated. It is an approaching perspective which increases the clarity of the objects' distinctive traces.

*"...the material painting was nothing more than an excuse, nothing more than a bridge between the painter's and the spectator's soul."*⁴³

Francisco Laranjo

*"Un voyage est une opération qui fait correspondre des villes à des heures. Mais le plus beau du voyage et le plus philosophique est pour moi dans les intervalles de ces pauses."*⁴⁴

"I'm checking on what's in the world.

What's left.

What's discarded.

What's no longer cherished.

What had to be sacrificed.

*What someone thought might interest someone else"*⁴⁵

I.

· Memories do not have time. Time has them, always. 'Always' is a strange blend of past, present and future. When the inevitable condition of time flowing is overcome, the ultimate circumstances are made up and memories acquire essence and existence.

· The essence of memories is basically the inner substrate of the self,

42 Eugène Delacroix, El puente de la visión – antología de los Diários, Madrid, Tecnos, 1987, p.3

43 Eugène Delacroix, El puente de la visión – antología de los Diários, pp.25.25

44 Paul Valéry, Oeuvres – "Études philosophiques", vol I, Paris, Gallimard, 1957

45 Susan Sontag, "The Volcano Lover". Available at <https://books.google.pt/books?id=3BIPJIMVkf8C&pg=PP1&lpg=PP1&dq=the+volcano+lover+online&source=bl&ots=wgMLgdNjU7&sig=-vCmCLnliapiXmVUZfoDve3TCiw&hl=pt-PT&sa=X&ei=sZdIVb-CjBanXyQPEIoL4Cw&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAzgK#v=onepage&q=market&f=false>

circumscribed in its privacy, conditioned by the multiple development of its events, willing to relate with others.

· Memory is precarious, fragile, transient in its emanation. Nonetheless, and even though it is hard to admit, it remains. The lightness of its conscious seems to lead to dissolution, which confirms its power over the self.

· The memories of the world derive from the intention of genesis: from sacred forces, idols, gods, God. Memories of the world reverberate in the memories men possess of history, even when humanity is aside from its deliberate establishment.

· The substance and shape of the memories of Arts ground for and structure the ever endless will to create, even when the impetus of creation is disguised in the apparent epistemological or semiological absence - whether visual or not. The memories we carry from Arts pave our own path in the world.

· The aesthetic memories belong to everyone: variable perceptions, sublime or grotesque experiences; the numerous aesthetic experiences emerge from the multiple diversity of individuals, their circumstance, intention, selective dispositions. They establish an autognosis pathway which follows the individual in the world.

· Memories attire in journeys: they acquire their properties, absorb odours, flavours, textures. They live out of diffuse sounds, translucent visions; their visions return home all the time.

II.

"Suppose you gain pride of understanding, inflate your own achievement, glimpse the wisdom that runs through all things, attain the Way and clarify your mind, raising an aspiration to escalate the very sky.

*You are making an initial, partial excursion through the frontiers of the Dharma, but you are still deficient in the vital Way of total emancipation"*⁴⁶

*"Everything has changed because it was we who have changed it, our external geography has changed as much as our internal one"*⁴⁷

· The dialogue between western and eastern landscape concept is conciliated in Francisco Laranjo's work. His paintings and drawings are islands in an ocean which, unlike cartography, brings one or other idea of made landscape close, with no identity dissolution. His direction of gaze, a principle prior to the materialization of the painting, resembles that solitude before the landscape which travellers (those who travel and remain in one place, not tourists...) account for in vivid descriptions.⁴⁸

· It is known, due to the historiographical conventions of European Art, the opposition that characterises Western and Far East landscape. Both present striking differences when it comes to chronology and technique. The respective

46 Originally written by Dogen, this excerpt of Fukanzazengi was translated by Norman Waddell and Masao Abe and is available at <http://terebeess.hu/zen/dogen/Fukanzazengi.pdf> [p.3]

47 Thomas Bernhard, My Prizes. Translated by Carol Brown Janesway and available at <https://books.google.pt/> [p. 119]

48 M^a de Fátima Lambert, Francisco Laranjo, Catálogo da Exposição, Riga (Latvia), September 2002

49 It was the case sustained during the Middle Age in Sienna: the trace of such an influence has touched, for instance, Piero della Francesca (the landscape of hills in the backside of the Montefeltro Dukes' portrait is an example). On the other hand, Islamic miniatures have clear Italian influence. This mutual influence reached, equally and almost certainly,

affirmative character renders a simple comparative study an impossible task. There are nonetheless numerous evidence of mutual influence, if one is to thoroughly consider both iconographies.⁴⁹

· According to some researchers, it is very likely that the Chinese landscape and later the Japanese have found their origins in cartography and in the use of landscape imagery to decorate palaces, as well as painted folding screens and scrolls. Francisco Laranjo builds a new conceptual cartography, greeting both traditions.

· The wanderings through history and landscape aesthetic serve as means to grasp the conciliation that is seen in Francisco Laranjo's work. Without symbolic or societal deformities, his paintings and drawings engage in rich and articulated plans, taken from one or other wisdom. About the theorisation on drawing⁵⁰, one has to underline its vital substance, its indispensable sustaining presence. From the Japanese it is expanded a "large and welcoming via" where the game of spaces and graphic filling are implied.

· The metaphysical definition of the void which Francisco Laranjo imposes either by a long background extension or by the density of dominant colours - in the smaller paintings - aggravates the intensity and simultaneous subtlety of details of visual and sound perception waves, which are almost olfactory and tactile, that emanates to us. The kinaesthetic versatility confronts both worlds, expanding through the countless paths to unveil.

· The articulation of calligraphy with the consignment of graphic elements which shape the landscape stimulates an ethic of the image as a substance-landscape. The drained dimension, from which the drawings of essence and nature suspend, is the supreme vehicle for the liberation of disquiet (East) and restlessness (West). The calligraphed landscape paves the way, through signs, words or graphisms, for the presentification in the mind of an individual's effectiveness, a place; in the end, the almost material concretion... susceptible of being measured by its volume. It is the landscape aesthetization through visual language; it is the verbal representation of the visual experience.

· Words draw inner landscapes, full of incoherences and involvement logic. The diluted or explicit evocations one uncovers or retains are a matter of memory or future of each individual, who is the author of inaudible landscapes.

Henrique do Vale

*"Everything in the world began with a yes. (...) I don't know what, I do know yet that the universe has never begun."*⁵¹

*That, while we are thus away, our own wronged flesh
May work undisturbed, restoring*

the rock védute by the Duch Joachim Patiner (circa 1480-1524). The most crucial and famous role - of the influence of Eastern and Western conceptions - was introduced by the stamps, in the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings and later in the Fauves. In the opposite direction, it expressed eastward, from the 17th century, receiving peculiar contamination from classical buildings or archaeological reconstructions.

50 I remind the rich argumentation, from Francisco de Holanda and Da Pintura Antiga, in conformity with Michaelangelo's aesthetic thought, present in different chapters of the book. Francisco de Holanda was a 16th-century Portuguese writer, contemporary of Michaelangelo Buonarroti (of whom he was an indirect source of this thinking). He travelled to Italy, where he remained for several years. Author of a vast body of work, he worked on art themes, such as the famous Diálogos de Roma [Dialogues of Rome] (1538), in addition to the mentioned above.

51 Clarice Lispector, A Hora da Estrela, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2002, p.13 (Our translation)

*The order we try to destroy, the rhythm
We spoil out of spite: valves close"*⁵²

Figural painting — referencing animals or people — entails the clear-sightedness of roles and scenarios, bonds of emotional relationship and especially natural respect: animal rights and human rights. The presented works reveal this intention and wisdom: they do not meet the aesthetic requirements or only representation technicalities, they really do respect the truth pertaining to authors as they are like world reformers and simulation generator's but also from remarkable anthropological expectations.

Figures reach autonomy but remain faithful: it's their ambiguity and grace; they are convincing and reliable. They deserve our thoughts and/or speculations. There then follows my writing.

The images that make up the narrative of this exhibition generate as many images on each person that wants to see them. There is sometimes an excess of images involving us in terms of media, the images do not exhaust, neither can they shoulder the faults of uses and abuses that are extraneous to them.

Images are visual perceptions of things that exist. This is the most seemingly banal truth. However, with the power of our most intimate authenticity, they become real, facts and events, no longer images. If one desires "reality" factual concretion, it can be assured above images of things that aren't in fact what they seem to be. But they could be. On the ability of being able to be, or even having the possibility to be what it seems, there lies the freedom to create.

Our bedside pictures, similar to the exclusive intimacy of our coffee table books, focus on longings, desires, fears, obsessions, finally, a whole panoply of psychoaffective and social eventualities we live with, good or bad, depending on the times.

Henrique do Vale makes our life seem simpler for a few moments: he presents us, reveals us the stories, not going beyond a mythology that he got hold while designing so many pictures - they are many more than we can get to know. The images in his narrative range, explore both, travelers and fixed figures. If they go through the artboards, they choose to live only in a few, leaving room for other forms or different figures: there is no guarantee that they glance at each other in that indefinable thickness, hidden from our eyes that is the space between painting and the truth performed by itself.

Jaime Isidoro

*"Creating in not imagination it's rather taking the great risk of be having the reality"*⁵³

The act of painting is spontaneous, exceeding, genuine. Thus fulfill the rigor that creation demands. The author comes across with the assiduous inevitability of producing more and more work. It is a compulsion, it's gluttony: a menu made of painting, watercolor and drawing. Painting is a ludic act almost unique, for those who complies it in its absolute genuineness. In the case of Jaime Isidoro, himself, painting and drawing are together a whole being. This is easily noticeable only by watching him during the act of painting. While he is painting, he chases away the superfluous and exorcises anguish.

52 W.H. Auden, "Horae Canonicae" (4. Noa), O Massacre dos Inocentes, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1994, 118

53 Clarice Lispector, A Paixão segundo G.H., Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2000, p.17

About ephemeral or more persistent issues which establishes the real, on gesture conundrums that extends, expands the body on imagination conditions, everything substantiates the need to create. Because the act of creating, although arising from such distinct territories, is always an ownership test, at least an extraordinary desire to have what is presumed to be reality. His paintings are authentic. He conceives them as passion, leading the intrinsic eroticism, which was converted into people. In the absence of figures pictured in his canvases, he presents us the essence of mankind. In the almost monochromatic austerity there is a clamor of voices that are heard: the light, the fog, at night, in time, whether it is in the past, present or future. The gaze of each day, night is day; night goes into day, night that is diluted in bright light: that irrevocable escape from the cycle of days and nights; the symbiosis of experience, beyond the phenomenological level, entering the slippery lands of a very specific visual ontology. Knowing how to dissuade sometimes irreconcilable life standards, of Art, how to make them converge into the unity of man, is only a privilege for the few. Jaime Isidoro dominates day and night, their respective imaginary, in painting. He dominates the intimate images that establish the everyday life: the walls, the houses, the river, the sea very near oscillates in an atemporality, where are reflected in the same time at different and opposite hours. The sea-wall does not limit the transposition: the gaze sees. Painting a door, whose secret should be found. The sea-wall, the door is open for those who, by nature, take freedom of self-control, daring to correct, for the apparent will, the deceptions of society. In the insurmountable painted matter, in the absence of direct semantic referencing, the secrecy of passage lies for others to possess themselves as well.

The geometrical and the instinctual dynamic gesture gather in formats and varying lengths, ensured as a whole; they show an uncommon complicity previously treating almost exclusively as irreversible. Jaime Isidoro proves that gesture and geometry are combined with aesthetic adequacy, through creative intimacy.

Conclusive liberation exercises, are considered, of irreverence, of incessant transposition.

Papers or artboards, both are images. Images that carrying silences and sounds, cause illusions of whispers, words that can never be heard or read, because images translate the unspeakable. As well as fox Saint-Exupéry knew and Paul Klee said, the essential is invisible to the eye and the invisible should become visible...

Painters sharpen the soul, paint the pictures for themselves, before giving them receivable; before giving them to see, like Paul Eluard would say. They emerge at a time that belongs to them, which for the others are constant and array confluent times. To see, to make time last, to converge in place, are some necessary transitoriness. They guarantee such coordinates, such anchorages or perceptive mappings instead of betraying the human.

*"Ils ont souhaité l'immortalité pour des mortels, les montagnes et les bois sur leurs tables, les océans sous leurs dents. Les fleuves sont détournés."*⁵⁴

The ephemeral, precarious or transitory get, precisely, the eternity of their apparent constraints. Each of us, who see these images coming from the inside of the authors, contemplate something that, being personal (private property and unique) is by inheritance (and subversion?), of everybody that can look at his heart's desire and condition, works, his images and records.

In indistinct landscapes, in movements that establish the power of nature, Jaime Isidoro - by analogy - "everything that I do not invent, is false," as Manoel de

Barros wrote. The almost cosmogonic source path and conviction is taken up. The water in his many matter imaginations, as well as earth, fire or air, feed the deep sea of humanity, in this hot ungovernable consciousness. Clouds tell the story of imaginary beings, the views of each of us, get finally a new strength.

*"And if clouds obstruct heaven,
Like the river clouds are water,
Reflecting them as well without sorrow
In the quiet depths"*⁵⁵

The endless views of Porto, are characterized as one of the most intimate cities of the gaze, more prone to explore, subject to the palates of memory. This image of Porto states: "The time there belonged to me, there would be no waiting eternities."

João Vieira

*We each have our own way of writing, as if it were a digital impression, but it's odd that we all write the same things in different calligraphies. And by being written in different calligraphies, things get different meanings.*⁵⁶

*For João Vieira, the discovery and use of the pictorial possibilities of signs and letters leads to a reinvention of painting, following a specific and idiosyncratic code that is always iconic and never textual.*⁵⁷

The letters in the paintings followed different directions and became concrete. Formerly associated with gesture and a more tangible informality, the letters came to acquire neater pictorial contours tending to be framed in tridimensional forms. If, at first, the letters and the composition background are somewhat undetermined, they then take on a certainty in their purposes that contributes to the perceptual clarity of vowels and consonants. By evoking the words, ideas and actions required, we never lose track of the connection of the letters to the private and communitarian realms. The semantic game which is accepted, developed and empowered serves an aesthetic irony filled with an eager affectivity.

