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M.F.

Galeria Zé dos Bois
Exhibition curated by Nuno Faria

07.10.2017 — 06.01.2018 | Wednesday to Saturday | 6 pm–10 pm
Rua da Barroca, 59, Lisboa | www.zedosbois.org

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CHAMA XAMÂNICA
OTELO M.F.

Irreducibly idiosyncratic, placed at the margins of the dominant canons of the contemporary art language, permanently autobiographical although not confessional, Otelo's M.F. work is, nonetheless, immediately recognizable through his poetics of radicalism: in the way it looks for the roots of things, of each thing - human, vegetable, animal, geological -, as well as in his thorough anthropological nature; that is, in the way each step and each movement directs itself towards others with the strength of a manifest or an oracle. Profoundly implicated politically by means of a strong ecological conscience, the work doesn't have a recognizable shape or a locatable era. Transporting energies, conducting forces, this practice is impregnated by an animist breath, although negotiates permanently with disappearance and with the regenerating power of destruction.

Perhaps the experience of death is always present in the creative process of Otelo M.F.; perhaps it may have even been decisive to cultivate an unused perceptive capacity or extra-sensorial ability to observe itself. However, in his work, drawing is the primary means by which his creative process unfolds. He who draws has the enviable power of self-observation or auto-perception. He who draws becomes a seismograph, registering the small interior changes, internal fluxes, heartbeat, emotions and the most abstract thoughts, still with no name or shape. The drawing, in constant flux, is the basis, the performative, operative language of all Otelo M. F.'s work.

[...] Contemporary is not the most fitting category for Otelo M.F.'s oeuvre; I would rather call it "futuristic" – that which foresees, which guides, which unravels the pre-announcing signals. Being self-taught, Otelo knew how to transport to his authorial work a set of childish drives, pre-cognitive knowledge, primal states of conscience, that somehow, weren't restricted, cleansed of all formal impurities, artificially slip between energy and form, vision and tact. In other words, it didn't occur a cut between the origin of knowledge and its refinement, its inevitable acculturation. Therefore, nothing in the artistic work of Otelo, recognizable as such, is strictly artistic – nor formally, nor intellectually, nor culturally. It moves unceasingly and irreducibly to other domains and (psycho) geographies, such as magic, science, archaeology, the ancient world, the lost civilizations, the occult, the non-academic knowledge, that is acquired through experience and past on hand in hand, by repetition and oral tradition, biology, the intimate relationship between the inner organs and the organic movements of the earth, a micro-physiology and a macro-physiology.

[...] The body is omnipresent on the *modus operandi* of the artist, as if the work constituted the extension and, in some cases, confused itself with the own body of the world or the world as a body. The ritualistic dimension of the artistic practice, therapeutic in itself, is simultaneously one of the most subtle and intense dimensions of Otelo M.F.'s work – in this sense, the deace as analogy is an omnipresent sign of this practice, so to speak, shamanic. A man performs a magical ritual because he believes in magic and not to see what will happen.

Being the outcome of this ritualistic practice, this objects can be divided into three groups: the ones that are collected and do not suffer any intervention (like some rocks that incorporate naturally outlined drawings, as the record of the geological passing of time, the track or the fossilized presence of some living being, or still some fruits or animals whose particular form reinforces the symbolism that is given to them in one or more cultures); the ones that the

artist collects, randomly in his drifts, mostly in natural environments, but also in the urban setting, doing so because he is somehow certain that a particular shape will later find its counterpart, sometimes on the same day, sometimes on the same path; and, last of all, surely the most idiosyncratic, the most peculiar: objects or sculptures resulting from the most unusual associations between all sorts of things – skeletons, animal bodies or furs, fossils, shapes that result from moulds, branches, trunks, corrupted fruits and other vegetal matters, rocks, tar or petrol, etc.

