

Galeria **Francisco Fino**

Pedro Paiva

*Em Frente da Porta
do Lado de Fora*

19.03.2024 – 20.04.2024



POR FAVOR
AO ENTRAR OU SAIR
FECHER A PORTA

PLEASE
CLOSE THE DOOR
WHEN ENTERING
OR LEAVING

URAVIA

Wacth presentation video

Roofless, amid ruins...

João Barrento

«There goes a man, in his body, as he suddenly falls...». This line from *The Book of Falls*, by poet Casimiro de Brito, could be the gist of how events unfold across Wolfgang Borchert's play *The Man Outside*, as well as across so many of his narratives. The oeuvre of this short-lived author is often seen as the epitome of *Trümmerliteratur* (lit. «rubble literature») of Germany's «Zero Hour» in the years following the Second World War. In it, the protagonist's situation – condition even – is always that which can be found in the title of another novel by a Portuguese author (Augusto Abelaira, who in turn gleans it from Raul Brandão's *Memórias*): *Sem Tecto, entre Ruínas* [Roofless, amid Ruins]. In Borchert's case, the ruins are in plain sight and the roof, aside from being absent, also refers to a frightening memory, whose presence is unable to nurture any possibility of a future. While the author's narrative work, namely in a book like *The Dandelion*, published a few months after his death in a hospital in Basel, still contains vestigial hope and faith in life, the play, written in his final days (and a paradigm for «rubble literature»), confronts us with a dead-end world (like the one we are awakening to today?). The hour in which this author of «Nothingness and Despoilment» writes is characterized by

an identifiable historical void: the «zero hour» of 20th century German and European history, which was, at the time, already perceived as the century of all calamities. Our time, in which so many are left «outside the door» (of life opportunities), is not (yet) that of another «zero hour», but it might be that of a handless clock: a time suspended, a time of expectation for uncertainties and horrors at a universal scale. With his radical scepticism towards the history and myths he experienced, Borchert sought to give a voice to a disillusioned generation, unable to find answers to essential questions, a generation of «Despoilment» (or «Despoiled of Yes» — his advice, including to his naïve alter ego, the figure of «The Other», is always: «Say NO!»); our time, however, seems to have produced a (self-deluded) generation capable of many «Yesses» and a few «Nos», albeit void of content, and made only of illusions and virtual ghosts.

In the preface to Borchert's play, another great author of the period, Heinrich Böll, points out the «committed», but *ex negativo* nature of that work, due the clear «attrition between the individual and History». In fact, Wolfgang Borchert's texts never seek to read History factually, it is the human all too human that takes the place of History. A real, all too real and close abstraction in its indifference to life, a bowl in which Pilate washes his hands again. The counterpoint to History is a living, and radically critical, *memory*. Something which today, in our «era of emptiness» labouring under the illusion of plenitude, seems not to exist, insofar as only «real time» counts — as if other times, including the bygone and the yet-to-come, were not «real», despite our awareness that their power is often greater than the sterile «evidences» of the present.

In the play, Beckmann, the scarecrow-man who «returns to Germany» after the war, is the affirmative and paradoxical centre that absorbs all

other figures (because everything takes place in the deepest depths of his oneiric consciousness), from the most pedestrian to the most transcendent. These include the «Street Sweeper», who represents *Death* (who had once also been the «General» and is now the inseparable and unavoidable companion of those who see no sense in an outer and inner world of rubble) seeking an escape in the waters of the Elbe from whose embrace it is reborn to pursue a post-mortem dialogue of the deaf; or the «Old Man», who embodies a useless, mute *God*, that everyone since Nietzsche knew «is dead». Beckmann, who lives immersed in a dreamworld, but seems to be the only man who is awake amid a conformist, conventional, apparently amnesiac and once again «happy» world (despite the catastrophes of History), takes on the role of great debunker of all illusions, «returning» the *responsibility* for every death to the Colonel (at the time, the responsible were still identifiable; today they are «faceless», unimpeachable, controlling every face at the global scale, in a time of barely controllable rhizomatic biopolitics) and reminding everyone of the weight of their *guilt*; Beckman, a manifold figure who chose the path of dream (to escape life), acts, in fact, with the greatest lucidity on the plane of life (dismembered families, broken relationships, politics and even art, which the «Cabaret Director» thinks «has nothing to do with truth»...). Beckmann is the disillusioned par excellence, against his «Other», who represents a baseless conformism and optimism and, in this case, is incapable of imposing itself to the Self (in fact, the very opposite is true). Beckmann is thus the only individual with a consciousness of his own amid a destroyed world, albeit resigned to, and guided by, conventions that are but rubble. His «Other», to which psychoanalysis attributes such an influence, but whom he does not obey, is the insistent voice of that conventionality of the empty commonplace, a falsetto voice with answers to everything but no solutions: its answer is always identical, consisting of purported «truths» contradicted by the facts – a contemporary example that now comes



to mind would be Jean-Pierre Sarrazac's play *The End of Possibilities: A Satanic Tale*, where Aragon's verses echo « We brought the dead to the table /We built sand castles... », and where the protagonist is a certain J. B., the so-called «champion of <over-death>», who resembles Borchert's Beckmann, who at a given moment plays with his surname by removing its initial and thus becoming what he had been since his return: an «eckmann», i.e., a man (*Mann*) curled up in a corner (*Eck*).