*It is as if I were listening to the painter: 'See the place where they meet. There is in these alphabets not only an announcement but a community which is both surrounded and situated. The ultimate place of a letter is its first position: the one that states and registers the absence of a body, but which also supports the (essential) moment of the figure. I call the transformation of the sensorial experience 'writing'.*⁵⁸

The conceptual games were outstandingly operative in media terms at the time of the performances in the 1970s. These were indispensable and memorable events in the Portuguese artistic background that looked for (redemptive) appropriation of such ever-changing times: 'O espírito da letra' ('The spirit of the letter') (Judite Cruz Gallery, 1970) stands as such an example. The video recordings of the time also reveal that unmatched dynamics.

Through their pictorial power, the letters embody diverse motifs, namely animals either real or imaginary. The works in this collection belong to the 'Bestiário' series, thus named after Jorge Luís Borges's *The Book of Imaginary Beings* and Júlio Cortazar's *Around the Day in Eighty Worlds* and *Bestiary*. This series establishes a kind of "zoo of mythologies beyond time".

55 Manuel Bandeira, "O Rio", Estrela da Vida Inteira, R.J., Nova Fronteira, 1993, p.203

56 João Vieira in Entrevista a José Marmeleira, March 1981 (Our translation).

57 João Fernandes, 'A letra e o corpo na obra de João Vieira', 2001 (Our translation).

58 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, 'Escrever, pintar, até desaparecer o mundo circundante', Sombras, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2001, p.286 (Our translation).

João Vieira recreates mythical beings, animals that play leading roles in legends whose mythic and poetic intensity has fascinated one generation after another.

The iconographic visitations Vieira attributes these creatures carries an intrinsic strength and a unique pictorial dramatic quality. They become almost anthropomorphic and recognizably historic or mythological as it happened to Bestiaire, according to Guillaume Appolinaire, where animals (I would not call them monsters), following the meaning of 'Fábula' ('Fable'), incorporate the qualities and flaws of human beings, their deeds and affections: Hayoth (Seres Vivos, 'Living Beings') and Raças Orientais ('Oriental Races').

*Are the monsters of João Vieira not coincidental? This time they are drastically not coincidental with all he had previously achieved, both in terms of the themes and of the way the hand has painted them. Assuming the seriousness of those who do not take Western art seriously, the work of the monsters in the armchairs of Viseu Cathedral and in the books of Baltrusaitis made it possible for Vieira to finally widen both the distance that separates us from him and the one that separates him from other contemporary artists – as if in an attempt to deny forgetfulness.*⁵⁹

The living beings and the oriental races provide clues to the knowledge of painting that, from the start, Vieira takes as a means of expanding the reasons, understanding and sensitivity founded on an exploratory imaginary that we should unrelentingly acquire. His travelling through physical and solid letters, the fixation he bestows on them and the metamorphosis through which they reinvent themselves are heralds to the various meanings and accesses of/to the human being. Whether the fabled animals isolate themselves or socialize in shared territories, their bodies of colours and textures bring forth their discursiveness and fluency together with the appropriation that writing endorses. These are ferocious beings, domesticators of humans troubled in their ramblings and waste.

Thus, this series bears an ontological substantiation that refers to the conditions of existentiality and to the ethical resources we can but admit.

Hayoth plays a leading role in Kaballah, one of the Seres Vivos ('Living Beings'). In the hierarchy of the Angels, it is one of the ancestral figures, overlooking the group of Haniel, Kafziel, Azriel and Aniel⁶⁰. As Jorge Luís Borges puts it: 'In Babylon, Ezekiel had a vision of four animals or angels; each had four faces and four wings', and 'each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle'.

In Zohar, or The Book of Splendor, the four animals are said to be called Haniel, Kafziel, Azriel and Aniel, facing respectively the East, the North, the South and the West. The four-legged angels from the Book of Ezekiel were called Hayoth ('living beings') and it is from the four faces of Hayoth that the Four Evangelists took their symbols.

This series depicts the way letters go through transfigurations and metamorphoses with intentions other than fulfilling a pictorial purpose: they explore, beyond this axiology, a symbolic and even hermetic orientation. Paraphrasing the title of the Serralves exhibition, we could say that 'Corpo de Letras' ('Body of Letters') shares the realm of a hermetic body, a cabalistic body.

In Raças Orientais ('Oriental Races'), the letters are distinctively human bodies that take on postures of interior flexibility due to their physicality.

In a philosophical perspective on the body (following Paul Valéry's reasoning), 'physicality' is an immediate appearance; it entails psychosocial and cultural representations that promote deep implications and repercussions in the status status recognition of the individual, invading all the lateralities. The physicality is built as a precarious cult, mythical in its ephemeral fashions and accessory times. Therefore, beyond this meaning, the letters which are bodies and the bodies which are letters convey, in this painting of João Vieira, the other cultural condition that corresponds to self-gnostic principles, thus exposing a quasi mystical intimacy and most certainly arising from a significant individual/authorial wisdom aesthetically, poetically and philosophically.

Jorge Coimbra

32 universos ('32 Universes') have focused on 24 units of the world about to transform itself into a large universe. Each unit on the canvasses consists of a somewhat hermetical signposting that summons Pythagoras's cosmogonies and redesigns the serial progression and the so-called music of the spheres (never to be listened to). This is one of the conceptual bases of this polyphthyc.

The aesthetical approach of Jorge Coimbra, displayed in most of his pictorial series, relies on the concept of ars combinatoria as a paradigm. Its basis lies in the capacity to develop numerous variants that differ from the painted units through transversal motifs I would call common graphic-pictorial denominators. The serial progression results from the compilation of the elements as a whole. Such an impulse allows for the existence of the various canvasses, drawing on a wise invention that moves the motifs in a relentless search apparently closing and ending in each painted moment. This concept which is both methodology and procedure in a convening way led to another series of works painted with chromatic components and almost no graphic presence. Nevertheless, the idea of drawing underlies the technique to give birth to the work as a whole. The alliance of these thought motifs with a sensitivity that is able to create worlds leads to a particular wise framework. The irrelevant discrepancies to be noted if one's visual acuity is alert prepare the spectator for the graphic reverberations whose chromaticity is introspective.

As far as Acordes is concerned, the reverberation resided in the innumerable units where the layout delimited different geometrical shapes from intersected moulds. As was previously the case in 32/24 Universos ('32/24 Universes'), the colour itself and the forms gave birth to interrelated pictorial sonorities, yet autonomous enough to survive on their own.

By comparing these two works created only a few years away we are faced with the question of the reality of painting, the challenge of going beyond the painter's own terms and the uncontrollable 'distortion' (in the positive sense) each viewer attributes it. Ultimately, which is the reality of painting?

Almada Negreiros believed Art started precisely when reality was transcended. It was not to be copied but 'invented' by imagination and the structured thought of the artist. However, reality is also a demand. Therefore, one must ponder how to understand and focus on the definition of 'reality'. "Without Art, there is no Reality, only Nature. Art has to do with Reality, not with Nature."⁶¹ In his dialogues in a short but emblematic book,⁶² Mondrian argued that abstract reality was more real than natural reality. Going for a

59 José Gabriel Pereira Bastos, 'Da Arte como Monstro necessário', João Vieira - Bestiário Exhibition Catalogue, Porto/Lisboa, Fernando Santos Gallery, 1996 (Our translation).

60 Cf. Le livre des êtres imaginaires, Paris, Gallimard, 1987, p.124.

61 Almada Negreiros in 'Diálogo entre Almada Negreiros e Fernando Amado', extracts 5-6 of Revista Cidade Nova, p.17. Paul Klee in Théorie de l'Art Moderne states apropos "Credo du Créateur" a similar and complementary idea to the one expressed by Almada when he writes: "De même qu'un enfant dans son jeu nous imite, de même nous imitons dans le jeu de l'art les forces qui ont créé et créent le monde." cf. op. cit., p.42.

62 Piet Mondrian, Realidad natural y realidad abstracta, Barcelona, Seix Barral Ed., 1973.

walk along the perimeter of any city in the world, two painters questioned which was the primary reality in the relationship between painting and art. On the one hand, the naturalist painter summoned reproducibility, the mimesis of what is perceived in visual terms, replicating images so that referents could be recognized and obvious meanings attributed. On the other hand, the abstract painter knew how to concentrate the essence of visual, conceptual acuity in the innocuous forms of geometrics. Thus, the genuine artist elevated himself to the polysemic suspension based on and delimited by attributive significations hereby expanding his achievements according to the phenomenological reduction (eidós) of Husserl.

Through intuition filling with intentionality, as perception or apperception the artist 'carries' inside the object, accedes things in themselves, thereby wishing to 'personify' or 'represent' and capture eidós. This 'purity' path requested from the artist's own apprehension becomes more rigorous for him than for any other individual who is indifferent to artistic creation.⁶³

This seems to apply to the series presented by Jorge Coimbra, following what Mondrian stated in relation to the 'new image of painting'. Such an image presents itself as real, as we can see in it both the content and the appearance of things. The content refers to the concrete expression whereas the appearance relates to what is natural and preserves its nucleus. Such will inevitably be the path art should follow from its very first beginnings, undertaking a 'permanent journey from the natural towards the abstract.'⁶⁴ It seems to me that in these square canvases there is a chromatic density achieving infinite variations of tones and thickness, textures and velatures so as to converge in the primary substance which is the singular opacity of colour, about to extinguish itself, with no need for any semantic referent or accessory token.

32/24 Universos ('32/24 Universes'): the written worlds suffer unexpected interferences when they could have seen their end. Day after day, the painter exercises his power over them, subverting a finalizing condition, adding or withdrawing graphically-painted elements, turning them into memories of themselves, worlds without an end, therefore mythical.

Acordes: here we should talk about the transposition into chromatic rhythms of what could have become a sonority: drawings of sounds, noises and more stimuli organized according to a logic not necessarily run by harmony nor by the proclamation of melody. The lines move laterally or longitudinally, allowing for open readings as one views the 63 canvasses as a whole. That reminded me of the correspondence between Kandinsky and Arnold Schoenberg throughout the years the many transpositions and brilliant kinesthesia that followed. The Universe, in the pre-Socrates philosophical perspective, came from the predominance of the great elements. With the Pythagorean School, the organizing reason became the number. Numbers from 0 to 9 were given a symbology that had not only mathematical but also geometric transparency. As a consequence, they acquired regular or irregular constructs delimiting the factual or conceptual architectures of the human beings, their inscription in the real world through this power of abstraction, one might think. Thus the algebraic, geometrical, literary and poetic variations become clear as a reasoning seduction out of the linearity of resolutions. Jorge Coimbra's cosmogonist works partake a world touched by his poetic exercise, sharing movements and fixations in a most beautiful way, where writing and vision become accomplices.

Jorge Curval

*What a road the Cold Mountain road!
Not a sign of horse or cart.
Winding gorges, tricky to trace.
Massive cliffs, who knows how high?
Where the thousand grasses drip with dew,
Where the pine trees hum in the wind.
Now the path's lost, now it's time
For body to ask shadow: 'Which way home?'*⁶⁵

Conde Olivares is the main character of a painting from Jorge Curval, which materializes and reviews the historical thinking according to mythology. The history of Portugal, through its leading figures, whether they are heroes, villains or anonymous, present throughout the years, is a breeding ground for the glorification of actions, values or tricks. In the spectators' reading, those leading figures must be provided a continuity when they become characters, separated from their context, isolated or pushed towards unsuspecting plots. In the art of painting, figures present an improved aura when they are given a name, a title, a cognomen or when they embody an allegory. It remains unclear how the painter wants this Count of Olivares to be represented in the eyes of the upcoming people, through the famous work of Velázquez. A man with an unknown face, becoming all those who were portrayed, that the history of art aims to perpetuate. This painting is quite an example of how an imagetic narrative moves itself, how it can divert, fitting the imagination of the audience, thus taking the risk of diverting the attention towards subjective paths in extreme action.

It is important to remember that the work of Curval evolved throughout the decades, presenting an experimentation sometimes systematic and other times divergent, exploring matter through its textures and reverberation; the support that provides a good reading on that somewhat explicit idea, thus fulfilling the aesthetic heterogeneous designs. Between the thickness of the elements and the morphology of the depictions we can find the lack of semantics or the clarification of the extrapolated and reinvented meanings. When it comes to this painting, the modelling of the equestrian figure invokes the diverse tradition, indexed in the history of the Western art. We can see those figures set in a celebratory three-dimensional plan but we can also see how they are embodied in a painting or drawing (remember Francisco de Holanda, Michelangelo...among others). In a morphological approach to composition, we must note the animal's imposing attitude when trying to overpower the human by swallowing him, suggesting an absurd connivance, resulting from the horse's tamed relationship and vice-versa. It generates an ambiguous dialogue regarding who tames and who is tamed. The human figure becomes aware, absorbed and existing in the matter that is the animal's own meat. One evokes the thinking of Gilles Deleuze, concerning Francis Bacon in "Logique du Sens", when the French philosopher argues that there are no faces (which makes the human and the animal different) in his pictures or depictions but instead, heads, substantive and visceral forms. It is the emphasis of meat as "viande" rather than meat as "chair". According to the Portuguese language, the first meaning concerns the animal's butchered meat, the latter undoubtedly regards the skin and its significance in the civilization. Behold the ride of the organic thinking, which is armour, helmet or phantasmagoria, an apocalyptic clairvoyance regarding the contemporary.

63 Cf. Maria de Fátima Lambert, "Arte e Fenomenologia: até à Arte Real/Abstrata, seguindo a "redução fenomenológica" de Husserl", Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia, vol.67, Issue 3 (2011), p.474.

64 Piet Mondrian, La nueva imagen de la pintura, CCECA, Murcia, 1983, p.61.

65 Han Shan, The Dharma Bum, available in <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Chinese/HanShan.htm> [Portuguese Publication: O vagabundo do Dharma – 25 poems, Caligraphies by Li Kwok-Wing, translated from Chinese by Jacques Pimpaneau, poetic versions by Ana Hatherly, Lisboa, Cavalo de Ferro, 2003, p.34]

Jorge Martins

*Time is an old crow
with blurred, grey eyes.
Eagerly drinking
the light of these days,
like owls the oil
of holy lamps.*

*And we smile,
dead birds
asleep at the bottom
of a swamp.⁶⁶*

One of the works in this collection was created for the 1998 Exhibition entitled *Arte no Tempo* ('Art in Time'). This event was promoted by Fundação D. Luís I and gathered several Portuguese and foreign artists who dealt with their issues and affections towards the concept of time, following explicit poetic mottoes. For Jorge Martins, the choice fell upon the poet Carlos de Oliveira.

Throughout the history of mankind, the recurring topic of time has been approached from several perspectives, in an analytical and reflective attempt to take hold of a domain which everyone knows to be abstract and irreversible.

