

A INVENÇÃO DO

SIM

E DO

NÃO

Jorge Queiroz

Curated by Natxo Checa

I really don't think it makes any sense!, said Natxo while we crossed Largo do Calhariz, dodging tourists on the sidewalk. It was the top of the afternoon and we were heading towards a pastry shop called Orion, me always two steps behind him, no doubt in my mind that the more I'd kept up with him, the faster he'd walk. As if he had no idea that there were two crosswalks less than five meters away, Natxo threw himself into the middle of the road while mumbling something I could not hear. Infused with the purest spirit of uncritical pursuit, I followed his lead. Blocking the sun with my hand to my forehead, I looked to the left, just as my mother taught me, and as I take the second step into the road I bumped into his back. Standing at the zenith of Calçada do Combro, facing Bica de Duarte Belo, his arms dropped along the side of his body, an unlit cigarette in his right hand and a dazzling grimace on his face, Natxo: *The Tagus and this light... Amazing!*

Until we got to Orion, I could not hear anything else he said. Whether it was the two steps that separated us, or the absurd volume with which phrases in the most different languages were shouted around us, I was only able to understand him again when we were inside the pastry shop. *For me, it does not make sense. It's just annoying!* I apologized, arguing that I had not heard anything because of all the tourists and how offensive the safari shorts they all decided to wear seemed to me. *I was telling you that writing another text on Jorge's work repeating all that surrealist mambo jambo just doesn't make sense to me at all! There are millions of those already! It is a totally worn-out option!* I hesitated to agree, trying to recall if I had contributed to this pseudo-surrealist school of thought with a text I wrote for an exhibition a few years ago... While we waited for our coffees, and to test Natxo's theory, we decided to make a research of concepts/themes in a set of critical texts that we had compiled in a word document as part of our research:

surreal (and related): 26 occurrences;

symbolist (and related): 4 occurrences;

fantasy or fantastic: 7 occurrences;

ambiguous: 12 occurrences;

unconscious or subconscious: 5 occurrences;

dream: 18 occurrences;

free association: 4 occurrences;

overlap or juxtaposition: 5 occurrences;

narrative (and non-narrative): 6 occurrences;

metamorphosis and idiosyncratic: both with 8 occurrences;

theater: 2 occurrences;

current: 3 occurrences;

fragment, abyss, rain, shadow, horse and cave:
all with 1 occurrence.

It was now even harder to counter Natxo's argument. Maybe he was right. I asked for a muffin with raisins as I pondered what it would mean for an artist to realize that, albeit inadvertently, a group of people had devised a very narrow discursive web capable of limiting the symbolic reach of his work. I remembered that although my perspective had never ventured far away from this pro-surrealistic approach, it was also true that whenever I found Jorge's work I was a little more convinced that the question might play itself less on the level of mind and memory than on the plane of the body. Not long ago this idea became even clearer when, by chance, I saw a TED Talk with Antonio Damasio entitled "The quest to understand consciousness." In it, the celebrated scientist spoke of the brainstem – an inner zone at the base of the brain – and how it is in this area that all the exchanges that determine the interaction between 'physical body' and 'mental body' occur, which led the Luso-American to suggest that this is actually the place from which all consciousness stems. Put differently, for Damasio the self-consciousness – for which the capacity to generate and manage images is determinant – is a product of the trade between the stimuli of the body and the machinations of the brain, mediated by that specific and narrow piece of gray mass. The brainstem is so decisive in this that lesions in distinct parts of it can lead either to total loss of 'mental consciousness' or to total loss of 'bodily consciousness'. Awesome indeed!

