
PORTUGUESE ARTISTS PEDRO PAIVA + JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO TO DEVELOP A PROJECT FOR MUSAC'S LABORATORIO 987



Artists: **Pedro Paiva (Lisbon, 1977) + João Maria Gusmão (Lisbon, 1979)**
Curator: **Tania Pardo**
Venue: **Laboratorio 987, MUSAC**
Dates: **19 May to July 2007**

Portuguese artists **Pedro Paiva (Lisbon, 1977) + João Maria Gusmão (Lisbon, 1979)** are to hold a solo exhibition at Laboratorio 987 showing an installation of films that approach their recurring conceptual references: Alfred Jarry's pataphysics, Bergson's intuitive method, a reversal of Nietzsche's nihilism and Alain Badiou's ontological and political adventure. Paiva and Gusmão's work is based on an articulation of various elements that embody a number of specific aesthetic and philosophical elements.

In their own words, their work revolves around "real narratives", a phrase philosopher Alain Badiou once applied to a sequence of historical moments that initiate processes of empirical discovery. João Maria Gusmão + Pedro Paiva's work presents some of these events relevant to the history of human kind as circumstantial occurrences or anecdotes. In doing so, their approach is essentially focused on capturing a number of riddles that in turn lead the viewer to question a set of phenomena (magnetism, spiritism or fakirism) to be found, for example, in the literature of Victor Hugo or Stanislaw Lem.

The intelligent humour that these images distil reflects the absurdity in each situation: from the man attempting to build a tower of eggs (Columbus' Column) to the human cannonball, the magnet man, the parade of stones, etc. The artists' work is seeped in literary references; "an artistic and intellectual" enterprise, according to their own definition.

The images portrayed in their photographs and film (silent) lead to puzzling situations; parodies of instants that in principle should be irrelevant. The artists' style invites us to reflect upon the aesthetic asseverations that underlie their body of work. Their films and photographs present characters involved in absurd and comical actions, as in the piece under the title *Magnetic Effluvium* based on Victor Hugo's description in *The Man who Laughs* of a climatic disturbance – a black snowstorm over the English Channel. In Miguel Amado's words: "Absurdity and humour in the work of João Maria Gusmão + Pedro Paiva are more an effect of meaning than a style strategy". Indeed, their themes are linked to the negative categories of paradoxes stemming from insufficiency; that is, what is negative in a work of art's proposition. The instrument they apply is the riddle taken as a genre – an observation of the nature of puzzles.

Pedro Paiva + João Maria Gusmao, biographies

Pedro Paiva + João Maria Gusmao met in the late 1990s as fellow Art students in Lisbon. Their fascination for philosophical insight has been a driving force ever since, not only behind their art, but also behind their editorial project for a small philosophical review, *Eflúvio Magnético*, that began in 2005.

They started working together on artistic production in 2001, with *In Memory* and *DeParamnésia*, both shown at the Zé dos Bois gallery in Lisbon. Though they both pursue independent artistic careers, they have taken part jointly in both solo and group exhibitions. One of their most notable projects was *Magnetic Effluvium*, with a first part in 2004 and a second in 2006. In 2005 they held a major solo exhibition *Intrusão: the red square*, at the Museu do Chiado, curated by Pedro Lapa. More recently, they were present at the 27th Sao Paulo Biennale (Brazil, 2006) and at ARCO 07 (Madrid) at the Black Box Space.

They have been awarded the EDP prize at the Belem Cultural Centre (Lisbon, 2004). Their work is included in institutional collections at the Museu do Chiado, the Serralbes Foundation, the BES Collection and the PLMJ Foundation, amongst others.

Laboratorio 987, MUSAC's project space

Laboratorio 987, MUSAC's specialised project space, is an annexed venue that develops its own independent programme. The first artist to show in this space was **Silvia Prada** (Ponferrada, 1969), with her ad hoc project *Hot or Not*, between April and May 2005. Next came a video project by **Fikret Atay** (Batman, Turkey, 1976) under the title *Sonidos Lejanos / Distant Sounds*. In September and October 2005 **Abigail Lazkoz** (Bilbao, 1972) developed her project *Esconde la mano (Hide your hand)*. **Ryan McGinley** (New Jersey, USA, 1978), held a photo exhibition *Between us / Entre nosotros*, in November and December 2005 while **Wilfredo Prieto** (Santi Spíritus, Cuba, 1977) projected his installation *Mucho ruido y pocas nueces II (Much ado about Nothing II)* between December 2005 and March 2006. **Monika Sosnoswka** (Ryki, Poland, 1972) took over in March 2006 with her installation *Untitled*. **Philipp Fröhlich** (Schweinfurt, Germany, 1975) authored a painting exhibition *Exvoto. Where is Nikki Black?* from September to November 2006. **Pauline Fondévila** (Le Havre, France, 1972) showed her installation *November Song* between November 2006 and January 2007. **Clare E. Rojas** (Ohio, USA, 1976) exhibited *Sympathetic Magic* from January to March 2007. Later, **Marc Vives** (Barcelona, 1978) + **David Bestué** (Barcelona, 1980) carried out their *Imágenes del Fin del Mundo (Images from the End of the World)* from March to May 2007.

Tania Pardo curates and coordinates exhibitions at Laboratorio 987.
For further information see www.musac.org.es

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