(Calligraphic) writing allows the painter to fix the clock in a standing position, using it both as frame and surface, i.e. dominating it symbolically through painting and writing. Together with this clock apparently with no metric functionality one can see a vertical canvas portraying one of the most iconic elements of Martins's painting. It is a shape probably similar to a coffin, stating its rigor in a sharp, dominating and conceptual way, yet inherently devoid of pretentiousness or qualification. Taking hold of a form which goes through most of his paintings clearly stands for a need to dominate time by means of an aesthetic and not exclusively functional resource. The dialectics between continuity and discontinuity balances the visual reception and the interpretative appropriation of the written poem, out of the need for a spatial game between the spectator and the tridimensional work, which requires a visual and walking tour around the clock, so as to gain time.

What we need is to discover the persistence of the motifs and the role of discontinuities so as to provide the key for this intensification, i.e. the remaining paradox between 'what there is to be' and 'what there is'.⁶⁷

On the other hand, as we can read apropos the Travelling Exhibition of Jorge Martins who visited South America: Brasil (Brasília, São Paulo and Rio) and Mexico:

Martins lives at an international crossroad of time, place and culture. On the one hand, he carries and embodies all the Western erudite information placing it in a logic of reflection, as if he were painting over painting. It's not just about his formal relation to the history of painting but also the technical or even scientific conditions of his production and reception: light, colour, bodies, spaces...⁶⁸

Perhaps this anthropological quality of travels, duration, escape and/or permanence has been, for many years now, a personal demand for the self-gnosis underlying the very substance of his works which claims nothing other than self-recognition.

Painting can know other subjects and know its own subject. In this case, it is said to be a consciousness that reflects upon itself. This Husserl's position about the transcendent object is not relevant, but therea re always those who want, at any price, to see logical things in painting. Here is a painting whose painting has no content whatsoever.⁶⁹

The dialogue of images, in a phenomenological perspective, broadened in 1985 to a judicious relation between drawing and photography. The 20 drawings by Jorge Martins and 20 photographs by Jorge Molder were brought together in a book entitled *O Fazer suave de preto e branco* ('The soft doing of black and white') a title taken from Francisco de Holanda published by Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. In this book, there was an interchange of shadows, sfumato and objectified lines those graphic elements which are frequently found in Martins's paintings. The iconographic accentuation of these two means of poetic and philosophical production have fostered the emancipation of both productions from their authors, growing in aesthetic authority prone to any type of subjective aesthetic reception. This project reveals the diversity of the painter's praxis which is paralleled by his wanderings in various cities and continents, a proof that maps, cartography, writing and drawing are at the core of his creation:

Night entered night, built on dust upon dust, mist upon mist, and turned these mysterious drawings into palimpsests of light. (...) A world of endless appearances as only light through its movement is able to change earth into water, water in stone and a city in a lunar landscape. Places and things become other as the light has meanwhile changed...⁷⁰

Drawing, in its most meticulous sense, accounts for essential principles that embody the language of pictoriality and other languages. As José Gil⁷¹ puts it, Jorge Martins's drawings are the result of a profound reflection on the art of drawing. The drawing itself asks for a driving force, a superior hand coordination and a rigorous gesture that moves towards painting. This corresponds analogically to Almada's primordial status of the drawing who considered it the intellectual capacity in its integration sense, the structuring knowledge, the archetypal insight, since drawing forced the artist to use his intrinsic capacities in order to promote his art. Drawing is here taken as the founding principle developed by Francisco de Holanda. Let us recall:

... Drawing, as I put it, has all the substance and bones of painting, it is painting because it embodies the idea or invention, the proportion or symmetry, the decorum⁷² or decency, the grace and refinement, the sharing and beauty of which this science is made.⁷³

69 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, 'Jorge Martins', *Um quarto cheio de espelhos*, Lisboa, Quetzal Ed., 1987, pp.83-84 (Our translation).

70 João Fatela, Introduction, *O Fazer suave de preto e branco*, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1985 (Our translation).

71 José Gil, 'Jorge Martins – A Visão e as sombras', *Sem Título – Escritos sobre Arte*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 2005, pp.180-186.

72 The concept of decorum comes from Cicero and Saint Augustine, having been also used by the Arabs Avicena and Algazel, who in turn might have taken it from the Greeks: "La belleza o el decorum es la cualidad que posee una cosa cuando es tal como debe ser." ("Beauty or decorum is the quality of something that is no more than what is meant to be.") For Cicero, decorum relates to the due measure, being absolutely necessary not only in the moral but also in the artistic sense. It is a quality of what is in agreement with nature thus moulding internal virtue. Cf. Edgar de Bruyne, *La Estetica de la Edad Media*, pp.39-41.

73 Francisco de Holanda, *Da Pintura Antiga*, Chapter XVI 'Em que consiste a força da Pintura', p.99 (Our translation). The qualities Holanda deemed indispensable for quality painting were: invention, proportion and decorum. The definition of invention is developed from p.90 of the work here cited, that of proportion from p.98 and that of decorum from p.163. Holanda's concept of drawing in relation to painting has an affinity with the position of Leon Battista-Alberti in his treatise *De Pictura* ('On Painting').

66 Carlos de Oliveira, *Tempo in Exhibition Catalogue Arte no Tempo*, Cascais, Centro Cultural Gandarinha/Fundação D. Luís I, 1998 (Our translation).

67 Maria Filomena Molder, 'Jorge Martins – Per Áspera ad Astra', *Matérias sensíveis*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 1999, pp.73-74 (Our translation).

68 <http://www.grci.pt/exposicoes.asp?zona=exposicoes> – Text on 'Fronteiras da Ilusão', Exhibition at Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, 2003 (Our translation).

In a symbolic way, drawing is man himself when its traces and lines encapsulate "the end of art as similarity and finish in a way that might open into other realms and show what is hidden."⁷⁴

Magalhães is the name of the painting dated from 1990 which is also part of IPP collection. The painting was displayed at the De revolutionibus orbium coelestium Exhibition.⁷⁵ The set of works presented matched a hermetic iconography of figures related to Portuguese discoveries and major characters of Greek philosophy and culture. Under the Heraclitus's heading, Jorge Martins (following Almada Negreiros) shows a path to the core of the truth of painting and of knowledge: "Because in the circumference the beginning and the end are the same."

Painting, which accounts for itself in chromatic terms, follows the sinuosity, the lines, the ways and the intentions of drawing (and of photography, one would argue). It carries an unnamed, suspended territoriality concealing the iconological thoughts of the artist. His painting depicts the undertaking of an isolationist way, deliberately and deeply fruitful, promoting other ways equally plausible for those who contemplate it.

Space and time in their pluralized singularity are both dominating concepts in Jorge Martins's work, assuming different conceptualizations and morphologies which become concrete by the capacity of vision (the supreme capacity of seeing, as Almada Negreiros would put it).

José de Guimarães

*"Art is irreverence, nonconformism and disruption.
Art is life outside of ourselves. And life is a fight against
time. (...)
Art is getting close to mystery.
Art exists in imagination, never in
Everyday reality.
Art is the image of introspection, never the
introspection of image."⁷⁶*

*"It is not easy, however, to be an Author in our consumerist world and
nevertheless coherently undertake our own dignity or truth."⁷⁷*

*It is, however, my opinion that the existing art crisis (not just in Portugal
but all over the world) is like a virus which started contaminating and
massively destructing fifteen years ago, one which results from the
economic powers desire to earn greedily and in a short time from an
initially expensive product."⁷⁸*

The symbols used by Guimarães take advantage of their material essence in paintings and objects and belong to what is called "collective imagination"....⁷⁹

74 "I consider drawing so highly that I dare show how everything one does in this world is drawing; and when talking to painters, I also dare prove and show to them that it is better to have a sketch or a blur created by the mastery of a brave drawer than a neat and shiny painting of unclear personages that lack the gravity of drawing." Cf. Francisco de Holanda, op.cit., pp.100-101 (Our translation).

75 Galeria Valentim de Carvalho, Lisboa, 1991.

76 José de Guimarães, "Manifesto aos Pintores Inconformistas", Arte Perturbadora, Porto, Afrontamento, 2000, page 43 (Our translation).

77 José de Guimarães, "Mensagem do Dia do Autor", Arte Perturbadora, Porto, Afrontamento, 2000, page 101 (Our translation)

78 José de Guimarães in an interview to M^a de Fátima Lambert, Arte Perturbadora, Porto, Afrontamento, 2000, page 108 (Our translation).

79 Cf. C. Jung, O Homem e seus símbolos, Botafogo, Ed.Nova Fronteira, 1987 (Portuguese translation of Carl Jung's Man and His Symbols)

They achieve it in such a way that human referential evocations in the imaginary world are more vivid through their specific symbolism.

*Dark art made realise how to materialise the concentration of meaning
and the mythical charge of shape. Thus, shape became a symbol in
my paintings and an agent with great acting power.⁸⁰*

Guimarães frequently creates representations of historic or revisited human beings (from mankind's great myths) in engravings, paintings and sculptures. Some stand out:

- Mitolusismos (name created by Gilbert Durand): D.Sebastião, "vestido em papagaio" for the exhibition "Arte para o céu", held in Japan in 1989; Rei D. Pedro (sculpture -1985); Inês de Castro (sculpture-1986);

- Literary myths: Naufrágio de Camões (1981.); the combination of the historic and literary myths; Vasco da Gama e o Rei de Melinde (1981), Camões e D.Sebastião (1981); and "A Nau Catrineta..." from popular tradition;

- Myths from painting itself: the **Rubens** series: Hélène Fourment (1978), O Retrato de Maria de Médicis (1978); Gioconda Negra (1975), Homenagem a Magritte (1984), **Homenagem a Marcel Duchamp** (Nu descendo a escada - 1980); **Vélasquez** (1984); Ecce Homo Português (1989-90);

- The myths and symbols originating in the universal cultural substrate: **Adão e Eva, o Paraíso, Arca de Noé, S.Jorge e o Dragão, Ícaro** (Red Icarus - 1985-88); Sereia (1990); A espada de Damócles (1990); Duende (1973); Gnomo (1973); Dançarina - sculpture - (1983); Arlequim - sculpture (1983); Pescador (1983); O Olhar do Faraó (1989); Esfinge (1987);

- Myths originating in African cultures: Dois fetiches (1990); Dois fetiches com animal -1990); Máscara (1990); O olhar da grande máscara (1990), Pássaro (1990); Guerreiro (1987); O Profeta (1984).

- "Recent" myths: O Devorador de Automóveis (1987), Dois personagens num automóvel (1990); Corredor de Maratona (1975), Nadadora (1980); **O circo** - Domadora de Crocodilos (1979); O Grande Actor (1984).

All these characters (mythical and historic ones) were organised in his sculptures, paintings and engravings. Sometimes they were as big as stage sceneries, huge installations, fabulous productions designed in the author's imagination, but traversed by a personal and tangible sociocultural contextualisation.

The afore mentioned symbols are sometimes combined with other iconic elements, which we could call signals or signs, thus materialising a specific intentionality as they refer to certain crucial aspects that confirm the "human" as such.⁸¹

The signs may be classified under categories. We should like to emphasise that the elements listed below are accompanied by their combined iconic figuration:

- **Human body parts in several combinations** – an answer to a kind of body dismemberment, in an appeal to the more historically symbolic and relevant elements (anthropological, cultural and psychoanalytical ones), which are built around intended situations and attitudes.

80 José de Guimarães, Os Símbolos, porquê? - 1979

81 As several authors have stated about Guimarães's work (Fernando Azevedo, José-Augusto França, Fernando Pernes, Gillo Dorfles, Antonio Tabucchi, and many others) this symbolism was created by and stands out from his work as symbolic vocabulary. We are given the key to decode it in a very exhaustive list of the symbols used in the work of José Guimarães, as published by Marcel Van Jole, in Art & Biblio Press of Antwerp in 1979.

· **Writing code elements**, not only from the alphabet and Arabic numerals, but also from doubly encrypted and symbolic writing, sometimes with an ideographic nature.

· **Geometric figures**: these carry a specific symbolism, based on the oldest meanings of the four fundamental geometric figures - the square, the rectangle, the triangle and the circle - as well as freer variations resulting from the notion of "form" itself.

· **Flora and fauna elements**: assessed against a nature's experience, to which symbolic combinations are attributed and linked through, for example, encrypted writing and "isolated" ideograms.

· **Explicitly symbolic and mythical elements**: typical from different civilisations and cultures, such elements converge in the original and mythical approach of Man's condition in his relation with the Universe - the cosmological dimension of being, according to the oldest philosophical traditions.

· **"Dynamic" and "kinetic" elements**: these are intended and occasional; they can be understood as links to the most profound and determining ideas, and also the most readable at the time's sociological context.

These fundamental references are imbued with ironic and revisited stories of themes the painter assesses through plastic quality, in terms of representative and figurative value, and made real by a great power of imagination. True to the essence of these images, the sign elements adapt to a reality-based imagination, allowing a profound emergence of the human being's core experiences; life, sex, death.

It can thus be said that these sign elements "symbolise" something, i.e., they are beyond the semantic link of the pictorial composition as a whole. They already constitute an independent and autonomous symbolic grammar as they carry a very concrete and intended meaning.

Guimarães fulfils the original artistic mission, as the references in art to Man and what surrounds him are rendered from pre-historic times in its artistic and magical expressions, which are combined with the elements from the collective imagination but also from personal ones (visible in creativity). It should be emphasised that the anthropological and symbolic substantiation of Guimarães' work are assessed by the communion with the water, air, (but most of all) earth and fire spirits, which have from the beginnings of time been reunited in a cosmological vision of the Being.

José Rodrigues

The first individual exhibition of José Rodrigues at the Cooperativa Árvore was held in November 1964. The Exhibition's introduction text was written by Eugénio de Andrade. There one can read:

*"When José Rodrigues came back from Africa we met somewhere. The author of those drawings was in front of me: coarse, quiet, lost. All slyness had disappeared from that sunburnt face enhanced by the black beard and hair - there was only place for the most ferocious melancholy."*⁸²

In a later text, by José Ernesto de Sousa, published in 1974 in *Colóquio/Artes*, the artist's terrestrial personality, his excessive artistic impulse turned into power and fight are also emphasised:

"The elimination of borders, the frenzied feeling brought about by the end of individual differences, and especially not knowing exactly (not that it

*is important) where expression begins and action ends, or better still, the party: where assets are transient and are erased at the detriment of processes, actions."*⁸³

These two poetic-critical reviews are central to legitimise my belief that, in the work of José Guimarães, the face and human body image summoning combines with the artist's character and area of influence, as the paradigm of a generation, of a war with the world, of a persistent utopia.

