

PRESS RELEASE

JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO + PEDRO PAIVA
Trilemma : Over a Ghostly Conception

13.09 - 28.10.2012

"... attentively considering those cases, I perceive so clearly that there exist no certain marks by which the state of waking can ever be distinguished from sleep, that I feel greatly astonished; and in amazement I almost persuade myself that I am now dreaming."

René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1647,
John Veitch translation, 1901



3 Suns, 2009. 16 mm film, color, silent, 0'50''

Meeting with the press:
Wednesday, September 12th at 4 p.m.

Opening:
Wednesday, September 12th at 6 p.m.

The Fribourg Art Centre will be hosting ***Trilemma: Over a Ghostly Conception***, a solo exhibition by João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva. The works shown by the duo, who represented their country at the 2009 Venice Biennale, consist in a series of short, silent films on 16 and 35 mm ranging from the poetic to the experimental, as well as objects, installations and *camerae obscurae*. Besides their plastic creations, they have also produced a written body of work, published in compilations alongside scientific, literary and philosophical texts by other authors.

Drawing on one of Newton's optical experiments on multiple remanent images, in this exhibition the artists challenge the status of the image and of representation within the perspective of a "phantasmal" world order. At the core of this "Trilemma" lie the fabrication of the image and of its shadows as well as notions such as visibility, projection, appearance and disappearance.

The nature of 16 mm film affords it a particular status. In an age characterized by an overabundance of smooth images, these noisy, rough, material projections command a different sort of attention on the part of the viewer, and seem to invite one to reconsider ones heritage and history. In spite of the fact that the medium itself reveals the nature of the tricks and procedures behind the appearing and disappearing of the patterns making it up, the films' magical, illusory content induces a kind of enchantment.



CENTRE D'ART DE FRIBOURG
KUNSTHALLE FREIBURG

The hovering objects are ostensibly held up by cables, the contraptions are simple and visible. In this, Gusmão and Paiva's work recalls that of other tinkering artists such as Fischli and Weiss. Their choice of subject matter – stuffed animals, humble objects and unassuming characters – seems to mark a certain aversion towards the technical, as appears also from their resort to the *camera obscura* and film stock. Referring to younger generations' fondness of *low tech* aesthetics, Art historian Thomas Golsenne suggests that it is "a way of combining a spirit of visual resistance with resilience towards a society whose notion of progress sometimes fails to go beyond the consumption of state-of-the-art technology".

In Gusmão and Paiva's work, philosophical and metaphysical considerations mingle with scientific experiments, fuelling intellectual considerations as well as a poetic approach. Natural and social sciences alike invariably lead to a lack of resolution, recalling fundamental doubts and letting in the irrational and the metaphysical. Juxtaposition becomes an aesthetic strategy. Their written compilations, which interweave texts by the likes of Pessoa, Montaigne, Daumal or Plato, echo the design of their exhibitions, where series of short films are projected simultaneously within the same space or according to the visitor's progress through the exhibit. Far from proposing a resolution or advancing a hypothesis, the perspective suggested by the series of images is poetic, unstable and open, a breath of fresh air in a society obsessed with control, regulation and foresight.

João Maria Gusmão (*1979) and Pedro Paiva (*1977) live in Lisbon.

Recent solo exhibitions (selection)

2012 *Those animals that, at a distance, resemble flies...*, Kunsthau Glarus

2011 *Em gwef tem gwef dr rr rr*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf ; *Alien Theory*, Le Plateau, Paris ; *There's nothing more to tell because this is small, as is every fecundation*, Museo Marino Marini, Florence

2010 *The foot removes the sock which takes off the shoe which leaves the footprint...*, Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf ; *On the movement of the fried egg and other astronomical bodies*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

2009 *Experiments and observations on different kinds of air*, official Portuguese representation at the 53rd Venice Biennale



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EVENTS

GUIDED TOURS

Thursday, September 27 at 6 p.m.

Thursday, October 18 at 6 p.m.

Free guided tours, available on appointment for groups and schools

GUIDED TOURS FOR TEACHERS

Tuesday, September 18 at 5 p.m.

On appointment: publics@fri-art.ch

PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

FOR CHILDREN AGES 7 TO 12

Wednesday, October 3rd 2-4 p.m.

Following a guided tour, children participate in a playful and creative workshop by Laurence Cotting. Within the context of this exhibition, each child makes a *camera obscura*, the predecessor to the still camera. Contribution: 8 CHF (includes a snack). Booking at publics@fri-art.ch or 026 323 23 51.

PRESENTATION OF THE MONOGRAPH

DEDICATED TO DELPHINE REIST

PUBLISHED IN JUNE

Thursday, September 20 at 7:30 p.m.

The artist and authors will be present.

The publication was co-edited by the Triple V gallery, Paris, and Atelier Berlin éditions / Canton of Geneva with the support of Fri Art and the Lange + Pult gallery, Zürich, the Centre national des arts plastiques, Paris, as well as the Istituto Svizzero di Roma.

The presentation will be followed by a meal. Dinner: 10 CHF, free admission.

INFORMATION

OPENING TIMES

From Wednesday to Friday 12-6 pm

Saturday and Sunday 2-5 pm

Late opening and admission free on

Thursdays 6-8 pm

Guided tours by appointment

ADMISSION FEES

Full fee: 6 CHF

Reduced fee: 3 CHF, those under 18,

students, seniors and unemployed persons

Admission free for Friends of the Art Centre,

children under 12, Passeport Musées

Suisses, Carte Culture, artists.

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Press kits and visuals on request.