

VASCO ARAÚJO

RITORNARE

Press release

VASCO ARAÚJO
RITORNARE
Solo exhibition
Galeria Francisco Fino
01.10.2024 – 16.11.2024

RITORNARE, a solo exhibition by **Vasco Araújo**, will be on view from October 1st to November 16th at **Galeria Francisco Fino** in Lisbon. The opening takes place on **October 1st**, starting at **10 PM**.

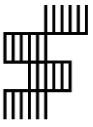
As suggested by its title, *RITORNARE*, the exhibition reflects on questions of revisiting and reinventing identity, calling on the visual and conceptual imagery of the idea of the diva and the artist's own work. In an exhibition comprising sculpture, video, installation and photography, Vasco Araújo refers to the past as a treadmill for thinking about the present, combined with transformation and freedom.

Below is a text by Vasco Araújo, in the form of an open letter to the public.

Dear All,

How does one begin a letter on the topic of Ritornare, or rather, going back, perhaps by starting at the beginning, which in this case, isn't the verb, but the reason that led me to go back, to Ritornare.

I think that when we return to something we've already done, it is always a revisitation of the past, which contributes to an awareness, or even a clarification, of what we did, who we were, or who we are. In this sense, Ritornare is a return to who I truly was and still am, a return to my identity and its construction through voice, a return to the body, to the body of the past, present, and future. It is also about pretending, which helps imitate figures from the past that can provide greater awareness of our existence. Imitation is also a form of mourning through identification: we always imitate what we would like to be able to explain, or what helps us desire and expand our understanding of human beings and their complexities.



Ritornare is to reveal the lining of things, it is a work on revisitation motivated by the need to investigate the Self, in the sense of exploring unconscious roots, not individual, but whose existence is shaped in post-memory. These works, focused on the world of opera singers, on the myths of the Star System, on intimate life, artistic careers, non-binary identities, on what I am, what we are, what we were, what we would have liked to be, and perhaps already are, question the possibility of reinventing ourselves from what we had already built or pointed to. They also question the possibility of reconstructing our identity without restrictions, leading us to a place of greater freedom and learning. And in the end, the question always arises:

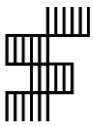
Who am I?

I could tell many things, narrate various stories about my career and journey, but that would perhaps be very boring. What I can say is that, at the end of this journey, there were moments when I looked in the mirror and felt that I was looking at someone else, someone who spontaneously represented or I represented in theaters... now, at times, I still cannot recognize myself. Who am I? Who? It seems to me perhaps that the artifice, the staging, have taken over my, our world, and we no longer live in another reality, or that this has become the reality, or even that reality is a great staging where we act, it is like singing. See, listen. Look, this is me singing, interpreting, and living in artifice within the reality that becomes my life, and we are all like this, there is nothing more... and, in the end, the question remains: who are we?

Since going back is not in vain, much less innocent, I hope that this new/old path will be revealing of what I would like to continue doing and practicing. And that this is a contribution to a process of transformation, of change, for a new exit that is increasingly free.

Ritornare to fly farther.

Lisbon, June 8, 2024



Artworks

Interview, 2024

Video: 16/9

Duration: 20'40"

Text: based on "Cast a Diva" by Lyndsy Spence

Performed by: Vasco Araújo

Variable dimensions

Ed. 5 + 2 AP

"Interview" is a video work that is more than just a mere portrait; it is an emotional and introspective reflection that places us between fiction and reality. Based on "Cast a Diva" by Lyndsy Spence, the text of this piece is an exploration of identity, personal power, and the relentless pursuit of true essence. Through an intimate conversation between a journalist and the diva, we are confronted with deep questions about authenticity, transformation, and acceptance. Throughout the interview, we are taken into a universe of self-awareness and reflection, where every word is laden with meaning and every silence resonates with the magnitude of the human experience. From internal struggles to personal victories, "Interview" offers a vision of the complexity of life and the human condition.

My Way, 2024

Installation

5 Chariots, 107 costumes inside plastic covers, 213 Cardboard tags with inkjet

Text: all operatic performances of Maria Callas

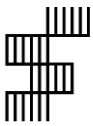
Dimensions: 185.5 x 850 x 65 cm

"My Way" is an installation composed of five chariots containing 107 costumes inside plastic covers and accompanied by 213 labels. On the labels are printed all the operatic performances and concerts that Maria Callas performed during her career. The arrangement of the chariots with the costumes and the labels creates an eight-and-a-half-meter timeline that constructs a visual narrative. The work is about the passage of time, the celebration of life, and the journey of artists.