In either case, we are dealing with things that incorporate a transitive power, an energy that transports them through time and place. In its oracular dimension, all of them communicate something either by default or by absence: to choose, to find and to recollect – all originate from a state of permanent attention and openness to chance. Beings, *all* beings, have their own negative, bring about their own emptiness, are both matter and antimatter, body and spirit. Everything is articulable and can be constituted as language, be it things, ideas, energies, forms or even that which is formless, bodies and skeletons – all sorts of matter are bound by unfathomable relations of attraction or repulsion, either spiritual, energetic or even physical, which inception we know nothing about. Here lies the deeply animistic nature of Othello MF's work, an ability to activate existence and to render organic that which is apparently extinct or deprived of breath.

We are faced with a rare and sometimes unexplainable body of work. As in a place we did not know existed but seems familiar, intimate even, upon our first visit. A place whose beauty we do not understand. A body of work that speaks of what we cannot see, through objects, things, beings that are commuting – lingering between life and death, presence and disappearance, body and aura, between worlds or dimensions (mineral, animal, vegetable). More than a practice of montage, Otelo's work is one of metamorphism, in the geological sense of the term (i.e., the transformation of a thing, a state or a form into another). Otelo MF belongs to a very particular set of artists, to

what we could call a genealogy of exceptions – idiosyncratic and eccentric authorial universes, escaping both formal and canonical thought; authorial universes that may even be left out of the artistic by some of the more strict, disciplinary criteria. These are artworks that grant us access to the aesthetic, anthropological and cosmic dimension of artistic thought. The object (in its material, physical, formal dimension) is not the object (understood as the purpose) of art.