The summoning of the human face (as iconographic as it is) is recurrently present in the work of José Guimarães, revealing plausible mutations, desired metamorphosis, inherent dramatisations. It comes from inside, assigns gregariousness, absorbs it, it even destroys it and then emancipates it with the same intensity as the original, with a genuine possession of itself.

*"La question du portrait commence peut-être le jour où un visage commence devant moi de n'être plus là, parce que la terre commence de le dévorer."*⁸⁴

The recurrent representation of known or anonymous faces is very much present in western painting. If one follows the history of painting (and, to a certain extent, that of sculpture) as a composite construction of singular identities, deflected in complementary times, one can see the return of the artists' memory, as they look (more or less objectively or fictionally) upon themselves. They take themselves as the radical possession of the world, through the reversion in their work. Nowadays, it is possible to see a reconceptualisation of the author's self as object and subject (simultaneously), a brave pretext to doubly disclose themselves, while assuming themselves as a collective enigma.

The author of the images is present in the clarification of the physical traits more easily identifiable or through hints and traces of a different nature - transfiguring, abstracting...

If one accepts Didi-Huberman opinion, portraits are, more than anything else, an anthropological issue which has characteristics in common with distinct social sciences and humanities. When the cultural anthropology concept, namely the symbolic anthropology associated to Gilbert Durand,⁸⁵ is applied to the work of José Rodrigues, it should be understood beyond the single identity recognition dimension, beyond those cases in which the real or mythical nominal allocation is a fact and/or symptom.

The portrait composition has numerous visual and object-like creations, visible in his drawings, paintings, as well as in the sculptures characterised by anthropomorphism, with the exception of the stylistic differences known over decades. Thus, the approach to the face, head, body and figure may

a) be done in undefined strokes, heightened and mitigated in exquisite graphic ramblings;

b) be condensed in telling fragments for the general balance of the painting, emphasising specific traits of the body;

c) hold back memories of other pictorial relations in new camouflage,

83 José Ernesto de Sousa, "José Rodrigues Vanguarda e com-sentimento", *Ser moderno... em Portugal*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1998, p.114 (Our translation): "An ever-postponed party, obviously in a not vague, well-defined "Vale of tears" (for example, the one José Rodrigues brought from Angola). That is why we talk about generation and journey. I could even add that this journey, this generation moving towards the party is a backward movement, through which lost paradises are found in the future."

84 Georges Didi-Huberman, "Le visage et la terre", in *Arstudio*, n° 21, Été 1991, p. age 85 Please check from this same author, *Las Estructuras Antropológicas de lo Imaginario*, Madrid, Taurus, 1982, namely Book 1, "Los rostros del tiempo".

82 Eugénio de Andrade, « Assim pode nascer a alegria ». (Our translation)

*through the use of minimising strategies;
d) expand in variables that result from an initial matrix...*

Evidence and contingency are associated in a misunderstanding game which, nonetheless, aims at an intense sacred-profane exaltation of the human kind, beyond time and history, but without losing its time and place references. The topography of the human face becomes an accessory to the cartography of the places and time visited by the author. The personal references experienced by the sculptor are present throughout his work: Africa, the East, the Greek mythological tradition - Europe's tracks - communicate with one another, ruling concurrently or in turns. Thus, the aesthetic identity of the artist is consolidated, conveyed in clear societal and anthropological identifications that develop alongside their complementing disparities,

The stability of the mask is one of the remaining ontological values. Its symbolic charge is intensified with the materialisation it is based on: the wooden grains represent the furrows of time of the individual, of the group, of the community.

The aesthetic assignment of the mask comes from the most remote and original: from pre-historic times when the face did not exist, conceptually speaking, when the face did not have any meaning, when it was taboo. It thus assembles all the magical tension of misconceptions and prisons of incomplete knowledge we aim at.

The bodies left by the pre-historical iconography have a unique figurative strength, an abstract, anonymous substantial meaning, whereas the face reveals the absence of any distinguishing traits.

The masks tour the trails of African lands, cross the seas until they reach the ruins of Olympus and hide the calmness, the inwardness of the East: papers, nails, wires, rags... they also seduce the being, they all represent the earthly spirit.

(The face is, therefore, a mask, which attests our cultural convictions but questions the limits of its hermeneutic extensibility - Umberto Eco questions the conflict of interpretations - Paul Ricoeur).

The face transcends the masks both in its plastic and anthropological dimensions, as well as in its psychoanalytical dominance.

The face is individualisation; the face is the assumption of the specific human condition, laid bare before itself and everyone else.

*"What does a face depict, where does its epiphany take us?...
It is therefore legitimate to think that when the painter represents himself, he is focusing on the alchemy of the face. This constitutes a dialect of identity and otherness, trying to understand itself, even when as someone else. Before anything else, the self-portrait is self-revelatory, self-analysis (as shown later)."*⁸⁶

The oval-shaped face, its almost regular sphericity, help redefine the impetuses across the periods catalogued in History. These formats reveal a memory in the incisions created by graphite, explored in the pigments or tuned by the materials: the use of diverse plastic strategies (graphic or pictorial) guarantees the artist's anthropological intention as an agent of humankind.

The most media-like (more direct?) answer about the face is to be found in E. Lévinas' "face epiphany", specifically: "The face and the exterior" and "Beyond the face", Totality and Infinity: the unequivocal primacy of the other;

⁸⁶ Carlos M. Couto S. C., "Auto (de) representação", in O Rosto e a Máscara, Lisboa, C. C. B., 1994, pp. 49-50 (Our translation)

the other reveals and manifests himself; it is totally different from objective things...⁸⁷ On the one hand, this implies the certainty of the other as such, as someone able to stand his own ground (thus introducing man to a religious and metaphysical experience), and on the other, it emphasises that acknowledging the other does not happen only at a private and intimate level, but it is essentially ethical and objective.

*"La reconnaissance du visage, comme élément premier de l'identification de soi et de l'autre est une opération que chacun réalise d'innombrables fois dans une même journée et sans laquelle l'existence sociale serait d'ailleurs impensable.(...)
Il est socialement absurde de concevoir des hommes sans visage dont on puisse se souvenir."*⁸⁸

Júlio Resende

*"Grateful, the beams of such pure lines,
Derived from the silent bolt,
Shall gather, shall meet one day
As open-faced visitors. (...)"*⁸⁹

Porto became, by the end of the years 1940 and 1950, the birthplace of the abstract geometry of Fernando Lanhas, Nadir Afonso and Arlindo Rocha as well as of a significant sector of the Portuguese neorealism, which concerned in its primary years a significant diversity of names in the city: Abel Salazar, Dordia Gomes, Augusto Gomes, Júlio Pomar and Júlio Resende. One of the significant names of the Portuguese group Independents was Júlio Resende, who peacefully modified his pictorial language in this period of time, preserving the social themes in his paintings, though bringing his figuration closer to na abstraction in which the colours become informal and complement each other.

*In the small establishment one finds the abandonment where the masonry stone is determined to display a past of glory of a nation that made History.*⁹⁰

During the full exercise of Estado Novo, and despite that fact, the cultural movements were enhanced by artists and authors that all around the country subverted the restrict consignments of the so called "Politics of the Spirit", implemented by António Ferro.

The decade of 1950 in Porto was filled with figures and protagonists, in places and cultural activities: Fenianos, Ateneu, Teatro Experimental do Porto (Experimental Theatre of Porto), Cineclube do Porto, S.E.N (Secretary of the National Education); adding the tertulias that frequently occurred in the Lello book shop, in Primus, in Rialto, in Palladium and in Majestic. Also the magazines – A Serpente, Gazeta Literária, Lusíada, Bandarra, Revista do Norte, Notícias do Bloqueio... - as well as the local newspapers, featured highly qualified cultural collaborations – as we may see in through the supplements and cultural pages edited in the newspapers O Comércio do Porto, O 1º de Janeiro, etc.

⁸⁷ "As opposed to what happens with the visibility of objects, the being does not reveal himself in the other's light, but presents himself in the revelation that should announce him." E. Lévinas, op.cit. (Our translation)

⁸⁸ David le Breton, Des Visages, Paris, Métailié, 1992, p. page 201.

⁸⁹ Ossip Mandelstam, Guarda minha fala para sempre, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1996, p. 223 [our translation]

⁹⁰ Júlio Resende, "A ilha dos meninos com olhos cor da esperança", Boletim Lugar do Desenho, nº5, ano 3 – 2000, p.11 (Our translation)

1. In 1950, took place the event “5ª Exposição de Arte Moderna dos artistas do Norte”, and was attended by António Lino, António Cruz, António Soares, Arthur da Fonseca, Cândido Costa Pinto, Carlos Botelho, Carlos Carneiro, Celestino Alves, Emmerico Nunes, Estrela Faria, Fernando Lanhas, Martins da Costa, Neves e Sousa, Júlio Resende, Manuel Bentes, Milly Possoz, Tom, Álvaro Brée, António Duarte, Arlindo Rocha, Martins Correia, João Fragoso and Hein Semke.
2. In 1955, under the responsibility of the gallery Alvarez, the 1ª Exposição de Arte Moderna – C.M.M.O. – gathered in Póvoa de Varzim the works of Carlos Botelho, Dominguez Alvarez, Carlos Carneiro, Dordío Gomes, Gastão Seixas, Jaime, Júlio Resende, Martins da Costa and Sousa Felgueiras:

“We cannot peacefully face the current divorce between Art and the public, given that nowadays, we can reach the true causes through an effective and deep final blow.”⁹¹

Júlio Resende had a significant role, namely in 1997 when Lugar do Desenho was created and based in Valbom-Gondomar, in the scope of the Júlio Resende Foundation, and along with the painter a group of artists that participated with him in that project: Zulmiro de Carvalho, Marta Resende, Vitor Costa, Armando Alves, Francisco Laranjo, Manuel Casal Aguiar and later Sobral Centeno.

Lugar do Desenho, which stands for The Drawing’s Place, focusses on the collection of art work from the painter, frequently promoting cultural projects, especially in what concerns exchanges between Portuguese-speaking countries and its culture.

The group of artists frequently involves other names that concern the projects.

The result of these journeys is presented through a substantial individual production from each of the participants, which leads to the exhibition of their visual experiences.

One should stress that the Foundation’s main goals stand for disseminating the art of the “visited” cultures, aiming to create a deep relationship between the artists and the communities.

This enhancement does not neglect its context, focusing one of its areas in the relationship between the artists trained at Esbap and “imposes specific features, which were never before tested”.

Preserving the specific features of the plastic languages of each of the elements that integrate Lugar de Desenho, one may note a similarity expressed through the specific incidence of the looks that reconvert the intensity of the previous experiences, exposing in a particular way and in accordance with an expressionist trend, presenting more or less, visual poetry as well as abstractionist sternness.

“L’Art est éveiller d’émotions. Il est la preuve de l’universalité et le moyen d’affirmer le pouvoir humain. L’art serait ainsi, bien que résultant d’une situation sociale, un moyen de transformation de la société.”⁹²

In a journey led as the crow flies, for it was short and incomplete, as we may see through the whole work of Júlio Resende, one may isolate some topics which influenced the iconographic and semantic contents.

Anunciação Matéria-Espírito: the fertility of water announces the symbolic assumptions of the iconographic poetry. The uneven fluency of the boats that sail in the souls is erroneous. It presumes shipwrecks, explodes in experienced mythemes, legends and recreated episodes.

Take a look at the transparencies on the colours, the figures were only swapped with the spirits. Boats announce their departures, swallow their preys in their basements. Capture and release the matters and the spirits, if one or another can be tamed. Predictions or facts, the irrelevance is analogue. Everything can be everything.

“In those moments I felt as though I was submerged up to my neck in that existence that was MYSELF. The external world, reduced to spaces, became overwhelming. How to put it? Spots were formed followed by rays. A movement of mutual exchanges peacefully established itself, without prior rules between my deep self and the external world. The surrounding landscape, void of meaning, reflecting itself in my eyes, bursting from within...”⁹³

Júlio Resende conceived a great tile screen for the building where the Central Services of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto are based, and denotes the mission, goals and origin of this institution.

In a format expanded in a horizontal direction, occur episodes that regard the concepts of Education, Culture, Research, Science and Technologies, all of those subsumed to the personal identity we aim to dignify and consolidate.

*“Style is a destiny.
Indifference does not concern us
The module’s hypothesis in the ideal forms (...)”
No! To the unilateral and stillness.
The wit, the spirit and the hand.(...)
The true meaning of research is to serve the Man (...)
You and I are responsible for the process,
The standardization of the industry and the role of designers”*

The calligraphed sentences stress the drawn space, between gaps of figures, signs and thick lines deriving towards the sky. On another hand, the painted graphic signs generate a visual vocabulary, whose nature can go back to the primary years of the pictorial expression, especially the paintings and signs inscribed in the walls of caves, grottoes... One relates the pictograms, ideograms and psychograms, thus enhancing the poetics of the individuals: the author-individual (who recognises himself in this educational mission) and the spectators-individuals who, in their everyday life or sporadic, visit works or move around this building.

He approached the existential matrices of the human being through the figurative extroversion of the elements perceived in topographies that disseminate the history of Portugal, in portions of mythical, insensitive time, in any constrictor dating.

“Art is an awakening of emotions. It is proof of the universality and expression of the human being. Thus, art would be a result from a social situation as well as a means to transform the society.”⁹⁴

91 In 1ª Exposição de Arte Moderna, Póvoa de Varzim, 1955 (Our translation)

92 Júlio Resende, “L’Art et la destinée de l’Homme”, in “Discurso”, pronounced in Academia de Belas-Artes da Bélgica, 1989: “A Arte é um despertar de emoções. É prova da universalidade e meio de afirmação do poder humano. A arte seria, assim, resultante quer de uma situação social, quer um meio de transformação da sociedade.”(free translation of the author)

93 Yukio Mishima, O Templo Dourado, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1995, pp.148-149 (Our translation)

94 Júlio Resende, “L’Art et la destinée de l’Homme”, in “Discurso”, pronounced in Academia de Belas-Artes da Bélgica, 1989 [our translation]

The images of the timeless, ageless culture, greeted in the painter's experienced visions, dissolving the emotions into painting, solving the issue concerning the pictorial affection versus the conceptualising factuality – where the philosophical and worldly explorations and expropriations become clear.