As a testimony of a particular historical moment, that of post-war Germany, and also of a tabula rasa literature, a literature of the naked word, in which language, debased by Nazism, is purified, Wolfgang Borchert's play has its own models and parallels in a more or less recent past and in his own time. From early on, the author claims an Expressionist heritage, which cultivates a type of drama in the field of theatre which is also that of *The Man Outside*: the so-called «station drama», which evokes the moments of Christ's path to the Calvary and whose structure is made of a series of episodes that problematize an individual trajectory which, like Borchert's play, alternates between radical scepticism and a pathos of occasional hope. In this «station drama», found in German Expressionists or already in Strindberg, the focus is not only individual fate, but rather a problematic of the human, in a tension that also exudes from Borchert's play between a Self that is not «One», but «one of them» (a «representative»), and the broader plane of a «universal drama» (at stake here is always the human condition itself, seen from the perspective of a Self with no illusions). Indeed, from a more universal perspective, *The Man Outside* could be read as a version of the medieval morality play (auto) whose Portuguese version is titled *Todo o Mundo e Ninguém* [The Whole World and No One], a «Whole World» of the Second World War that transcends its historical boundaries and contains in itself the essence of every disaster in History. And we could also ask whether the play, and its protagonist, can be seen

as a sort of 20th century *Woyzeck*, himself lost in a society of «normal» people that do not understand him, between military discipline and fair clowns, between the obsession with the Other of himself and the inability of relating to others. Like Büchner's *Woyzeck*, Beckmann is also an anti-hero riddled with insoluble paradoxes. He who has only doubts spends his time asking questions for which he knows there are no answers. Laughter, once a frequent weapon in Borchert's short stories, is now impossible, in this grand theatre of the absurd (of the world), in which even God has deserted his mission.

And this is projected on the very language of the play. Wolfgang Borchert's style mirrors a mental state of obsession or loss: repetitions upon repetitions, a constant alternating between conviction («yes or no») and the escape into dream or a fall into pathetic expressionistic expression, the loud, albeit empty scream. A despair without illusions, or the illusions of despair? We ask: why so much insistence on repeating the same ideas or actions, the same unstable «truths»? Probably because the world, much like today, has trouble listening, it is almost always deaf – especially to the most blatant events and situations, such as war, injustice or inequality. Confronted with the calamities of this world, we become speechless, mute. The world is particularly deaf to the grim music of large-scale disasters, and it is necessary to repeat, to insist, so that the «greyish and honest faces» might wake up, as illustrated in Borchert's short story «Along the Long, Long Road». On the road, which stands for the course of life itself, and along which «Left-tenant Fischer» races, stumbling to the sound of the hurdy-gurdy man's refrain («Rejoice! Revell!») while chasing the tram that would take him somewhere unknown, illusions, misunderstandings and inequalities are patent. Especially between the women, the eternal Penelopes of expectation – childless mothers, widows, desperate girls –, and the men, the destroyers of the world (and still, in this horizonless world, the



time has not yet come to say, like Roland Barthes in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, that «the future belongs to the feminine»).

Now, too, none of us know where we are headed, chasing the yellow tram of alleged hope, and, adding offense to injury, having ourselves to pay for the ticket.

We could close with some poets of the «Zero Hour», who knew, like Wolfgang Borchert, that the returned, or the exiled were (are?) the tenants of Death. Some, like Jewish exile Nelly Sachs, in the cycle *In the Houses of Death*, still hoped for some luminous window to open up: «When you raise up your walls again [...] /Do not garland the departed with tears [...] / Do not weep the minutes together with the dust, / which covers the light». Others, closer to Borchert (and to us), harbour no illusions, such as Peter Huchel, one among the poets the most sensitive to the course of History, who writes in the final strophes of the poem «Psalm»: «The desert becomes history, /written by termites/with their fangs/in the sand.// And no one will unravel the mysteries/Of a species/ Decidedly committed/ To destroying itself».

Among us, although much later, some also came to share this vision of the world as a «garden laid waste to». Such is the case of Maria Gabriela Llansol, with her apodictic, disillusioned statement: «Nothing has yet changed the world». Which she complements with another that we could use and leave hanging in today's barely breathable air: «Conceive a human world that might thrive here, in these rootless lands». However, as if echoing Beckmann, or Primo Levi in *If This Is a Man*, the author herself concludes: «I couldn't tell what a human being is».