This meant that, contrary to what I'd always believed, consciousness and imagination were not simply a phenomenon and a faculty governed by memory and aided by a set of eminently visual narratives. Their structure and functioning were not only susceptible of being stimulated by chemicals

capable of changing the frequency, quality or structure of synaptic circuits. Apparently, and according to Damasio's proposal, if the body and brain contribute equally to the creation of consciousness and imagination, it should be possible to deduce that they contribute, to the same extent and with the same force, to the altering of those same consciousness and imagination. If this is so, then one can perhaps rescue Jorge's work from the shadow of an artistic context so absurdly full of its own mythology as is Surrealism. Perhaps it can be removed from a universe so charged with an ideology in manifest erosion, so contaminated by a terminology that has surpassed the artistic domain to mean, outside of it, so many, so different, and so unclear things. Perhaps it is possible, finally, to lift the weight of the psychoanalytic yoke that falls on most of this type of expressions, with its revelatory and therapeutic purposes, and replace it with something much less ambitious, but no less relevant – something closer to the idea of game, of mild hallucination: a sort of fever.

As I took a sip of my abatanado I pondered on this hypothesis of having in fever, or in any other phenomenon of homeostasis disturbance, for that matter, the origin of abstraction as we understand it in the field of visual arts. If that was in fact possible, that would mean a double deed: Jorge's work could at last be removed from Surrealist determinism, and the increasingly poignant presence of abstraction in his painting was justified – and abstraction, as we know, was something the Surrealists always fled from as fast as they could. All those gestures and all those strokes of paint that, in the works presented in this exhibition, permeate glimpses of any recognizable referent ... all those pictorial masses that erase the real, that hide, transmute and dissolve it, would gain a plausible justification in this other order of things. They would stand like those pictures you see when you have a feverish delirium, those things you see but can not name, nor were you able to imagine otherwise: the abject forces that swallow vaguely suggested figures and things, transforming them into streams of sensations and intensity – something that throbs and changes, a breath of mud and lava covering everything at its passage...

I woke up from my own little delirium when I heard the word Lago. Having a snack with Natxo always means eating cakes with him and with whoever is with him on his cell phone. This time it was Jorge Queiroz himself and, from the expression in Natxo's face, they were both fiercely agreeing on finding an alternative to the temptation of asking someone to do an orthodox catalog text for this exhibition. *Absolutely! Of course I know who Eduardo Lago is: he directed Instituto Cervantes in New York, he won a series of literary awards ... (Long pause) Enrique Juncosa, the curator? What's the name of the magazine? Normal? ... No, no, I think it is really a great solution! But the best was to invite him to come to Lisbon not only to see your show, but also to stay in residence and create a proper text to this exhibition. No, of course, I mean a literary piece! I'm totally fed-up with catalog texts! Yes, we would launch it at the end of the exhibition! Huhumm ... Right. So shall you call him, or shall I?*

Bruno Marchand

ENTRANCE

Untitled, 2016
Gouache, pencil and watercolor on paper
Artist's collection

FIRST FLOOR

4	5	8	9	12	13	15	16
3	6	7	11	10	14	18	17
1	2						

Room 1

1. *I Polaroided and I Still Have the Polaroid*, 2013
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Courtesy 3+1 Arte Contemporânea

2. Untitled, 2008
Oil stick on paper
Artist's collection

Room 2

3. Untitled, 2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection

4. *A Invenção do Sim*, 2010
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection

5. *O Caso de Coragem*, 2015
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Gallery Nathalie Obadia

6. *O Caso do Silêncio*, 2015
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Gallery Nathalie Obadia

Room 3

7. Untitled, 2010
Gouache, charcoal
and graphite on paper
Courtesy 3+1 Arte Contemporânea

8. Untitled, 2010
Gouache and graphite on paper
Artist's collection

9. *Different Trains*, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

10. *Different Trains #2*, 2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

11. *Statues and Birds #2*, 2012
Pencil, gouache, vinyl ink and
3D postcard on paper
Artist's collection

Room 4

12. Untitled, 2008
Ink, pencil and acrylic on paper
Artist's collection

13. Untitled, 2017
Oil and acrylic on paper
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

14. *Different Trains #7*, 2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