*"...[Júlio Resende] shows us that learning is ceaseless and permanent and that wisdom is constant, requiring the renovation of values and plastic procedures, and also demonstrates an everlasting respect for his authenticity."*⁹⁵

Manuel Amorim

*It smells, would I add, like the Neolithic and the Paleolithic.
Or, in another way, like the future. Because the Ice Age
is a category of the future, which is that time
in which you love no one, finally,
not even yourself. (...)*⁹⁶

Time swallows matter, invades the souls and stimulates the earth to make it fructify. This is the way men have always wanted it to be, wandering among rationalised convictions, putting myths aside, celebrating the gods, and always inventing their subjects - tamed by paint, absorbed by the translucidity of water, expanding the axes of pictorial compositions. The silhouettes dress as brief bodies, where the precarious is similar to the eternal.

The corporeal visibility - the revelation of the body - consist of a specific language; it becomes institutionalised language, through implicitly accepted conventions, or simply implied; it makes concrete a language expressed corporeally, demanding the tragic, the dramatic, and the theatrical. In his paintings, silhouettes are not people, because such condition would limit them to cease to exist. Silhouettes are absent beings that are never forgotten. They remain malgré tout, because they are captives in the kingdoms of the imagination made concrete in the work of art. Silhouettes reveal the painter's structural ability to approach the canvas as a plain where houses and trees can be desolated, giving way to the human as in a pantheist vision.

*"I discover you absent in the corners
most populated, and I see you bodiless,
yet distinct, over the ocean sea.*

*To call you a vision would be
knowing not visions
that fill up the world
and empty.(...)"*⁹⁷

The body in the silhouette is individual although somehow it makes mankind present. It is, perhaps, a memory from the times when the individual had not the consciousness of being, shaped in the amalgam of the holistic body.

The body, understood as the place for intersubjective action, mediated, and prospective, responds - by means of its exhibition, almost free of any limits or restrictions of any kind - to the need, the urge for communication through the exploration of its traces, of its endogenous exposure; in the dilution of its relational alterity, in its redundancies, in excesses.

The body created unthinkable levels of signification, conditioning and conditioned by ideological movements and stipulations from various subjects.

The body does not see only, it knows how to see, it can see; it needs to know how to see the body - with consequent specific, particular visibilities.

Bodies had been unreachable beauty ideals: the Greeks, for example, desired the body par excellence, that body so correct, ordered, and harmonious that could not exist. The order and anthropometries of the body were fixed in time, were captured in 'time, the greatest sculptor' that commanded so many inventions.

The manner in which man, in his social and time coordinates, defines his proxemic perception, appropriation and recreation depends, unconditionally, of his phenomenological circumstances. His model of spatial organisation is established not only by his specific coordinates - in terms of phenomenological conscience - but made especially possible by the impulsive receptiveness and dynamics - intimate and projective. Namely the experience of "deepness", according to Sami-Ali, is a true "enigma", dependent on the body in the world and on the world in the body.

*"...de la double présence du corps dans le monde et du monde au corps", because "n'est pas assimilable à la troisième dimension relevant d'une abstraite géométrie du visible, la question ne se pose pas dans de savoir, dans un système de représentations comme celui d'Alberti, comment s'effectue le passage de l'expérience vécue à sa transposition rationnelle. Cette transposition se trouve en fait médiatisé par le corps propre en tant que pouvoir originel de projection, faisant naître à la fois, extraits de la même étoffe de l'être, le visible et l'espace du visible."*⁹⁸

Manuel Amorim has thus created a world in which silhouettes are inserted in the landscape - simultaneously the scenery, background, and uterus. That world unfolds into nucleus inhabited by shadows, shapes, phantoms or explicit protagonists. They occupy irreplaceable places that they will not give to others for being units needed to restore the image that, from mental and internal, becomes painting. They inhabit the inverse relationship of being, among substantive measures which bring to mind an aesthetic where light is shadow, knowledge and ignorance, courage and fear, survival always.

*Mostrar la imagen como un buscado efecto de distancia, como un descubrimiento que debe sorprender primero el artista y Amorim piensa en Tabucchi al materializarme el ejemplo: investigar en el anverso de la pintura como una suerte de negativo del cual surge – o quizás surgió – una imagen en la cubierta del laboratorio, mágica, inesperada y, al mismo tiempo real.*⁹⁹

Magical kingdoms grow denser in the various series, such as in the most recent Heimat, The Cave, Travessias (Crossings) or the Viajante/Voyageur (Traveller). So that there are crossings, territories to cross must exist, places where landscapes follow one after the other, always benign inventions of men crossing times, in the great journey of the world.

...Su mundo se cieme constreñido a la particularidad de lo que el busca: una oposición-tensión entre la extrema fluidez del espacio sin límites, celularmente "quadrillé et habité" por la materia y el poder sensual del color, la solidez transparente de las acciones ambiguas, enigmáticas,

95 M^a de Fátima Lambert, Catálogo da Exposição Zeitgenössische Kunst aus Nord Portugal, Wiesloch (GER), 1994 [our translation]

96 Josif Brodsky, Landscape with flood, (Our translation).

97 Carlos Drummond de Andrade, "Contemplation in the bench", Poetry Collection, (Our translation).

98 Sami-Ali, Le corps, l'espace et le temps (The body, space and time), Paris, Dunod, 1990, p.131

99 Anton Castro, "Descubrir las imágenes en la distancia de una superficie celular", (Discovering images in the distance of cellular surface) Coloquio/Artes n^o 79 – December 1989, p.42

*contemplativas de los personajes, como arquetipos o emblemas que no manifestasen particularidad de sexos o de pertinencia.*¹⁰⁰

This cosmological environment, presiding the most part of his painting, is decisive when favouring the substantive matter that aggregates the visual identity thought, simultaneously expanded because a collective one. It crosses time and evokes memories of the world as we conceive it, as we represent it. We wish that by making it present we may transcend the ephemeron, that stealthy presence we call life. And that we may make it possible, through impulsive conditions that oppose it. The silhouette, isolated or in a group, is like a division of the self in visible matter, thus recording the essence of space amalgamated with time.

Manuel Cargaleiro

*"Il invente, en effet, des motifs inédits, des juxtapositions nouvelles de formes et des couleurs, nous donnant parfois, même, l'illusion, grâce à la hardiesse de son goût qu'il a littéralement inventé et crée ses propres coloris comme si ceci n'existaient pas déjà dans la nature ou parmi la matière qu'un marchand de couleurs offre au premier venu."*¹⁰¹

In an article from 1963, for "Colóquio Artes e Letras", Edouard Rodoti emphasized the expertise in the use of colour as one of the privileges of the paintings of Manuel Cargaleiro, Portuguese painter from the School of Paris. The French critic considered that the painter brought the colours from the Portuguese nature and landscape, the polychromy that featured, and still features I may add, his work.

The tiles are prominent in his paintings, providing a link with his creative activity, pottery.

Born in 1927 in Vila Velha de Rodão, he attended the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon, travelling to Paris afterwards, where he completed his education. Upon his return to Portugal, he began teaching at ESBAL, where he became notorious for his creative production, in a school where the Dean was Jorge Barradas – notorious figure of Portuguese ceramics. His plastic and ceramic production have evolved throughout the decades, presenting an artistic coherence in what concerns the dominant language and that allows to almost immediately recognize its authorship.

His work is mainly characterised by an organization, developed through a grid that – in formal terms – is structured like a network. However, that network is managed through sharper and thinner consonances, or wider and broader ones. By deciding the following stroke, the graphic units are almost entirely filled with colour or they allow a glimpse of the line, remaining the graphics always as main focus. The detail oriented impulse, which guides the ceramics' creation, where each detail is mastered, starting with the impulse, then further to the tools after selecting the applications, to the firing of the pieces, demands of the artist to be aware of the time this process takes. This ability to control the time, where delay overpowers speed, comes together in the painting. With no need for extreme changes, one can perceive artistic movements in the pictorial reproductions by entering such paths: a) abstractionist/geometrical predominance; b) prevalence of geometry along with representative elements; c) primacy of representations, where one can stress a visual-graphic vocabulary, with an almost inexistent extend.

100 Anton Castro, "Descubrir las imágenes en la distancia de una superficie celular", (Discovering images in the distance of cellular surface) Coloquio/Artes nº 79 – December 1989, p.45.

101 Edouard Roditi, "Manuel Cargaleiro, peintre portugais de l'École de Paris", Coloquio Artes e Letras, nº 24 – Julho 1963, p.55 (<http://coloquio.gulbenkian.pt/al/sirius.exe/artigo?683>)

The studies regarding colour are intrinsically associated with research concerning the graphical units in the composition plan, coming together at timely rhythms (empty). Between the graphical-chromatic units lie the empty cells which emphasize the previous, generating overlapped structures, punctuated by representative motifs that create a poetic dimension of a simple beauty. They are reasons for balance.

Manuela Bronze

*"Everything's mine but just on loan,
nothing for the memory to hold,
though mine as long as I look."*¹⁰²

*"(...) thus PANOS unfolds into the Quotidiano Obrigatório [QO] and Cartas do Meu Jardim [CMJ] series in themes previously explored with other media and materials. The collage of fabric over serigraphs, in the Matissianas and Rubra series explores other textile relationships and behaviors, in the tranquility of craftsmanship. (...)"*¹⁰³

Since the 1980s, Manuela Bronze's work bespeaks an intrinsic complicity between drawing, painting and specific visuals for Performing Arts productions (costumes, props and scenarios), which, together with her theoretical research, is the foundation for all the typologies addressed and considered.

... a hanging image often implies an upward direction which also plays in the opposite direction; suspension evokes duration and breaks which solidify in the material of the dress clinging to a fake body. The suspicion remains that the dress or maybe the absent body, leaving a substitute, shall live in a home that's imago mundi ...

The paintings and drawings envisioned by the artist have coherent rapports, leveraging the different materials used and considering the aesthetic and plastic proposals assumed as paramount. Her artistic compositions are often compiled with evocative and metaphorical representations, which establish a particular symbology shared by the imaginary that ancient mythologies have imposed. Her enlightenment incorporates appreciative contemplation of the history of art, literature and culture, always vitalized by her own assumptions and delimited by historical concession.

The universe, depicted in different compositions, belonging to different periods and series, is populated by beings and objects that systematize a botanical lineage, in some cases bathed by momentous zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representations. The crossbred species are revealed as quite possibly an imagined herbarium.

In the history of Western art, themes coincide, linked to the research and achievements of science that, for centuries, have led to their autonomy, by applying methodological decisions that result from an epistemological awareness and accumulated scientific techniques and procedures. In botany, and zoology or mineralogy, the rigorous design of the observed elements became contemplation that guided the artistic creation, well beyond the need to register and document. There are numerous authors who link both aspects - artistic and scientific. In particular, those artists should be evoked – women who were both scholars and recognized authorities with scientific merit.

The thorough implementation of what was captured by visual perception branched off into endless and always different detail, capturing a completeness

102 Wislawa Szymborska, View with a Grain of Sand: Selected Poems, Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company. 1995, p.18

103 Unpublished excerpt provided by Manuela Bronze in April 2015.

with which a peaceful look could not immediately accede. At first, the multidisciplinary activity of Hildegard von Bingen could be evoked. Here, it is possible to identify the convergence and distinguished knowledge of botany, medicine, music, poetry, drawing and poetry, as well as a visionary knowledge shared, at the time, by those who sought it. Medieval illustrators invented plant species associating decorative elements, where the calligraphy dances on the parchment. Later, tradition persisted, taking on different meanings in particular when it came to the inventory of exotic species that the seduction of the alleged new worlds brought to Europe. Leafing through the current editions that compile the elaborate designs consider, for example, Anna Maria Sibylla Merian who studied plants and insects; Marianne North, biologist and botanist that, in the 19th Century was already engaged in documenting species, which were drawn and painted with remarkable expertise. This evocation should not omit the pictorial skills of Josefa de Óbidos, who invented in Portugal a type of baroque poetry filled with idiosyncratic topics. Also in the vast work of the painter born in Seville, still lives gave fruit to raves where imaginary kingdoms fed factual and visible things. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning the tales of the draperies engraved by Diana Scultori (16th Century), which stage mythological, biblical and allegorical episodes, with intensely dramatic scenic and structural complexity. Thus, this is how ancestries are articulated when I analyzed the work of Manuela Bronze and associated it with a congregation of relevant artists, although made invisible for some time in art history.

The names mentioned previously indicate a qualitative validation incorporated in the significant representational and conceptual designs, emphasizing the uniqueness of the pieces designed by Manuela Bronze. Analyzing their compositions, made essential in the materials that bring them to life, it is worth noting that the figures are thought of as if camouflaged under the hood and fabrics that are represent or are the substance of the work. Believe that in all manufactured things, nature exists and the human species lives on, implicitly... a matrix, a sufficient, final... cause and/or reason.

Miguel d'Alte

The notion of construction /existential constitution stems from an ontological reading of a place "where anything can happen" in Miguel d'Alte's paintings. It is the visual perception of the image's frame that seizes the space. An inevitable condition that will remain beyond the time of Man: "In the eyes we see people to the lees."¹⁰⁴

The objective world, which is apprehended through successive visual images that derive from the possibility to see, is assumed here through the intense chromatic fillings - black and gray with an extreme structural density-, and through void spaces and could invoke the concept of emptiness in Tàpies or even another approach to emptiness such as in Vieira da Silva's Issue Lumineuse. Thus, it is possible to understand that the fillings, the constitution of presence, can be achieved through the interaction between full and empty areas, which characterize this iconography.

Continuous and discontinuous areas define the delimitation of the spaces within the canvas. Plans are merged; there are margins and footers, perhaps delimiting the individual existence of different spaces - walls, doors and windows - sometimes evidenced by subtle horizontal and vertical collages made of newspapers fragments. These newspapers collages, so relevant in the avant-garde tradition of European painting, alert us to the clash of what is real through the existential reality (material and aesthetic) of the canvas. The elongated and sometimes conical shapes of these collages look like sources of light that focus on a stage of reality of an inner depth, where it is lawful to pretend ignorance regarding the mystery of being, symbolically evoked by Benjamin:

104 Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, London, NLB, 1979, p.83

*My hand penetrated the crack of the open door of the pantry's cupboard, as a lover in the night*¹⁰⁵

The spaces on canvas enjoy, in some cases, this double possibility of being either the interior or the exterior of the first dwelling - house or street/road: the room - the stage or the universe.

Black, gray and white intensify the establishment of the space of and on canvas, due to the chromatic neutrality that swells the intrinsic conditions of the surfaces and volumes made bi-dimensional in these paintings. Miguel d'Alte interpolates extensively flat, evenly spaced surfaces with others viewed as abstract expressionist.

The confluence of lines that becomes denser, with a point of origin to its terminus on the margins and limits of the canvas. These travel within an imaginary, or real city, a sort of urban reverie that is a characteristic of Benjamin's conception of experiential space, appealing to the flâneur.