Pedro Paiva

Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora, 2024

Installation

Ed. 3 + 1 AP

Photography and color director: Leonardo Simões

Sound (editing and mixing): Hugo Leitão

Post-production: Borja Caro Montes

Cast: Francisco Martins, Cláudio da Silva, João Grosso, José Manuel

Mendes, Alexandra Sargento, Carolina Dominguez, Rita Durão

Extras: Leonardo Moura Mateus, Mariana Calado, Bruno

Acknowledgements: Márcio Loureiro

Variable dimensions / Variable durations





Detail of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, 2024



Detail of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, 2024



Detail of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, 2024



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva
Dormente em pé, 2024
Clay
35 x 34 x 19 cm

Pedro Paiva

Seis moscas entediadas caídas no chão,
2024

Clay

27 x 58.5 x 47.5 cm



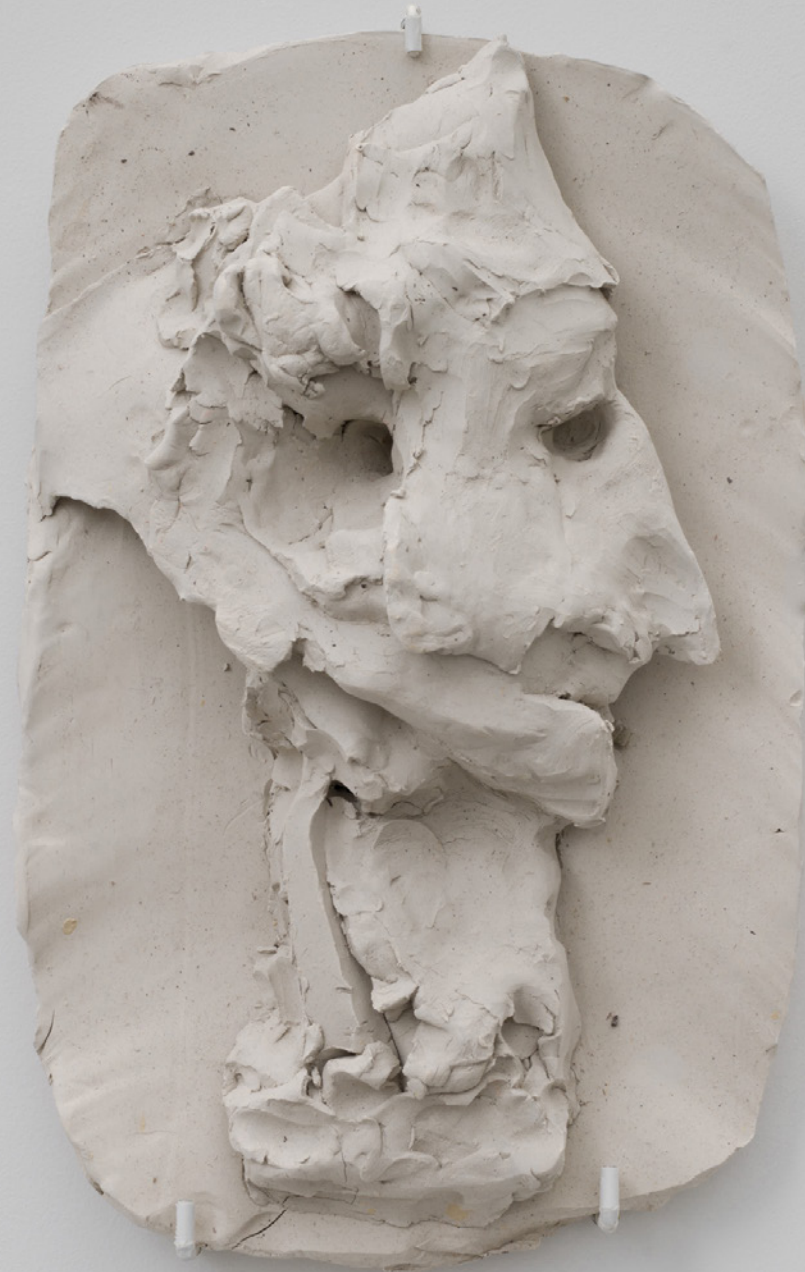
Pedro Paiva
Personagem a falar com o Outro, 2024
Clay
37 x 36 x 18 cm