Room 5

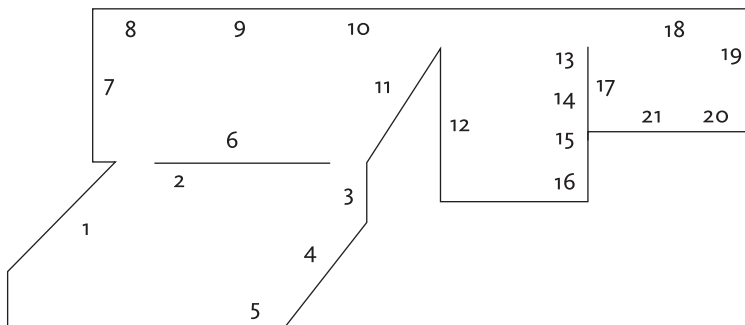
15. Untitled, 2010
Watercolor, vinyl gouache
and pencil on paper
Artist's collection

16. Untitled, 2017
Pastel, oil, pencil
and acrylic on paper
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

17. Untitled, 2014
Pastel, vinyl gouache
and pencil on paper
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia

18. Untitled, 2010
Pastel, watercolor
and colored pencil on paper
Artist's collection

SECOND FLOOR



First room

1. Untitled, 2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection
2. Untitled, 2008
Colored pencil on paper
Courtesy 3+1 Arte Contemporânea
3. Untitled, 2012
Gouache, colored pencil
and manière noire etching
Artist's collection
4. Untitled, 2011
Pencil, pastel and
vinyl ink on paper
Courtesy Galeria Nathalie Obadia
5. Untitled, 2008
Pencil on paper
Artist's collection

Room 2

6. *Le Cas Inverse*, 2015
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia
7. *Sem Título*, 2010
Gouache, charcoal
and graphite on paper
Artist's collection
8. *Different Trains #1*, 2016
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia
9. *Different Trains*, 2016
Acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia
10. Untitled, 2008
Japanese ink, oil stick, gouache
and colored pencil on paper
Artist's collection
11. *Figura 1*, 2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection

Room 3

12. Untitled, 2017
Pastel, oil, pencil and
acrylic on canvas
Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia
13. Untitled, 2008
Gouache, oil stick, colored pencil and
ink on paper
Artist's collection
14. Untitled, 2008
Acrylic, gouache and pencil on paper
Artist's collection
15. Untitled, 2008
Gouache, acrylic, watercolor
and charcoal on paper
Artist's collection
16. *Void*, 2012
Pencil, gouache, ink and
watercolor on paper
Artist's collection

Room 4

17. *Múltiplo*, 2014
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection
18. *Alphabet*, 2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection
19. Untitled, 2018
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection
20. Untitled, 1998
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Artist's collection
21. *Drawing on the Wall*, 2018
Colored pencil on wall
Artist's collection

ZDB would like to thank

3+1 arte contemporânea

Galerie Nathalie Obadia

Assembly and exhibition architecture

Ananias Costa

Antonin Blanchard

Bruno Marchand

Carlos Gaspar

Cyril Reichenbach

Hugo Bost

Joana Leão

João Nora

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Jorge Queiroz was born in Lisbon, in 1966, where he currently lives and works. In 1991, he began his studies at Ar.Co - Centro de Arte e Comunicação Visual, Lisboa, where he completed the Full Study Plan in Painting as well as the Advanced Course. He completed a Master's degree at the School of Visual Arts in New York (1997-1999), where he resided for the next six years, later settling in Berlin, in 2004. He was resident artist at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2004), Recollets, Paris (2007) and Civitella Ranieri, Italy (2011). He was a finalist for the Daniel & Florence Guerlain Contemporary Art Foundation drawing award in 2009, and in 2015 he won the AICA Prize for Visual Arts for the exhibition *O Caso*, held at Pavilhão Branco of Museu da Cidade, Lisboa. Among its many international exhibitions, highlights for the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), the 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004), the 4th Berlin Contemporary Art Biennial, Berlin (2006) and the Biennale of Rennes (2016). He is currently represented by Sikkema Jenkins, New York, Nathalie Obadia, Paris and Brussels, and 3 + 1, Lisbon.