Entre Actos (*Vissi d'Arte, Vissi d'Amore*), 2024

Video sculpture

Painted wood, 2 LCD monitors; 1 pair of speakers, media player, and 2 videos



Music: excerpt from the aria "Vissi d'Arte, Vissi d'Amore" from the opera Tosca by G. Puccini, performed by Maria Callas

Videos duration: 3'16", loop

Dimensions: 165,9 x 100 x 65 cm

"Entre Actos (Vissi d'Arte, Vissi d'Amore)" is a sculpture with video. The sculpture, based on a model of an opera house, contains within it two videos in slideshow format. One displays images of Maria Callas on stage performing La Traviata, Tosca, and Norma. The other video, also in slideshow format, features images of the artist impersonating Maria Callas on stage, interpreting the same characters from the previous video. The images in the videos are accompanied by an excerpt from the aria "Vissi d'Arte, Vissi d'Amore" from Giacomo Puccini's opera "Tosca," sung by Maria Callas. The music fills the space around the sculpture, enveloping the viewer in an atmosphere of intense emotion and reflection.

The work evokes a range of emotions, from melancholy to hope, inviting the viewer to reflect on universal themes of life, love, and art. "Entre Actos (Vissi d'Arte, Vissi d'Amore)" transcends the traditional boundaries of sculpture and thus attempts to reflect on alterity, the dichotomy between reality and fiction, and the complexity of the human condition, inviting us to reflect on our own experiences and emotions.

La Superba, 2024

Installation

16 color digital photographs glued on 3mm PVC (39 x 49 cm), 21 color digital photographs glued on 3mm PVC (21.5x29.5cm), 2 color digital photographs glued on 3mm PVC (39 x 24.5cm)

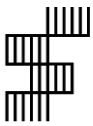
Text: by Vasco Araújo, based on "Diva - Great Sopranos and Mezzos discuss their art" by Helena Matheopoulos

Variable dimensions

The installation "La Superba" is a deep dive into the life and career journey of an opera singer. The text is a multifaceted narrative that reveals not only moments of triumph and success but also the challenges, sacrifices, and personal reflections that have shaped this artist.

From the awakening of her voice's awareness to moments of ecstasy and fusion with music, the story of this singer is told in the first person. Through her words, we are transported to the backstage of grand operas, but also to intimate moments of self-questioning and personal overcoming. Through the highs and lows of her career, we see her passion for music and her commitment to constantly improving her talent.

"La Superba" offers a glimpse into the life and career of this artist, which serves as a metaphor for reflecting on our own lives and existence.



S'HE #1 – 4, 2024

Photograph

Digital color photographs plasticized on dibond

Text: Vasco Araújo

Dimensions: 80 x 100 cm

"S'He" is a series of photographs created from self-portraits taken on Polaroids in 2000. This series reflects on the nature of identity and its construction over time and lived experiences. It is through the text, written on each photograph, that identity is described as an artificial system, shaped by choices and circumstances, built around passions and adversities that eventually fade away. This idea of forgetting as part of the identity formation process is crucial and suggests that the new self is built upon the foundations of the past but is not limited by it.

The works also address the relationship between voice and body, highlighting how the voice can elicit physical responses, from mimetic gestures to an awareness of the presence of the audience. This connection between voice and body invites us to explore the complex processes of formation and expression of human identity, as well as its connections with time, memory, and the external world.

Diva's Props Archive, 2024

Photograph

12 digital color photographs printed on 310gr William Turner paper (40x30cm each), 12 acrylic boxes

Dimensions: 162 x 91,5 cm

"Diva's Props Archive" is a set of 12 photographs taken inside archive boxes, where various objects belonging to the glamour and iconography of opera divas are stored. Each photograph captures a timeless moment, highlighting iconic accessories and props associated with the world of divas. This work invites the viewer to immerse themselves in the dazzling and fascinating world of divas, celebrating the beauty, power, and cultural impact of these iconic figures through what is not commonly accessible.

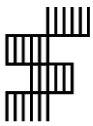
A Testimony (Archive Sound Coil #1), 2024

Sound Sculpture

Reel-to-reel tape recorder, media player, headphones

Voices: Filomena Andrade e Sousa, Pedro Pla

Text: based on the libretto of the opera "La Traviata" by G. Verdi



Duration: 13'02''

Dimensions: 38,5 x 28 x 12,5 cm

"A Testimony (Archive sound coil #1)" is a sound sculpture where the female voice becomes a vessel, carrying the weight of a tumultuous existence, expressed through a series of poignant and evocative moments. The recurring refrain, "Camélia, Camélia, Camélia...", echoes, encapsulating a deep longing and a heartbreaking loss. The protagonist's cry is a visceral expression of an unrealized connection, an echoing plea for someone who seems forever out of reach. The repetition of the name "Duval" punctuates the narrative, underlining a persistent search for answers and meaning in the face of an elusive past. The work reflects on the relentless passage of time, acknowledging the ephemeral nature of memory and the difficulty of maintaining one's own identity amidst life's tumultuous journey. As the sound narrative unfolds, it invites viewers to immerse themselves in a visceral exploration of the human condition.