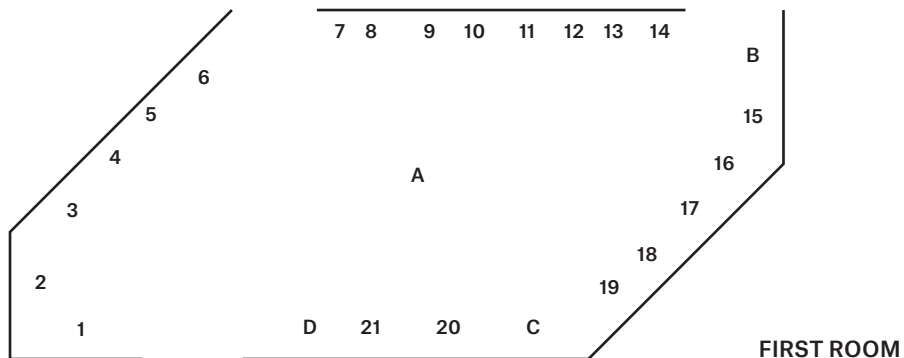
Exhibition Checklist

ENTRANCE

From the series *State of Indeterminacy*, 2013

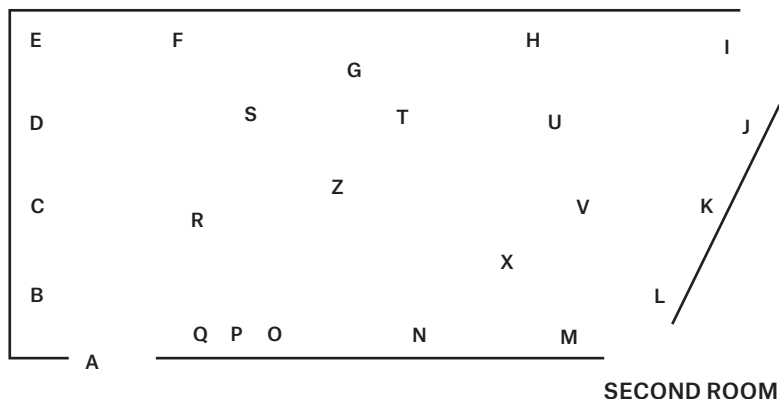
STAIRS FIRST TO SECOND FLOOR

From the series *State of Indeterminacy*, 2015



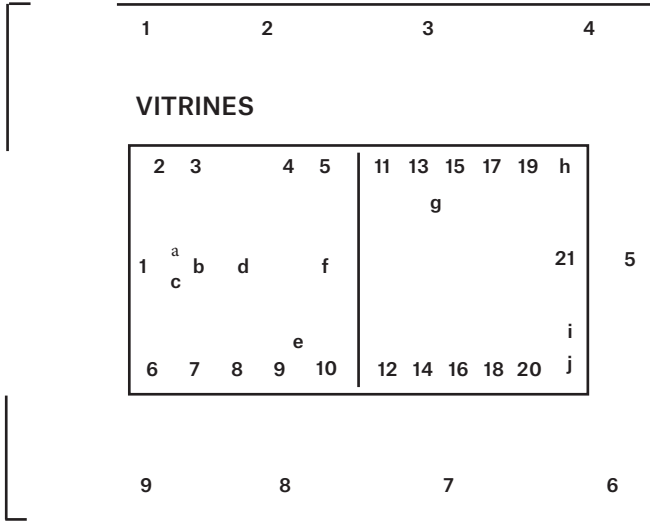
A. Jangada Make-do, 2014

1. From the series *Drawings for Petra*, 2015
2. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2003-2017
3. *Não intitulado (a partir de Raio X)*, 2001
4. 31 de Dezembro 1993, 15:05:06 déjà vu to *Trajatórias e Circuitos Fechados*, 2002
5. 31 de Dezembro 1993, 15:05:07 déjà vu to *Trajatórias e Circuitos Fechados*, 2002
6. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2003-2017
7. From the series *Recognition of Birthright to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014
8. From the series *Drawings for Petra*, 2015
9. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2015
10. From the series *Drawings for Petra*, 2015
11. From the series *Linguagem de Luz*, 2014
12. From the series *Linguagem de Luz*, 2014
13. From the series *I Dissapear Into the Darkness*, 2017
14. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2015 B. *Suture or Remnants of a Burnt Bridge*, 2014
15. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015-2016
16. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2003-2017
17. From the series *Enough is Enough*, 2016
18. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2003-2017
19. From the series *Chama Xamânica*, 2014-2015 C. *Mal de Mér*, 2015 (resíduo de performance)
20. From the series *Chama Xamânica*, 2014-2015
21. From the series *Chama Xamânica*, 2014-2015
- D. From the series *Aqueloutro (Pump unt Frack)*, 2014



- A. From the series *Residências de e para o Imaginário* to *A Linha Curva*, 2010
- B. *Effigies of Waste meets Aqueloutro (I)*, 2014
- C. From the series *Residências de e para o Imaginário* to *A Linha Curva*, 2010
- D. *À la mode de Méret or an Homage to Maurizio's Disgraceful Sense of Humour*, 2014
- E. *Not Manual Merely Manipulable to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014
- F. *Service + Blood and Home of a Poet to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014
- G. *Earth Plug*, 2014
- H. From the series *Effigies of Waste*, 2012
- I. *Code of Silence*, 2014
- J. *Ponto Final*, 2017
- K. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2014
- L. *Ephemera Forma I to Interface Makonde*, 2012
- M. *Residências de e para o Imaginário*, 2010
- N. *Hand in Hand with Nomadic*, 2014
- O. From the series *Effigies of Waste (Loop II)*, 2014
- P. *In the Spirit of Idle No More to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2013
- Q. From the series *Effigies of Waste meets Aqueloutro (II)*, 2014
- R. *Last Call II*, 2016
- S. *Effigies of Waste meets Interface Makonde I*, 2012
- T. *The Combustion of Xenon's Helmet*, 2015
- U. *Mesa p/ 1: Borracha Blast to Interface Makonde*, 2012
- V. *Resíduo - Artefacto: O que arde cura to Interface Makonde*, 2013
- X. *Rico Ricochete*, 2012
- Z. *Compacted Double Ring & Manifestation Ring to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014