Pedro Paiva
Relevo rente ao vento, 2024
Clay
29 x 39 x 6 cm

Pedro Paiva
Maxilar de palhaço rico, 2024
Clay
50 x 32 x 8 cm



Pedro Paiva
Descalçar a bota, 2024
Clay
18.5 x 27.5 x 17.5 cm





Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

*Instante que Deus inventado faz animar
figuras, 2024*

Clay

27 x 34 x 18 cm

Pedro Paiva
Encantador de serpentes (tarantismo),
2024
Clay
32.5 x 25 x 23 cm





Pedro Paiva
Décor (última cena), 2024
Clay
32 x 53 x 37 cm



Pedro Paiva
Pecado original (restos), 2024
Clay
14 x 41 x 26.5 cm

Pedro Paiva
Alambique (entre 1500 e 100 anos a.C.),
2024
Clay
38 x 25 x 38 cm





Pedro Paiva
Câmara de ressonância, 2024
Clay
25 x 43.5 x 43.5 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

*Flat Screen (still do último olhar de uma
mosca morta por um mata-moscas), 2024*

Clay

42 x 29 x 5 cm

Pedro Paiva

*End of the world (still de "O dia do júízo final",
1977), 2024*

Clay

28 x 28 x 17 cm





Pedro Paiva
Chapéu (versão I), 2024
Clay
18.5 x 37 x 28.5 cm



Pedro Paiva
Chapéu amarrotado, 2024
Clay
22 x 32.5 x 25 cm



Pedro Paiva
Máscara de gás, 2024
Clay
17 x 29.5 x 26.5 cm

Pedro Paiva
Telha e cotovelo de S. João, 2024
Clay
54 x 50 x 28 cm





Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Pedro Paiva
Fantoche (Bode), 2024
Clay
51 x 20 x 19 cm





Pedro Paiva
Apocalypse now, 2024
Clay
21 x 38 x 30 cm

Pedro Paiva
Elefante, 2024
Clay
25 x 19 x 19 cm



Pedro Paiva

Eremita com erecção ou leopardo deitado,
2024

Clay

28 x 20 x 10 cm





Pedro Paiva

Um nó aparentemente complicado, 2024

Clay

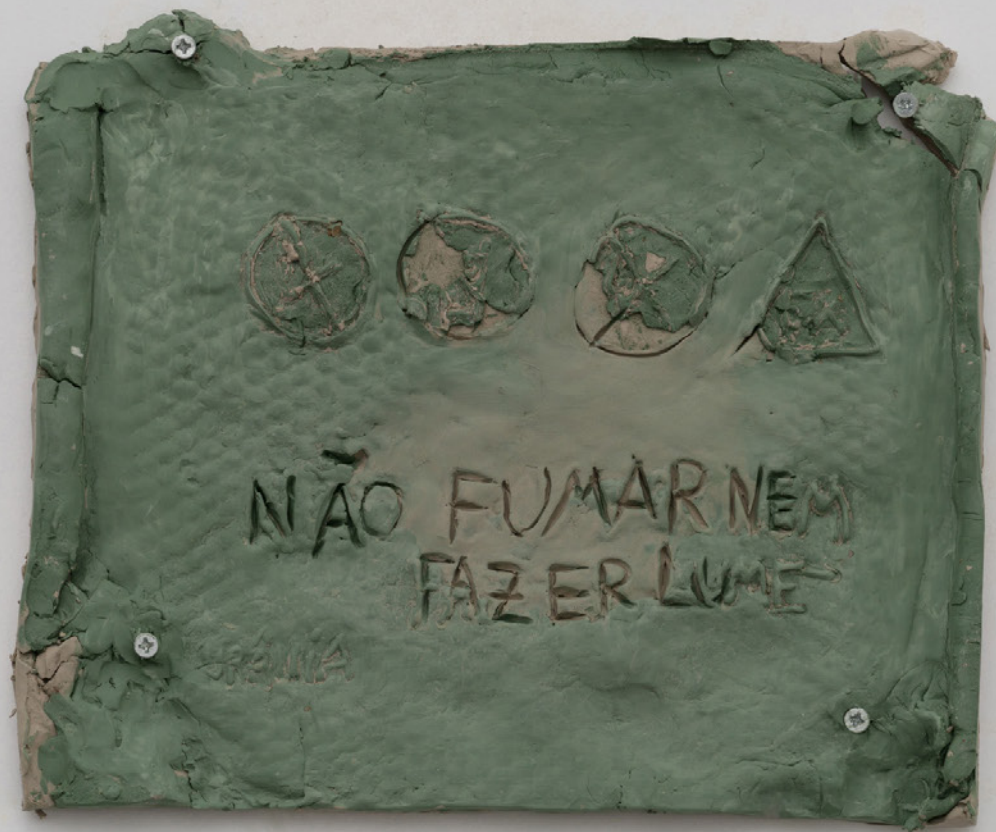
19 x 20 x 9 cm



Pedro Paiva
Calcanhar, 2024
Clay
32 x 38 x 24 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