*Only those who walk the road experience its power and how it, at every turn, brings out unfamiliar areas rather than the landscape that for an aviator unfolds as lowlands...*¹⁰⁶

On canvas, the evocation of architectural spaces is reflected on the figuration of columns, pillars, ground and scattered squares, which meet and withdraw in this path of invisible characters that do not need to be.

Miguel d'Alte's spaces denote themes of life and presence or absence and unreality, conveyed by the alternating brief senses of yellow or blue green, translucent and faded, only surfacing at certain and brief moments. Such perception of space is the condition of the man himself, himself a viewer of his self:

*Space is a category of our understanding: the first matter of existence, therefore an everyday place. You live in a space, volume, an area, you live in a room, an apartment, a city; the reference to space is unspoken but omnipresent.*¹⁰⁷

The reading of the surfaces in vertical/horizontal or diagonal/vertical quadrants are inherent to existential location references, as the viewer's own situation: it is the idea of reference in terms of place, but also space as an idea of quantity - geometric, geographic space, determined by their own personal experience in this space as a body. Bodies that are absent, but implicit in the images. It is necessary to safeguard however, the strong intention of bodies Homenagem a Dili and the disguised and fleeting evocations of faces that resemble human simulacra on some canvases.

The effective presence of each is found to unveil the spaces to see:

*One who (...) wants to see, or rather, look, will lose the unity of a closed world, to meet in the uncomfortable opening of a universe, from now on, floating, abandoned to all that is felt: it is here that the synthesis will become fragile until sterile; and the object to see, eventually played by reality, will replace the subject of knowledge, dedicating the simple reason to something like a breakdown.*¹⁰⁸

105 Walter Benjamin, *Rua de Sentido Único e Infância em Berlim por volta de 1900*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 1992, p.132 (Our translation)

106 Walter Benjamin, *Rua de Sentido Único e Infância em Berlim por volta de 1900*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 1992, p.43(Our translation)

107 Abraham Moles and Elisabeth Rohmer, *Labyrinthes du Vécu*, Paris, Librairie des Meridiens, 1982, p.7 (Our translation)

108 Georges Didi-Hubermann, *Devant l'Image*, Paris, Ed. De Minuit, 1992, p.172 (Our translation)

Nikias Skapinakis

I do not know what art is – what is life, what is love, what is God now that the devils have been canceled. (...)

One may consider the creative act to be selfish, unconcerned with communication and work accessibility. But insofar as it is creative, the act is communicative.¹⁰⁹

Nikias's work dates back to the mid 50s, in parity and dialogically with many of the names that continue to revitalize the current situation of Portuguese art. After experimenting with several languages, Nikias promotes a genuine personal/individual identity, thus contributing to the plurality of aesthetic options on stage.

For decades, Nikias's paintings have diversified iconographic content, covering genres enshrined in history: portrait, landscape, still life and historic paintings.

But the portrait is perhaps the deepest, most unconscious of self-portraits. When painting portraits, the painter imposes a psychological reality that is his own and, in this impervious way, comes to the reality of others. The portrait will thus live a deployed situation, because self-portrait, from where it starts, reaches an objective truth, beyond the artist.¹¹⁰

From 1955 Nikias began a series of portrait works that would last for more than two decades, as pointed out Simonetta Luz Afonso. The work focused on individual and group portraits gathered in the emblematic exhibition "Para o estudo da melancolia em Portugal – Nikias Skapinakis – Retrospectiva de Retratos 1955-1974", that was held in Museu do Chiado in 1996. In the words of the painter, he began this series "when the century was in the middle and I finished my work, a revolution was knocking at the door". Nikias Skapinakis acknowledges that a painter while [as] a portrait painter does not merely look. He necessarily establishes an inter-subjective relationship with the portrayed, recognizing otherness and interiorizing the highest condition of their personal (and architectural) identity.

In this dialogue sustained by the look underlies a mixed condition of truth and invention, where the game of appearances or falsehood becomes a fine art. That is to say, by extrapolating Nikias's words, the truth surpasses the subject - whether the one who portrays or the one who is portrayed, chasing a reality that shifts between these realms, establishing a game or giving it perhaps the conditioned substance of the game – and would evoke, very possibly, the same meaning as in Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Verité et Méthode*.

As a result of this game made conscious by the author of Greek descent, an iconographic galaxy was embodied where evocations of emblematic people of Lisbon is recognize. They are the charismatic poets, art critics, historians, politicians and intellectuals who lived and perpetuated, and established a brief and consistent mapping of cultural and artistic thought.

The characters, the people who contributed to the immediate recognition of this pictorial language, also have a symbolic value, becoming a supreme emblem for the ideological and corporate ownership that the historical situation in Portugal demanded - in the days leading up to the Revolution and the ones that followed. The revelation, in the format of portraits of intellectuals and artists, allowed the dissemination of ideas and attitudes underlying the personality of those

109 Nikias Skapinakis, in *Situação da Arte – inquérito junto de artistas e intelectuais portugueses*, Edited by Eduarda Dionísio, Almeida Faria and Luís Salgado de Matos, Lisboa, Europa-América, 1968, p.74 (Our translation)

110 Nikias Skapinakis, " Pro-memória" in *Catálogo da Exposição Para o estudo da melancolia em Portugal – Nikias Skapinakis – Retrospectiva de Retratos 1955-1974*, Lisboa, Museu do Chiado, 1996, pp.12-13 (Our translation)

represented. The value these portraits lie not merely in each specific iconography, but serves as a means to disseminate actions and political and cultural activities.

Painting is a very accessible art, but requires the viewer to have the capacity of love that can be called empathy and that may not conceive easily; moreover, it becomes a hermetic art once read, and note that this difficulty affects not only the average viewer but the informant and even critical viewer.¹¹¹

The leading motivations in the work of Nikias Skapinakis go back to the archaic images of Greek culture. In some cases, such references are absolutely direct (amphorae, vases, the faces of mythology heroes...) and others should be decoded from subtle and almost unnoticed clues. The paintings celebrate that look that extends beyond the surfaces, almost always planned, reminding us of the symbolist paintings of Paul Gauguin.

The colors, shapes, even the disruptive gaps of premonitory volume (which tend to cancel each other) are combined elements that define the pictorial and semiotic discourse.

If, in the 1970s, painted fruits – Pimento-vermelho, Cabaça... - met the previously evoked representational values, the landscapes are also organized according to the structuring values of a color buildup, properly confined to its contours and formal rhythms. On the other hand, the flowers, bottles, tables or guitars painted in the early 1980 denote a matisseana referential that closely relate to topics in some of the constituent parts of *Quartos Imaginários*. Still, in relation to some still-life paintings of the series produced in 2003, it is possible to witness objects that ensure metaphorical and symbolic power, such is the case of *O Abano de Lady Wlndermere*, *Anforas de terra* or *Uvas Verdes* (the latter from the 1990s). The objects (natural or artifacts) refer, again, to identity and personal references that are transposed, enhancing and designing convictions previously explained, as the essence of the picture. The still life, as well as the landscapes, as will be explained below, almost becomes a transposed or mediated portrait.

Among the still life and landscapes, void of figures but with implied portraits, are the works from the *Series Quartos Imaginários* (aforementioned), where objects - dense and affirmatively - represent the cultural and artistic identities referenced in the titles of the pieces.

The landscapes receive psycho-affective consignments, connected with figures that are explicit personal individuals. In the landscapes blend together – as well as in the figurations - feelings, instincts and anthropological-symbolic values and, in some cases, of mythical and ontological nature. Regard, in comparison, the scenic views and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic iconography with mythological intentionality: *Hera e Cuco resfriado*, *Dia e o Cavalo Sedutor*, works from the 1970s. The planning of the painting is similar to cutouts and collages, creating an ironic feelings and almost *mise-en-abîme* of the pictorial genres themselves.

Enseada Amena (1994), a diptych presented in the *Heteronimias* exhibition, resumes the presentation of forms (in defining the pictorial space) that had already appeared in previous works such as, for example, in *Homenagem a Carpaccio*. Other analogous situations emerge in other works, thus articulating a kind of temporal arc that unites distant points (but accomplices) in the plastic artist's route. The recognition of topics is recurrent, although their autonomy and empowerment is safeguarded, whether in figures, landscapes or more abstract (and expressionist) morphologies. As referred in 1995 by Bernardo Pinto de Almeida:

111 Nikias Skapinakis, in *Situação da Arte – inquérito junto de artistas e intelectuais portugueses*, Editors. Eduarda Dionísio, Almeida Faria and Luís Salgado de Matos, Lisboa,

By inventorying the ways and models, we could say that if a trace remains, and par excellence, the guiding principle throughout all the series will be the permanent marking given by the design as it sets boundaries or establishes various topologies. It disrupts the naturalist feature, pointing to two-dimensional markings and registering an impulse on the form that cannot be characterized to be included in the narrow field of figuration.¹¹²

The journeys undertaken through applied aesthetics and stylistically differentiated provide a reading confronted by the insurmountable requirements of the author that is not rooted or satisfied with single route. Finally considering the landscapes, in the typology that characterizes the Polytechnic of Porto Collection, there is the need to isolate the transformations, mutations and dynamics that expand into multiple aesthetic directions - which confer more interest and relevance.

Prudência Coimbra

"The eye, which is called the window of the soul, is the principal means by which the central sense can most completely and abundantly appreciate the infinite works of nature; and the ear is the second, which acquires dignity by hearing of the things the eye has seen."¹¹³

The thoughts regarding the eye are one of the most compulsive common denominator which organise the works presented by the artists in the Western iconography. Through the visible and external eyes entered the artist's intention. Through the individual soul (and reason) of each, ensuring a spectrum of intersubjective expansiveness, that the extreme demand for love defined in nearly mythical moulds.

Prudência Coimbra observes the visible and transports that rough matter from the invisible, matter that can be decoded and understood by the introspective vision. That ability and process that flexibly control her creative action, regardless of the support, register and technics to which she recurs. On another hand, that eye sharpness, that accesses one's gaze is intrinsically connected to a thought that selects poetic and literary foundations as well as ideological and societal.

The identity foundations underpin her work transposed to texts, excerpts and fragments, which rationalize the iconographies. She may resort to historical figures, whose life intensified in myths and symbolisms that expand their consequences, becoming a memory symbol. In the big screens, where the inscriptions lie, we are able to see pictorial territories, whose creative instincts are overwhelmed by the strategy of words and beliefs.

Under the aegis of aesthetic and ontological torment, and perhaps mistaken by the lust in the minds of generations of readers, behold how the Lettres d'une religieuse portugaise¹¹⁴ from Soror Mariana De Alcofrada strove throughout the years.

The artist focused more on the opaque gazes rather than translucent, in all likelihood descendants from the slipware in Greek statues – partners of the configurations provided by the sculptor that is time, recalling Marguerite Yourcenar. Yes, be the "window of the soul", countless emeralds of glazed and

uncompromising eyes, just like torment and desire bewitched the nun, much to delight of her French knight. But are the eyes keeping us from the frequent and exact path that leads towards the creatures' visible soul? It has been said that people look (simple act); all it takes is for them to stare at someone, reaching them – through a simple, determined and unavoidable act. It is the lucid and deliberate look, selected by an individual, captivating the one that is being looked. Whoever is looked at must withstand the intensity, circumstance and the (inexistent) reason why he is being stared at.

One keeps to himself the eye's mute interrogation, when reached, congratulating himself and accepting – the knight becoming absent of the landscape of the nun's gaze... Staring and being stared at is a simple act, though complex and filled with oppositional meanings. Allowing oneself to be looked at, thus allowing others to reach one's face. When being looked at, one can take one path: allow oneself to be filled with doubt, laugh or excuse from returning the look. Longing for the stares that left, never to return again. That desire increased day by day, reaching a despair which the intellect ignores.

The baroque celebrations that hold on to the exchanged looks, remembering how much Josefa de Óbidos stared – that visionary who preserved cherries, garlands and figures of baby Jesus, who could have taught Soror Mariana de Alcoforado the alchemical transformation of words into painting... Some of the stories evoked here are posterior to the great paintings of Prudência Coimbra in the Polytechnic's Painting Collection. One may think that in those wide ranges of painting in refinement with writing, the substances for these recent prosecutions were held in its full throttle (Aristotelian terminology).

René Bertholo

"I chose, therefore, the drawing and, after an intensive labour period, I began to paint an unitarian vision. I want to make a painting that is not visible at a glance."¹¹⁵

Painting that narrates how the world is perceived and built by the characters; and, also how it arises in diverse contents and moments offered to the conscience. Each one of the painted elements appears saturated of "faces" and functions; and exists through the multiplicity of connections of the feelings, chained in a system of knowledge.¹¹⁶

Member of the magazine/group KWY, Rene Bertholo first departed to Munich in 1957 (with Lourdes Castro, Costa Pinheiro and José Escada) and one year later to Paris, where he resided. It was one of the Portuguese artists of that generation who decided to leave Portugal and live abroad, in order to positively fulfil his projects. In the 70's, he travels to Berlin, where he stays for a year, returning in the early 1980's. His publishing-related activities had been initiated while he was still a student at ESBAL (Fine Arts School in Lisbon), founding the magazine "Ver" with a group that would be emblematic in the Portuguese artistic scene, due to the outbreak of the "segundas vanguardas" or the assumption of the contemporary taxonomy. As a painter of an informalist tendency, he broke with this trend during the 50's, managing his work through the assumption of role of the image — of objectalist order — in terms of the verification and allegiance to common imagery: objects of the urban daily life. Bertholo highlighted the images of common objects — a plastic language related to the Pop Art — of his painting, attributing them a specific three-dimensional autonomy. Thus, between 1966 and 1971, he made mechanized objects of pseudo-cybernetic style: these are the Modelos Reduzidos, (Reduced Models)

¹¹⁵ René Bertholo interviewed by Pierre Restany in Catalogue René Bertholo, Porto, Museum of Serralves, 2000, pp.52-53.