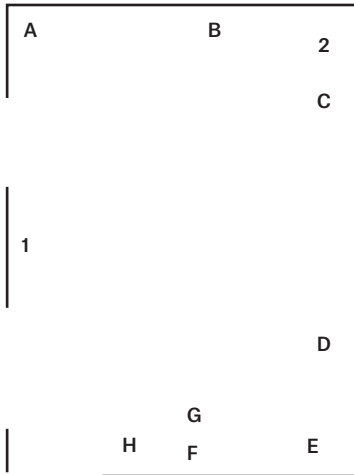
THIRD ROOM



1. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
2. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
3. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
4. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2015
5. *Rigor Fructis*, 2012
6. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
7. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
8. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
9. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016

VITRINES

1. From the series *Drawings for Petra*, 2015
2. From the series *Porcupine Spike & Drawing Occultation*, 2015
3. From the series *Porcupine Spike & Drawing Occultation*, 2015
4. From the series *Recognition of Birthright to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014
5. From the series *The Damage is Done*, 2015/2016
6. From the series *Chama Xamânica*, 2015
7. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2016
8. From the series *Enough is Enough*, 2016
- 9-10-E. *Ronald MacDonald's Indigestion*, 2010-2017
11. From the series *I Dissapear Into the Darkness*, 2017
12. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2016
13. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2014
14. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2014
15. *Ronald MacDonald's Indigestion*, 2010-2017
16. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2014
17. From the series *I Dissapear Into the Darkness*, 2017
18. From the series *I Dissapear Into the Darkness*, 2017
19. From the series *Portable Drawing*, 2013
20. From the series *Drawing Occultation*, 2016
21. From the series *Drawings for Petra*, 2015
- A-B-C. From the series *Telluric Bypass*, 2014-2015
- D. *Ignis Fatuus*, 2017
- F. *Intruso #1*, 2002
- G. *Effigies of Waste meets Interface Makonde II*, 2012
- H. *Intruso #2*, 2010
- I. *Effigies of Waste meets Interface Makonde II*, 2012
- J. *Effigies of Waste meets Interface Makonde II*, 2012



FOURTH ROOM

1. From the series *Aqueloutro*, 2015

A. *In God We Rust to Instruments of Quasi-Null Consequence*, 2014

B. *State of Indeterminacy overlapping Effigies of Waste (Assemblage for Hypothetical Procession)*, 2014

2. *Blood & Diamonds*, 2012

C. *DNA Strands of Fictional Black Goo*, 2017

D. *O.P.P.E.*, 1994-2017

E. *Having Had Great Masters*, 2015

F. *Máscara Lidangadanga (dia)*, 2012

G. *Whitening out a Whiplash*, 2015

H. *Fist Full of Love*, 2016

Nuno Faria (Lisbon, 1971) is a curator. He is currently artistic director of CIAJG - Centro Internacional das Artes José de Guimarães. Between 1997-2003 and 2003-2009 he worked at the Institute of Contemporary Art and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, respectively. He lived and worked in the Algarve between 2007 and 2012, where, among other projects, he founded the Mobilehome - School of Nomad, Experimental and Independent Art project in Loulé, in 2009. He is a professor at ESAD - Escola de Artes e Design das Caldas da Rainha.

Otelo M.F., (Almancil, 1974) works between the Algarve and London, a city where, since 2008, he has lived for long periods of the year. His recent exhibitions include *Chama Xamânica*, Culturgest Porto (2017); *The lynx knows no boundaries*, Fondation Ricard, Paris (2015); *Interface Makonde e Oracular Spectacular, desenho e animismo*, Centro Internacional das Artes José de Guimarães, Guimarães (2013 and 2015, respectively); *Instruments of quasi-null consequence*, Clages Gallery, Cologne (2014); *Algarve Visionário, Excêntrico e Utópico*, Museu Municipal de Faro, Faro (2010).