Não fumar ou fazer lume, 2024

Clay

50 x 40 x 6 cm

Pedro Paiva
Telhas, 2024
Clay
29 x 51 x 50 cm

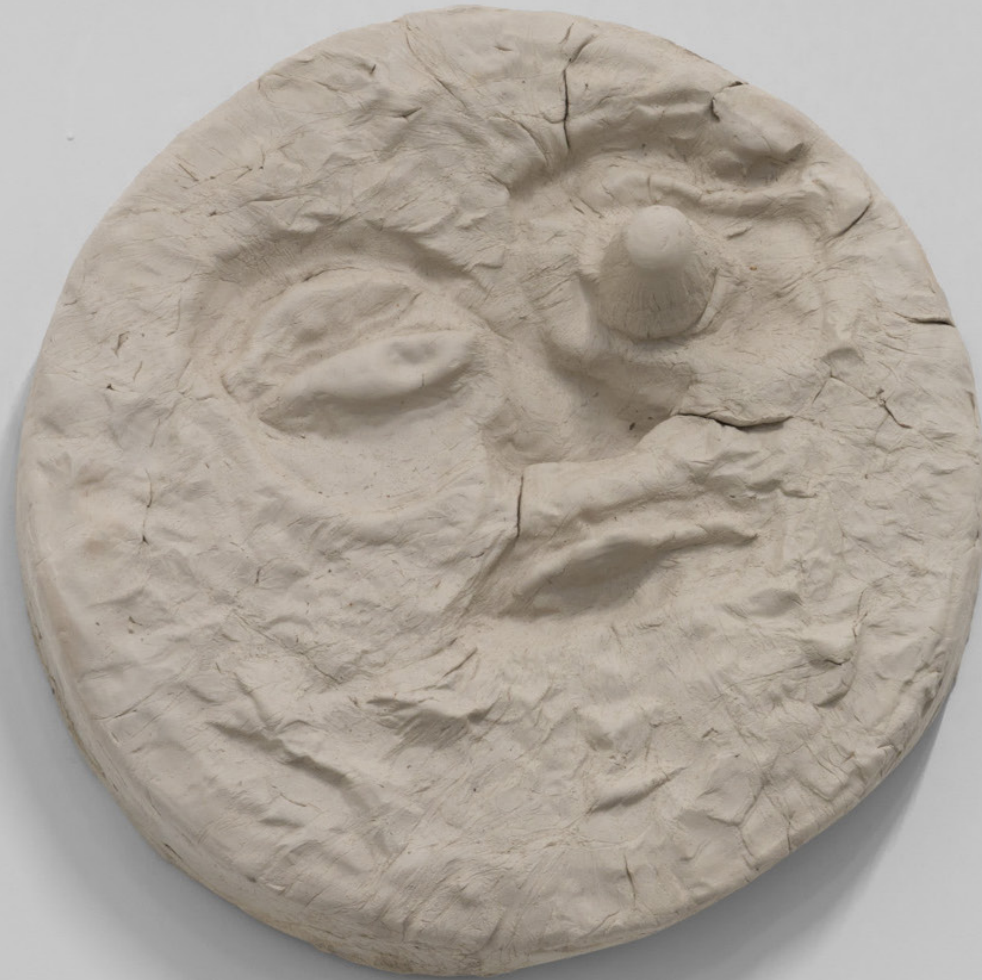


Pedro Paiva
Cefeira ao luar, 2024
Clay
Variable dimensions





Detail of *Ceifeira ao luar*, 2024



Detail of *Cefeira ao luar*, 2024



Pedro Paiva
Escombros (maquete), 2024
Clay
23 x 31 x 29 cm



Pedro Paiva

Mecanismo para medir envergadura de aves, 2024

Clay

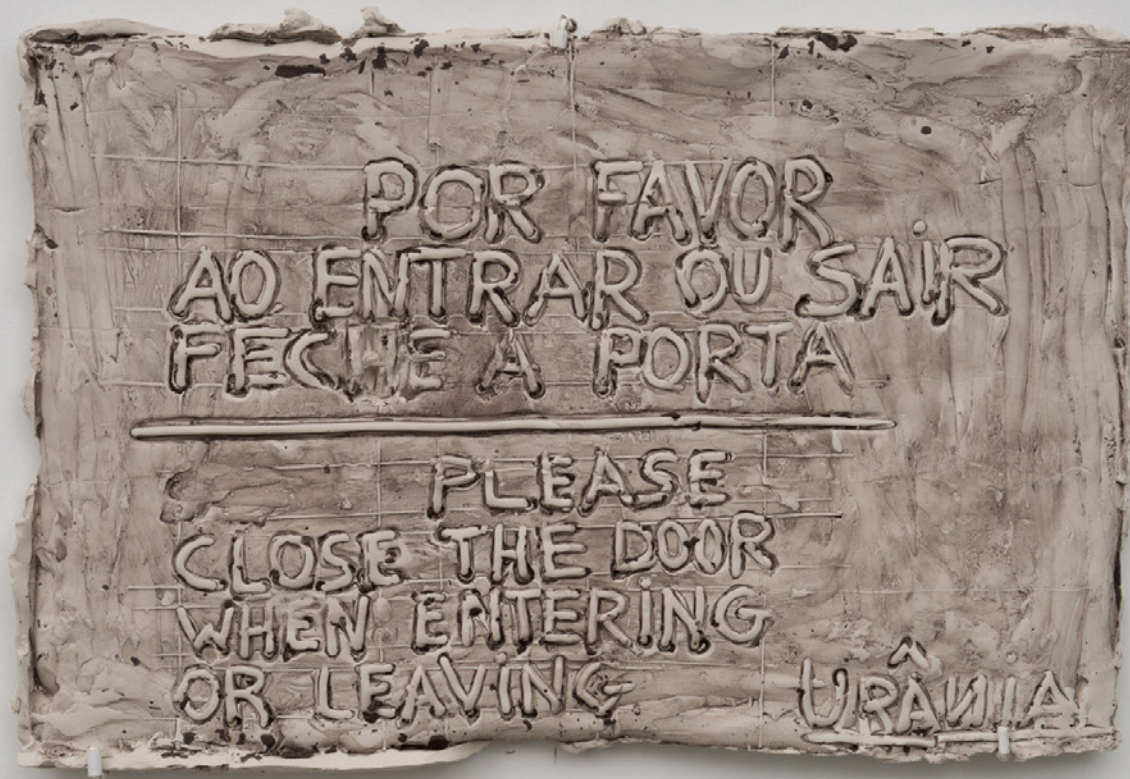
28 x 60 x 23 cm

Pedro Paiva
Equipamento para medir cauda de gatos recém-nascidos, 2024
Clay
42 x 44 x 19 cm





Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

"Por favor ao entrar ou sair feche a porta", 2024

Clay

50 x 74 x 2 cm



Pedro Paiva

Dêcor (com barroto a segurar parede), 2024

Clay

28 x 45 x 41 cm



Pedro Paiva
Julgado pela forma do nariz, 2024
Clay
23 x 20 x 21 cm



Pedro Paiva
Meia, 2024
Clay
11 x 31 x 19 cm



Pedro Paiva

Dois vermes a acasalar, 2024

Clay

10 x 15 x 20 cm



Pedro Paiva
Prego, 2024
Clay
14 x 20 x 18 cm

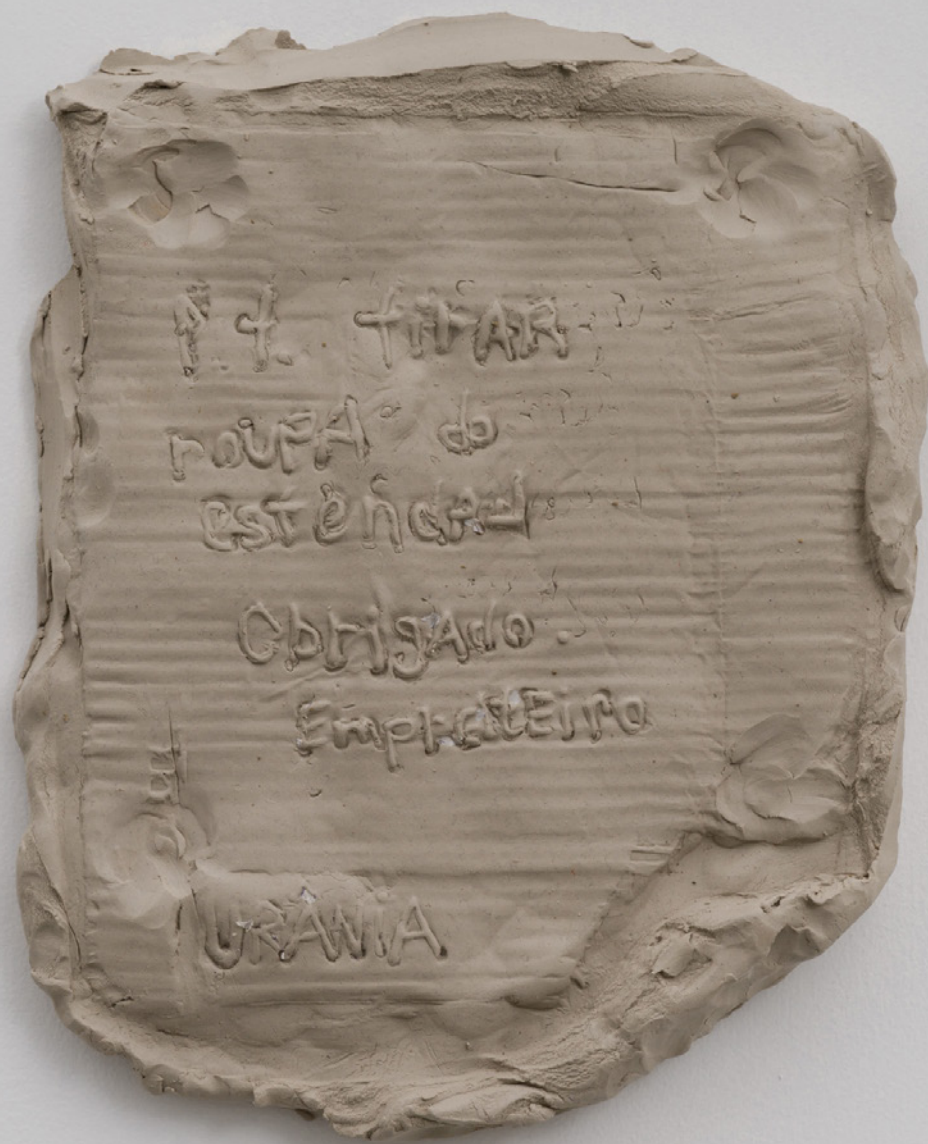


Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva
Décor (com Igreja), 2024
Clay
45 x 50 x 38 cm

Pedro Paiva
p.f. tirar roupa do estendal, 2024
Clay
37 x 38 x 25 cm





Pedro Paiva

6 cavalos ou 40 homens, 2024

Clay

50 x 45 x 50 cm



Pedro Paiva
Pontão, 2024
Clay
27 x 49 x 37 cm

Pedro Paiva
Sapata, 2024
Clay
50 x 28 x 31 cm



Pedro Paiva
Magnolia, 2024
Clay
38 x 22 x 22 cm





Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva
Ferro de engomar, 2024
Clay
33 x 52 x 25 cm



Pedro Paiva

Meia ponte, meia dúzia de maçãs e meia lua, 2024

Clay

30 x 38.5 x 39 cm

Pedro Paiva
Pata de elefante com osso, 2024
Clay
61 x 36 x 31.5 cm





Pedro Paiva
O cego, 2024
Clay
36 x 20 x 23 cm



Pedro Paiva

Escultura às avessas, 2024

Clay

18 x 31 x 20 cm

Pedro Paiva
Encontro entre duas esculturas, 2024
Clay
15 x 16 x 19 cm





Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Pedro Paiva
Porta entreaberta, 2024
Clay
35 x 35 x 50 cm





Pedro Paiva
Lata de atum, 2024
Clay
14 x 24 x 18 cm



Pedro Paiva
Patim, alma, boleto, 2024
Clay
18 x 5 x 12 cm

Pedro Paiva

*Troféu do terceiro concurso de esculturas
públicas, 2024*

Clay

45 x 18 x 18 cm





Pedro Paiva
Bule, 2024
Clay
21 x 21 x 17 cm



Pedro Paiva
Maçaneta, 2024
Clay
21 x 15 x 8 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

Gola ou garganta, 2024

Clay

22 x 19 x 19 cm



Pedro Paiva
Cogumelo, 2024
Clay
11 x 12 x 7 cm



Pedro Paiva

Um par de meias, 2024

Clay

20 x 15 x 12 cm



Pedro Paiva
Duplo cogumelo, 2024
Clay
17 x 18 x 18 cm



Pedro Paiva
Três cunhos, 2024
Clay
12 x 25 x 33 cm



Pedro Paiva
Véu / Mortalha, 2024
Clay
10 x 16 x 18 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva

Lesma de volta a casa, 2024

Clay

25 x 24 x 20 cm



Pedro Paiva

Pisa-papéis (momento íntimo entre um rato e um grilo), 2024

Clay

17 x 13 x 20 cm



Pedro Paiva
Pisa-papéis (gorila), 2024
Clay
28 x 14 x 20 cm



Pedro Paiva

Pisa-papéis (Montaigne durante o acidente de cavalo), 2024

Clay

22 x 25 x 18 cm



Pedro Paiva
Dois cinzeiros, 2024
Clay
9 x 19 x 36 cm



Pedro Paiva
Inventário, 2024
Clay
20 x 40 x 50 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024