¹¹⁶ João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "René Bertholo", Um quarto cheio de espelhos, Lisboa, Quetzal Ed., 1987, p.136

Europa-América, 1968, p.224 (Our translation)

¹¹² Bernardo Pinto de Almeida, "Nikias: 1995 – Heteronimias", Nikias Skapinakis – Heteronimias, Porto/Lisboa, Galeria Fernando Santos, 1995 (Our translation)

¹¹³ Leonardo da Vinci, Aforismos (326) [Aphorisms], Madrid, Espasa Calpe, p.64, available in <http://www.seekingintellect.com/2014/10/28/leonardo-da-vinci-on-what-it-means-to-be-a-good-painter-and-how-to-become-one.html>

¹¹⁴ Letters published by Claude Barbin in Paris – 1669. Translation from Eugénio de Andrade, published in Assírio & Alvim, Lisboa, 1993.

of archetypes such as: the house, the boat, the palm trees. ..., metal-painted trimmed objects associated to a small engine that originated movement in some of its elements, like in *Palmier* (1966). The concern to use, in a recreational manner, a procedure that generated movement got close to the scope of intervention of the Kinetic Art, although these were far more radical and refined - Niki de Saint-Phale, Jean Tinguely, Rafael de Soto ...

Rene Bertholo knew how to institute the consonance between languages, artistic tendencies and a identitarian poetic substantiation. He reconciled personal preferences, developed under the scope of his personal vision that, for sure, showed an axiology (a sense of belonging) to the collective imaginary, mapping some topics of the invisible that he knew to convert in meticulously intense and affectionate visual elements. From childhood memories to the "mise-en-abîme", overthrow and reinvention to celebrate at any age, establishing and / or converting mythical units in aesthetic "punctum".

*"Once I built a village: tiny cardboard houses with an opening in the place of doors. I put sugar inside and waited for the ants to come and give life to the village. Then I spent hours staring."*¹¹⁷

Throughout his work, under specific settings, depending on the time period, there is this common denominator in René Bertholo that consisted in spreading childhood, emphasizing it for the delight of all. He let it invade, turned it into lucid and rationalized content in his artistic production.

*"My realism consists of reconstructing in the memory the integrity of the form. The ready-made images blocked my vision. They are too present. (...) The drawing allows me to reach the true realism, which is the rational schematization of the form."*¹¹⁸

It was by analogy and resemblance to the three-dimensional, detailed and mechanical models / prototypes characterizing his three-dimensional creation, that the author has structured compositions in his painting. Thus, it results from an organization of the surface, hosting countless pictogrammatical components, carrying, in some cases, an immediate significance, in other cases, arousing an almost ideogrammatic articulation. They refer to a certain (somehow) mannerist tradition, such a claim being understood, this horror vacui related to the canvas of Bertholo. Likewise these are canvas showing deep sensitivity and recreational reason; they favour a perceptive framework that revisits the childhood wonder, when a child faces this wonderful world of countless and endless toys. A kind of scenography, whose reality comes from the imaginary, not only individual but collective, compensating adulthood obsessions, impulses and constraints.

*The image allows to communicate with all the people, beyond cultures and languages. With images there are no misunderstandings of words, from which only poetry is exempt.*¹¹⁹

René Bertholo is one of the most represented authors in the Painting Collection of the Polytechnic, known for three large paintings: The 1993 "Encobrimentos", the 1994 "Untitled" and the 1999 "O Visitante discreto". Each piece is a world where the wonderful and the awake fantasied intersect, remembering and agreeing with the titles of Bachelard's books about matter imagination and their reveries, dreams and confabulations. In these canvas, visual elements commune with the air, the land and the water, exempting the fire that may

arise under intermedial morphologies, as well as evoking the concepts worked in *Poética do Espaço*. The magic embodied in detailed images that draw narratives, stimulating the imagination of viewers, allowing them an aesthetic interpretive exercise. The symbolic value and the metaphorical assignment of concept-units, which can be isolated in his paintings and objects / sculptures, may enunciate a visual vocabulary that, by not being closed (sealed), enable reasoning systematization, judgements oriented to the explanation of ideas and significant and overpowering arguments, belonging to different typologies, creating a complex taxonomy. I refer to the compilation of visual elements drawn by the author, published in the Exhibition Catalogue in Museu de Serralves, in 2000, published for the first time in the Catalogue of Mathias Fels, Paris, in 1969: "Inventário "Irrisório" with Múltiplas Secções". 66 visual units are presented in a sequence that does not obey to logic that could be directly or literally understood by the reader/viewer. The presentation order will probably derive from a subjective association, revealing the coherence of the artist's genesis and association. Each of the "pieces" is described in a minuscule synopsis awarding it effective identity - according to the imagetic intentionality of Bertholo, waiving anything with stereotyped sense and meaning.

One should observe some of these identitarian characterizations of visual units converted (perhaps) into conceptual objects of his imaginary:

"6. Image Piggyback, makes love as a ghost Piggybacked in his shoulders

(...)

13. Machine Invented by a solitary monk, dedicated to endure it own being and to make surpluses. When manipulated, it provides great services.

(...)

46. Cup of coffee. Expression of Wallonia. The word coffee is usually pronounced coffee. Its pronunciation is in fact faithful to its foreign origin. The continent takes the content into little account, as long as there is intoxication (without colour but full of implicatures)."

And so on, our reading of these visual aphorisms, transposed into a logic surrealist, imposes the assumption of the personal imaginary. As an exercise that stems from my observation of some paintings (including, of course, the three belonging to the Polytechnic of Porto Collection) and Bertholo's objects (without being exhaustive, of course), I allow myself to capture, enunciate and highlight some elements (safeguarding their double valency), as iconographic and semantic: heads, pieces of clothing (shirts, jackets, pants, hats ...) bodies, toys, puzzle pieces, birds, pets, sun, clouds, rainbow, trees (palm trees), leaves, fruits, flowers, vases, teapots, coffee pots, cups, bowls, plates, tables, chairs, benches, houses, factories, gardens, doors, porches, columns, walls, shelves, stairs, watches ...

Each of the three canvas collects the elements that can derive in visual narrative, open and without restriction, thus gathering both meanings transpiring factual reality and fantasist glimpses that shake convictions and situational dogmas - that each of us, besides the artist, can decide.

In "O Visitante discreto", dated only one year prior to his death, human figure unfolds in double – Doppelgänger - which written in horizontal lines show a rhythm, being almost as a score of space and time. The term, borrowed from Otto Rank, comes from the book title published in 1914, where this concept is developed and it would be later one of the arguments to preside over its own interpretation of artists and works, collected in *Art and Artist* (1932/1989).

In this canvas, the presence of the house, walls and doors acquire an indisputable symbolic charge, thickening the existential tension of the profiled figure (of illustrative valency). Although planned, the fantasist representations reveal a good volumetric resolution - of plastic morphologies and aesthetic feelings in

117 René Bertholo interviewed in 1979, quoted by João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "O dono das torres e outras pinturas de René Bertholo", Porto, Galeria Fernando Santos, 2003, p.3

118 René Bertholo interviewed by Pierre Restany in Catalogue René Bertholo, Porto, Museum of Serralves, 2000, p.53.

119 René Bertholo interviewed in 1979, quoted by João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "O dono das torres e outras pinturas de René Bertholo", Porto, Galeria Fernando Santos, 2003, p.3

parallel, and combining themselves - to resolve indecision, when it comes to weighing forces between the real and the imaginary. Starring at his works, it seems fairly attributed the title of *Mythologies quotidiennes*, consecrating the 1964 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in the city of Paris.

Rene Bertholo conceived kingdoms inhabited by creatures that look like people and animals, birds and artefacts included. And as it is supposed, everything condenses in an atmospheric mass that turns grey in details and animist mechanisms, sharing irony and innocent sublimity. The expected relations between the painted elements alone do not meet the stereotyped precepts. These are unexpected circumstances, almost prejudice-free associations that stretch, forcing the viewer to exacerbate their attention.

Ricardo Gonçalves

*That, while we are thus away, our own wronged flesh
May work undisturbed, restoring
The order we try to destroy, the rhythm
We spoil out of spite: valves close*¹²⁰

The art work of Ricardo Gonçalves presents a safe and detail-oriented research that underlies both in the case of the three-dimension pieces and in the two-dimension compositions. As I have stated before, his paintings express "... consignments of decorative worth, where the motifs establish an intersected reading rhythm, properly separated from the (almost) even background – Motivo 3, Breu." These longitudinal pieces, when perceived, reveal layers of thinking that are not necessarily due to a literal reason that would merely push towards a direct understanding. In a first approach, one would think of palimpsests, attached in the artist's current period of time, resulting from appropriations mentioned in chronologies and distinct cultures. Ricardo Gonçalves didn't mean for the iconographic and semantic contents to be apprehended at once. Nor do they reflect themselves in a slow contemplation, aside from those whose tardiness existence delays itself in the still sight that moves in the composition as if it were a game of discovery, such as a child's curiosity. The way the layers of lace, excerpts of printings and textures of coloured skin interact with each other, steers a balance and harmony which seduce and question the true meaning of creation.

This set of two-dimensional works is perceived as a concentration of systematized clairvoyances, articulated through a work methodology in a delayed archival mission concerning its personal references (like we usually find in the rationalized magic of some authors). One can only hope that the paintings will preserve the artist's introspective soul and that the spectators' open mind will acknowledge the primacy of the negligible denominator, whose concern lies in perceiving the piece as a uniting aesthetic whole through a single particle.

Rocha da Silva

*"... The tiny human figure is the basic unit of the author's formal universe and it gives him a lot of leeway in terms of exercising the games and illusions inherent to the practice of painting."*¹²¹

The tiny human figure is a lot of people and only one at the same time. The tiny human figure is, tiny human figures are, and the verbal conjugations (somewhat paradoxical prior to Fernando Pessoa) have adjusted to this fact. And it goes

on, goes on, reminding us of the aphorism of Manoel de Barros - "repeat, repeat, until it is different". Nevertheless, in this case, to be different is also to be equal, in a seductive and tantalizing *trompe l'oeil*,

The tiny figure, in an introspective Gestalt exercise, depicts morphologies, whose semantic contents are referred next. He does so through a presentative methodology that can converge into density, in a compact dynamics or, on the contrary, to seduce into dispersion establishing breath intervals with different amplitudes, although dominated by centrifugal action.

The translucency or opacity, articulated in flat painting areas, absent from these visual signs I have alluded, correspond to a well-thought praxis, representing different iconographic typologies, motifs, themes and contents: self-portrait; isolated or collective figure; natural landscape - accessed in amplitude or restricted fragment; urban landscape - isolated buildings, architectural group, urban layouts; maps and cartography that can oscillate between actual and conceptual;... Moreover, to highlight the case of still lifes, that may entail objects and artefacts, leisure objects, objects of knowledge and so many other elements to evoke.

*The work of Filipe Rocha da Silva is hardly seen directly, that is, in a single act of seeing. And, immediately, the awkwardness begins because in it, there is always the representation of visible things: figures, landscapes, skies, architectures, objects and even the light and the shadow, archetypes of visibility.*¹²²

It can generate figurations: closed whose recognition is immediate; expanded, forcing us to a convergence/ concentration exercise to seize the motif/theme; circumscribing representative forms; circumscribing abstract forms; informing the shapes of contour, but filling them with motifs in terms of graphic colouring or modelling, and so on and so forth, referring to the complexity and plurality of intentions of the usage of the 'tiny figure', stamp model or "stencil", always to be fulfilled in consent to the mission assigned by the artist in every situation.

The repetition, better yet, the proliferation of the "tiny figure" that most of the times owns a significant existentialist note, split into 5 main/top compositional situations, unfolded into many, as many as the artist decided during almost 4 decades:

1. the structure aims a complete filling of the surface, being almost opaque, where a drawing may overlap, integrated by graphic lines that define the representative or abstract motifs;
2. the structure consists of a curtain whose pattern or print are the tiny human figures "stamped" in almost rigorous intervals; thus they become a translucent layer that allows to glimpse the painted contents, depicting in the background figures in different sizes and scales, fragments of landscapes, architectures in the city, objects...
3. the structure may overlap in two layers, evidencing different patterns; for instance, an evocative pattern of a coloured fabric with geometrical and arabesque motifs, the other pattern is the regularity of the tiny figures, aligned vertically and horizontally, building perceived alternates.
4. the structure develops in concentric circles, with different dominant colours pushed by the figures in more or less dispersed, vibrating rhythms, that simulate a vortex.
5. the monochromatic structure expands in black (for example) where countless figures stand out, punctuating specific moments attached to objectual composites (TV sets or other "manufactured" pieces or even representative of #things#landscapes#fragmented and natural...)

120 W.H. Auden, "Horae Canonicae" (4. Noa), O Massacre dos Inocentes, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1994, 118

121 Alexandre Melo, "Mil e uma figuras", Catálogo da Exposição Rocha da Silva – Obra recente", Porto, Galeria Fernando Santos, 2000, p.5

122 Fernando de Azevedo, « Pintura [Rocha da Silva, 1990] », in http://www.porta33.com/textos/content_textos/fernando_azevedo/filipe_rocha_da_silva.html (accessed in February 2015)

*Dessiner est pour moi proche de l'écriture.
Je dessine, et les signes que j'appose sont ma
façon de parler, de survivre, de me comprendre
moi-même, de comprendre ce qui m'arrive.*¹²³

The tiny figure is a graphic sign, devoid of an apparent meaning that recognizes it as anthropomorphic. It is written sign, of choreographic breathing. In some canvas, the tiny figures change their figure, but the rhythm and application methodology in the surface are analogous. Then the endless plurality of repetition generates a visual dynamic, a mobility exercise leading to exhaustion, so many and so tiny creatures. More than tiny figures, let them be creatures. Considering the topic of visual perception, one should value acuity contemplating the works of Rocha da Silva. Considering the work developed since mid-70's until now, one verifies that, through mapping different series and/or periods, there are common denominators.

The laws are beyond the life of the figures and their expressed multiplicity, but will there not have in them, in those runaway creatures, a historical existence and a possibility of apprehension, in terms of time, their own development and their own evolution? (...)

*They are the feel and give rise to the event. They distinguish in the multiplicity of their runaway for the moment, the exact instant they elect and simultaneously betray the motif of their want.*¹²⁴

1. The gestalt issue, of visual perception that rules the aesthetic reception of the viewer undoubtedly forced to exacerbated observation, a kind of aesthetic quiz, so to speak.
2. On the other hand, and considering iconographic contents - treated as a palimpsest, mapping canvas where the history of painting exposes itself to the knowledge designs and consequences.