A Testimony (Archive Sound Coil #2), 2024

Sound Sculpture

Reel-to-reel tape recorder, media player, headphones

Voice: Lucy Shaw, Joan Sutherland

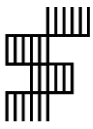
Text: Vasco Araújo

Duration: 1'42''

Dimensions: 26 x 22 x 7cm

"A Testimony (Archive sound coil #2)" is a sound sculpture that delves into the core of identity and representation. The female voice questions the nature of identity and authenticity in the contemporary world, where the lines between reality and representation often blur.

Through sound and narrative, we are led to reflect on the complexity of existence and the constant search for our true essence.

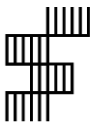


Biography

Vasco Araújo was born in 1975 in Lisbon, the city where he continues to live and work. He completed his first degree in Sculpture in 1999 at FBAUL (Lisbon University School of Fine Art), and attended the Advanced Course in Visual Arts at Maumaus in Lisbon, from 1999 to 2000. Since then, he has participated in various solo and group exhibitions both in Portugal and abroad, also taking part in residency programmes, such as The University of Arts, Philadelphia (2007); Récollets, Paris (2005); and the Core Program (2003/04), Houston. In 2003, he was awarded the EDP Prize for New Artists.

His most recent solo shows include: *E agora para onde vou?*, Fundación DIDAC, Santiago de Compostela (2024); *Eros and Thanatos*, Appleton Square, Lisbon (2024); *Memoria afectiva*, Bodega Piloto, Bogotá (2023); *Pathosforme!*, Rialto6, Lisbon (2022); *A Moment Apart*, MAAT, Lisbon (2019); *Vasco Araújo*, M-Museum, Leuven, Belgium, (2018); *Decolonial desires*, Autograph ABP, London, (2016); *Potestad*, MALBA – Museu de Arte Latino-Americana de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires (2015); *Under the Influence of Psyche*, The Power Plant, Toronto (2014); *Debret*, Pinacoteca do Estado de S. Paulo, S. Paulo (2013); *Avec les voix de l'autre*, Musée d'art de Joliette, Joliette (2011); *Mais que a vida*, Fundação C. Gulbenkian/ CAM, Lisboa and MARCO, Vigo (2010); *Eco*, Jeu de Paume, Paris (2008); *Vasco Araújo: Per-Versions*, the Boston Center for the Arts, Boston (2008); *About being Different*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2007); *Pathos*, Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca (2006); *Dilemma*, S.M.A.K., Ghent (2005); *L'inceste*, Museu do Azulejo, Lisbon (2005); *The Girl of the Golden West*, The Suburban, Chicago (2005); *Dilema*, Museu de Serralves, Oporto (2004); *Sabine/Brunilde*, SNBA, Lisbon (2003).

His most recent group shows include: *Tino Grandío. Correspondencias. Colección de Arte Abanca*, Centro Obra Social ABANCA de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela (2023); *O Castelo Surrealista de Mário Cesariny*, MAAT, Lisbon (2023); *Bienal del Bioceno – Cambiar el Verde por Azul* 15.^a Bienal de Cuenca, Cuenca, Ecuador (2021); *Triângulo atlântico* Bienal Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2018); *All that Falls*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014); *Investigations of a Dog*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (2009); *Everything has a name, or the potential to be named*, Gasworks, Londres (2009); *Em Vivo Contacto*, 28.^a Bienal de S. Paulo, São Paulo (2008); *Artes Mundi; Wales International Visual Art Exhibition and Prize*, National Museum Cardiff, Cardiff (2008); *Kara Walker and Vasco Araújo: Reconstruction*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, (2007); *Drei Farben – Blau*, XIII Rohkunstbau, Grobleuthen (2006); *Experience of Art*, La Biennale di Venezia. 51st International Exhibition of Art, Venice; *Dialectics of Hope*, 1st Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow, (both in 2005); *Solo (For Two Voices)*, CCS, Bard College, New York (2002); *The World*



Maybe Fantastic Sydney Biennial, Sydney (2002); *Trans Sexual Express*, Barcelona, a Classic for the Third Millennium, Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona (2001).

His work has been published in various books and catalogues and is represented in several public and private collections, such as at the Centre Pompidou, Musée d'Art Moderne (France); Museu Coleção Berardo, Arte Moderna e Contemporânea, (Portugal); Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Portugal); Fundación Centro Ordóñez-Falcón de Fotografía – COFF (Spain); Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Centro de Arte (Spain); Fundação de Serralves (Portugal); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (USA); Pinacoteca do estado S. Paulo (Brazil).

Image

Detail of *Diva's Props Archive*, 2024 © Vasco Araújo
Courtesy of Vasco Araújo and Galeria Francisco Fino

Additional information

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Opening hours

Tue. – Fri.: 12 PM – 7 PM
Sat.: 2 PM – 7 PM