Pedro Paiva
Sala de cinema, 2024
Clay
25 x 51 x 34 cm



Detail of *Sala de cinema*, 2024



Pedro Paiva, Luísa Rajak, António Paiva

Jardim das metamorfoses, 2024

Clay

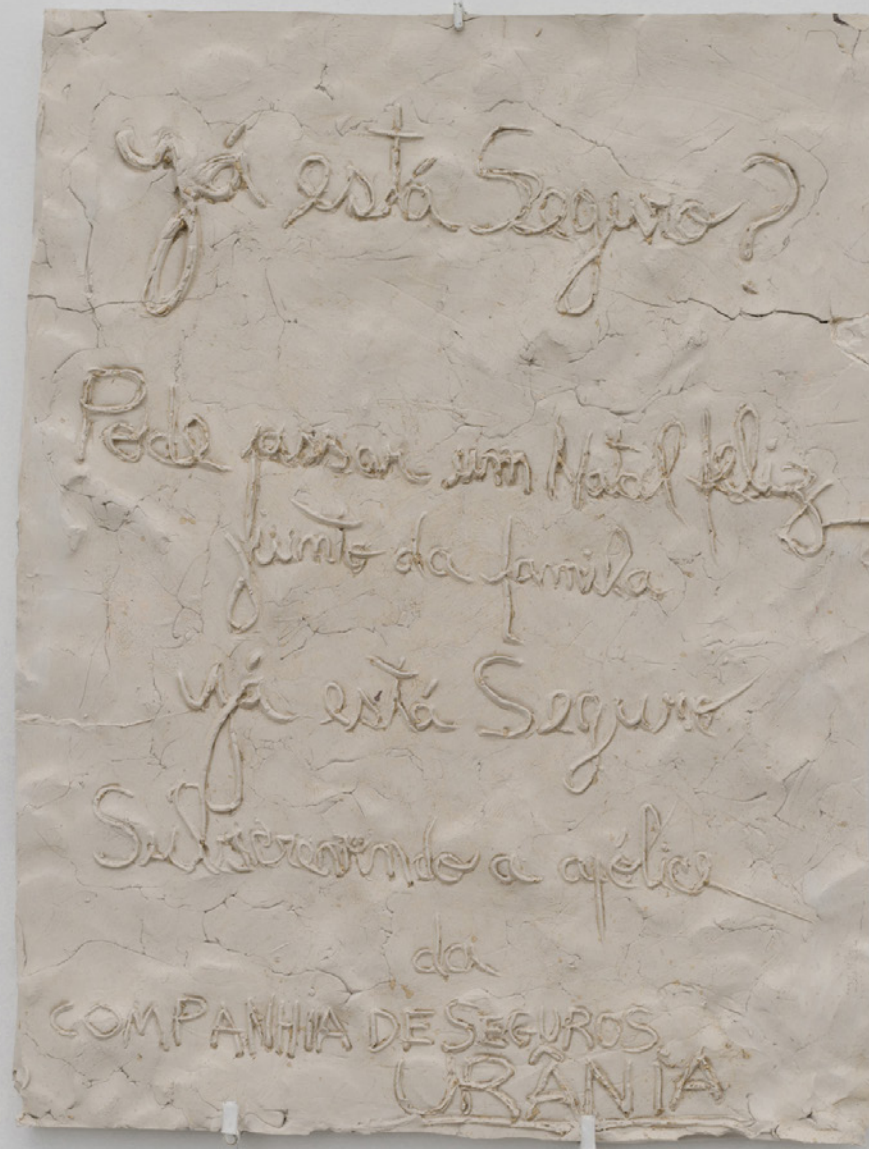
15 x 80 x 40 cm

Pedro Paiva

*“Já está seguro? Pode passar o Natal feliz
junto da família subscrevendo a apólice da
companhia de seguros Urânia”, 2024*

Clay

57 x 42 x 2 cm



Pedro Paiva
Matriz, 2024
Clay
41 x 30 x 4 cm





Detail of *Matriz*, 2024

Pedro Paiva
Inundação, 2024
Clay
32.5 x 25.5 x 27 cm





Pedro Paiva
Escultura inacabada, 2024
Clay
28 x 40 x 36.5 cm



Installation view of *Em Frente da Porta do Lado de Fora*, Galeria Francisco Fino, 2024

Pedro Paiva

Lisbon, Portugal, b.1977 in Lisbon. He attended the Faculty of Fine Arts School at the University of Lisbon and the UDK, Universität der Künste, Berlin. Paiva has been working as a visual artist since 2001, when he began an artistic partnership with João Maria Gusmão, that continued until 2021. Over the last twenty years, this work has been presented in museum exhibitions, art galleries, cinemas and even theater stages. In recent years Pedro Paiva premiered his fictional feature film *A Moeda-Viva*, as well as collaborating with Cláudio da Silva and Carolina Dominguez in the theater production *Woyzeck, Fuk'em'ol!*, premiered in 2023.

His long-standing multidisciplinary collaboration with João Maria Gusmão began in 2001, in the field of experimental analog film, photography and installation, while simultaneously developing an essayistic discourse. The use of obsolete image reproduction

processes, such as 16mm film or slide projections, supports an aesthetic vocabulary based on philosophical references such as Nietzsche or fantastic and science fiction literature.

Their career has been consolidated internationally at events such as the São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2006), Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre (2007), Manifesta 7, Kassel (2008), and PhotoEspaña, Madrid (2008). They represented Portugal at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009.

Their work is represented in several international museum collections, including: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, MACBA, Centre Georges Pompidou, Tate Modern, SFMOMA, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco and the Serralves Museum.

[More about the artist](#)

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