In a certain way, one could consider these canvas as agents of labyrinths. Rocha da Silva academic studies - PhD - entitled *Variações sobre o Maneirismo – estudo comparativo entre o séc. XVI e o presente*, validates one of the plausible readings, but never set apart or solely directed into the aesthetic assumption of his painting. The complex structure, heterogeneous composition, validating methodological and conceptual branches reveals affinities to the characterizing axiology of mannerist aesthetic; horror vacui, scenographic dynamism, proliferation of ornamental and/or decorative motifs, dramatised figurations, certainty of the contour and its determined filling... these would be some immediate topics to refer to when you talk about mannerism as a localized style in a time when there was a need to name a way of painting, of understanding art, apart from the strict obedience to the criteria, canon and rules stipulated in the Treaties of Renaissance. This excessive singular way of depicting the world in a work of art generated insecurity in terms of its evaluation and validation. Such aspects have, for sure, transposition, corresponding to underlie questioning of the reflexive and critical discourses about contemporary Art and Culture. If the intellectual thought of Rocha da Silva has spread into these branches, his tiny figures are an intelligent filter to see and warn about the history of painting and, therefore, the history of the world – from pictogrammatical figures to human signs drawn in objects and daily life materials: the tiny human figure is substantive to man.

Sobral Centeno

*His works present a confluence of waters between reality and the imaginary, not unaware of what is real, but claiming it through the imaginary.*¹²⁵

Painting is an environment dominated by the genuine visuality, as means to regenerate myths and symbols which are more associated with imagination and fables rather than with the focus in redeeming intents concerning the German history. His works presents a confluence of waters between reality and the imaginary, not unaware of what is real, but claiming it through the imaginary. He did not aim for any artistic expression of a collective national identity, instead he favours the individual expression which embraces the circumstances of a society encrypted in myths and symbols which transcend the historical time, though preserving their unique intention and technique.

The visual elements used by Sobral Centeno for the continuation of his work stand out from an integrative and dense background, through meanings and extrapolations of an anthropological nature and ironist ideal. The contingencies which underpin his pictorial language do not present a restraining role, instead they work as a stepping stone for new calls and for the acquisition of a new aesthetic feature, analysing the regarded ranges.

When trying to approach the ranges presented throughout the years, one aims to preserve the technical regularities, the persistent reasons for the acknowledgement of personal plastic conventions and the metamorphosis to which they were subjected. A list is then created, almost calling for a content analysis, as befitting the concerned purpose.

The pictorial vocabulary must be transversely analysed, between the iconographic enumeration (of artistic worth) and the symbolic extrapolation (of theoretical worth).

Some of the emphasized icons suggest a relationship with the icons seen in other contemporary painters' plastic languages, which confirms the sense of gregarious inclusion and belonging in a common period of time, historically determined and lucid. Sobral Centeno is a collector painter, hunter and fisherman: he will not miss any charade or image.

The paintings of Sobral Centeno determined, almost since the beginning, a personal imagetic, which exists in a state of aesthetic autonomy. The heads, the tables, the vessels, the animals and the geometrical structures that support these iconic elements play among themselves, available and determined. This imagetic that detains semantical worth, defers it towards the symbolic nature, within the current anthropological and society circumstances; warning for the ethological awareness; draws mind topographies and raises individual aesthetic reactions.

The zoomorphic figures, which began their appearance in his paintings in the decade of 90, present themselves prominently in a mythical space and time – resulting from a personal and collective imaginary – from which they emerge, in its opacity or transparency of the line and colour, through a directed sequence that always revisits its main characters. The repetition of the iconic elements seems to have a will to express its constitutive substantiality, so that there are no doubts left regarding its deepest consistency.

The construction – involving one another – develops in a progressive transformation, so necessary that the emphasized visual references become naturally required, without trying too hard. The painting is and is not related with the natural way of the things that exist in the external world. It is up to

123 Jan Fabre, *Umbraculum*, Paris, Actes du Sud, 2001, p.87

124 João Miguel Fernandes Jorge, "Filipe Rocha da Silva", *Abstract & Tartarugas – Luz e sombra visível*, Lisboa, Relógio d'Água, 1995, p.61

125 M^a de Fátima Lambert, *Sobral Centeno*, Porto, IPP/Politema, 2003 (Our translation)

the human being to transform them, it has been known to be that way since Michelangelo... It is the primacy of the internal and mental image because it is imagined within the image of the visual perception – so believed the Italian sculptor – and become perfect.

The multiple relationships between the mythical-poetical destinies and those of the latent pictorial composition, developed in paintings and papers, emphasize the Man's aesthetical dimension based in his symbolic ability, the possibility of creating a fictional universe and specify its context in time and space, leading it to conceive the images like scenarios, where the actors star as recurring figures: objects and/or synthesized anthropological/zoomorphic forms. Thus an iconographical ecosystem was constituted.

*"Art sets an anthropological state of wholeness before us that does not aim for a truth status or current reality, instead for semblance and possibility."*¹²⁶

These images repair the wedge between the mythical and fictional universe and the reality of what is pictorial, for they send us towards the anthropological and memorial contextualization of the creational fiction of his obsessive fables.

The "magical" dimension of the shaping of these paintings' contents provides us the relevance of the humanizing and communitarian mission of the utopian art, which seems to fit both the sacred and the profane plans.

Conceived from a project which aimed to invoke in one's mind the repercussion of a two-year visit to Africa; these images translate the (almost) conclusive synthesis of the author's evolution.

The human and animal reality – in the condition of the matter – of these representations fits in the cosmos' mythical reality, just like the content of the ontological reality emphasizing the revelation of the original and almighty being.

Beyond the predefined horizon of the images' sequence, such as actors who question themselves, aiming to support their otherness/individuality (though unrecognizable), before us lies the condensed image of the species: the singularity of the universe and the universal case of the singular.

*Tracking our own territories will project us towards ourselves. A great knowledge regarding other nations, their costumes, beliefs and myths should make us return to our roots.*¹²⁷

Space and territory extend as priority concepts for the definition of the painter's style, beyond the indispensable factor they represent for any author. But, in a particular way it is crucial to establish the space as background and scenario for the represented creatures and other objects. With or without it, those representations may become suspended, void or on the contrary, expand in its full power and brutality.

*What happens when an artist changes territories – whether they are based on reference or affection -, does he carry his culture's features with him?*¹²⁸

The space, which aims for a definition, stands as a not entirely neutral surface; there one can find random and geometrical elements, like scratches, spots and

lines which encourage the most thorough presence of other elements contained in its outlines, readable and delimited. What are territories aside from being the extension of a place that isn't the place of expertise?

*His art is a crossing of a rite of passage, which for us seems both peculiar and familiar, his figures are everywhere and nowhere.*¹²⁹

Susana Lopes

*"...now I live surrounded by words
that I nurture
in my garden of sorrow*

*I follow them
and they follow me:
they are the demanding procession
following me*

*Everywhere
I hear its roaring thunder"*¹³⁰

The sum of the folders is to be found in the final archive, expanding the detailed condition of memory in continuum, which repeats the fold and cut action – le pli... Gilles Deleuze dixit (to be remembered).

The pieces recall the pleasure of manipulating the infinite time measurement that transcends humankind. Somehow, the painted strips that order units (which can be isolated and shredded) put forward a straightness which, in this case, are imposed on the mythical circularity of time.

The structures that give geometric shape to the patterns invented by Susana Lopes, also ensure a tridimensionality that never, ever, voids the surface roamed by the drawings permanently inscribed. The colourful patterns call upon our memories. The unfolding of fabrics in a store difficult to find in modern cities marks the subtle presence of a weaver or a sketcher. The technician (if one takes art as *tekné*) who knew how to direct the birth of a piece of work in a manual or automatic weaving loom. The objective is also to glorify the imagination necessary to draw patterns and prints, whose botanic or geometric origin seem endless. On the other hand, it should be stressed that the structures, with their concentrated and fluid paintings, reveal certainty and are prescriptive. If one observes the painted pieces (which can be separated, if so decided, through the effective cut of an invented "fabric piece") one can see centripetal and centrifugal movements ad simultaneum. There is a presence of a body made invisible, which was determinant in different phases of a process that should be remembered. The methodology that materialised the conceptual state of the installation is the result of the rigorous demand visible in the fluidity (almost psychogrammatical) of some painted stages. Time is present in the painted path, where hours or half-days must separate but where one privileges (even opts for) a "voidable" union....

The unifying condition (though the isolated life of each painted drawing is preserved) is translated into a kind of fallen procession, directed to the ground. On the ground, the hours of the days of the painted items continue to bend (and peter out). This guarantees continuation in division: it means that deciding to cut is to separate... so that uniting is definitely the result of a person's free will and decision.

¹²⁶ José Jiménez, *Imágenes del hombre – fundamentos para una estética antropológica*, Madrid, Tecnos, 1992, p.96 (Our translation)

¹²⁷ Christine Bühlung, "Lugares – territórios: uma viagem de descoberta no séc. XX", in *Catálogo Territórios – Sobral Centeno*, Rio de Janeiro, Galeria Lháia, 2002, n/p. (Our translation)

¹²⁸ Paulo Reis, "Vastos territórios de afetividade", in *Catálogo Territórios – Sobral Centeno*, Rio de Janeiro, Galeria Lháia, 2002, n/p. (Our translation)

¹²⁹ Christina Wendenburg, "Lugares e troca de lugares", in *Catálogo Sobral Centeno – lugares – territórios*, Porto, Galeria Cordeiros, 2002, p.11 (originally published in *Catálogo Sobral Centeno*, Berlin, Galerie Michael Schultz, 2001 (Our translation)

¹³⁰ Ana Hatherly, "Pensar é encher-se de tristeza", *O Pavão Negro*, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 2003, p. 27 (Our translation)

Somehow, these works of art conjure up the calm dimensions of writing and drawing revealed in the “Livros de Horas”. These were converted into perfection by patient and passionate hands - something we might not be able to grasp, nowadays. It is comforting to find pieces of the past that represent the materialisation of the artist's thoughts. She also displayed them at an old factory, influencing several generations in the city. It celebrates that kind of archaeology made up of memories, of which there are no traces, except for the words (shown here) in a painting party created to heighten the person's invisible legacy, one that can be recreated by the onlooker, by the public. The visual impact of the installation may take our breaths away, but it gives it right back: happy for being slowed down, imagined by the endless action which will allow for more units “in a latent state”.

CODA

*“Knowledge is the sea of humanity, the field of humanity, the general condition of human existence. (...) What makes illusion so strong, what impacts it with such a power of reality is precisely knowledge. (...)”*¹³¹

*“There is not much more to say, I walk leaving behind the last fragments of memory.”*¹³²

The tendency to own images is associated with collecting paintings: the visible quality of master pieces gathered by antique dealers, in auctions, in art galleries, not just from Portuguese or European artists but from far away places - all this commensurate with the memory of spaces of an almost imaginary world. Generally speaking, private collectors are very concerned with their privacy, and only those closer to them know what they own. This reservation, almost decorum, in safekeeping the images ensures the keenness of those looking at them, so that they may own them inside. The images of works of art and others should be looked inside, through what is visible outside.

Making public or private works of art visible overcomes the idea of cultural elitism which prevailed in the minds of those who assume art as something finished, restricted and, therefore, almost secretive. Display paintings, safe keep the images, worship them as the forebears (but also forthcoming), even if it is current works one whispers about. Time, as it is thought of nowadays, makes its triple assertion an accomplice.

*I cannot write when I am anxious or waiting for solutions, because in those moments I do everything possible to make time go faster. Writing is making time stand still, it is dividing it in small particles, giving each one an irreplaceable life.*¹³³

The collections aren't necessarily only in museums, one can also find them in other cultural places. The purposes are prominent for its constitution and they fulfil specific scopes. Thus, preserving a collection also means sharing the pieces it contains, resorting to a proper dissemination next to diverse audiences. When a Higher Education Institution collects contemporary painting, it is responsibly and consciously fulfilling its educational scope. It is being aware of the educational mission, acknowledging the artists' thinking and action.

In a specific perspective, one could think that this would be the case of a somewhat private collecting, since the mission of a Polytechnic or University

does not stand for displaying art works in a museological context.

They rather privilege that mission by establishing specific collections without a literal scientific or technological connection. One develops fond feelings towards them as they provide unique experiences. Such initiatives acquire a meaning that is more complete and wide when one associates the preservation of the memory of science and technology with the distinct enhancing action of the current artistic legacy. The circumstances around the active collection of significant paintings defines a relevant legacy of selected memories, thus preserving a heterogeneous proximity between socio-cultural and scientific agents and actors, promoting an individual education which ensures an expanded community concerning locations and chronologies. The art legacy aims to understand, interpret and reflect on the art works of the past and must be aware of the distinct preferences expressed by the current days.

Just like the academic research developed in Portugal – and in many other countries from Europe and abroad - concerning private collections established around distinct auspices and conceptions, one asks distinct questions, though similar. Regarding the specific museological context of art collections in public higher education institutions, one must rethink, define arguments, extrapolating to this type of collecting, integrated and under a public higher education institution.

The compilation of the works that integrate this collection is not limited to the unidirectionality of the general preferences, instead it aims for some variations, following the style of Gillo Dorfles, in which one finds a plurality concerning the criteria, styles and trends that promote the primacy of painting as an open and distinct art. This collection tries to be a reflexive exercise – in process, showing how and when this expression – painting – is validated in the contemporary times, creating current and future perspectives and artistic intersections.

The compilation of contemporary painting of the Polytechnic of Porto does not represent the preferences of a collector who lives in an office made of individual curiosities. Rather it should be perceived as a reproduction of the language diversity; aware of the responsibility towards the constitution and expansion of the insightful and smart taste, enhanced by the acquisition of habits that will be carried throughout life by students and others actors of this type of institution. Thus, the promotion of a visual culture is enhanced, just like the curiosity concerning other artistic and patrimonial expressions, all of them requiring a broad critical thinking and combining specific fields subject to a correlational praxis. The interaction with the art work brings them closer, familiar, democratic; it unravels stereotypes and opens doors towards the acceptance of cultural, ideological and social differences that dignify each individual for himself and in its intersubjective reason concerning others, their faces and names, one could say, following Levinas' thinking. According to Gilbert Durand, there are anthropological structures that support the artistic creations, which also applies to the expansion of the research thinking or the professional exercise; all of them acting in behalf of the promotion of the skills of the people involved in this matter, in an environment and concern regarding this context – increasing motivations, enhancing the personal dignity through a lucid and friendly complicity, in an aesthetic path – following Francesco Carreri – and in prospective terms. A collection must not stagnate in its full accomplishment, one must intervene and enhance it. One can only wait for the works to rest in a place that welcomes other people to contemplate them, in conditions able to promote a culture and its social responsibility.

131 Yukio Mishima, O templo dourado, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 1985, pp.183-184

132 Alberto Vigilias, Lisboa, Assírio & Alvim, 2004, p.15

133 Clarice Lispector, “Escrever, prolongar o tempo”, Não esquecer, Rio de Janeiro, Rocco, 1999, page 102 (Our translation)

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