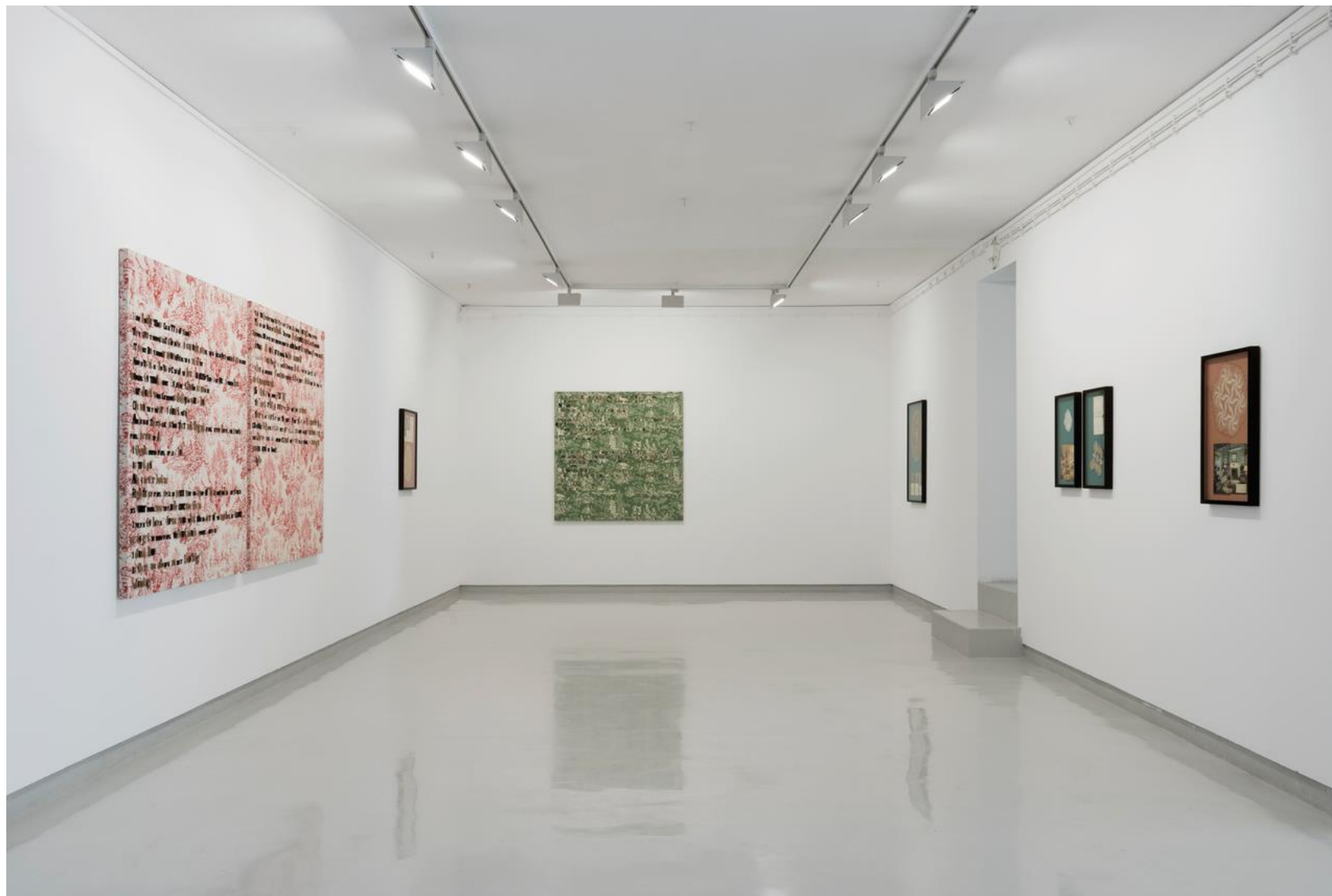


*Suppose it is true after all, what then?*

Vasco Araújo

Curated by Alexandre Melo

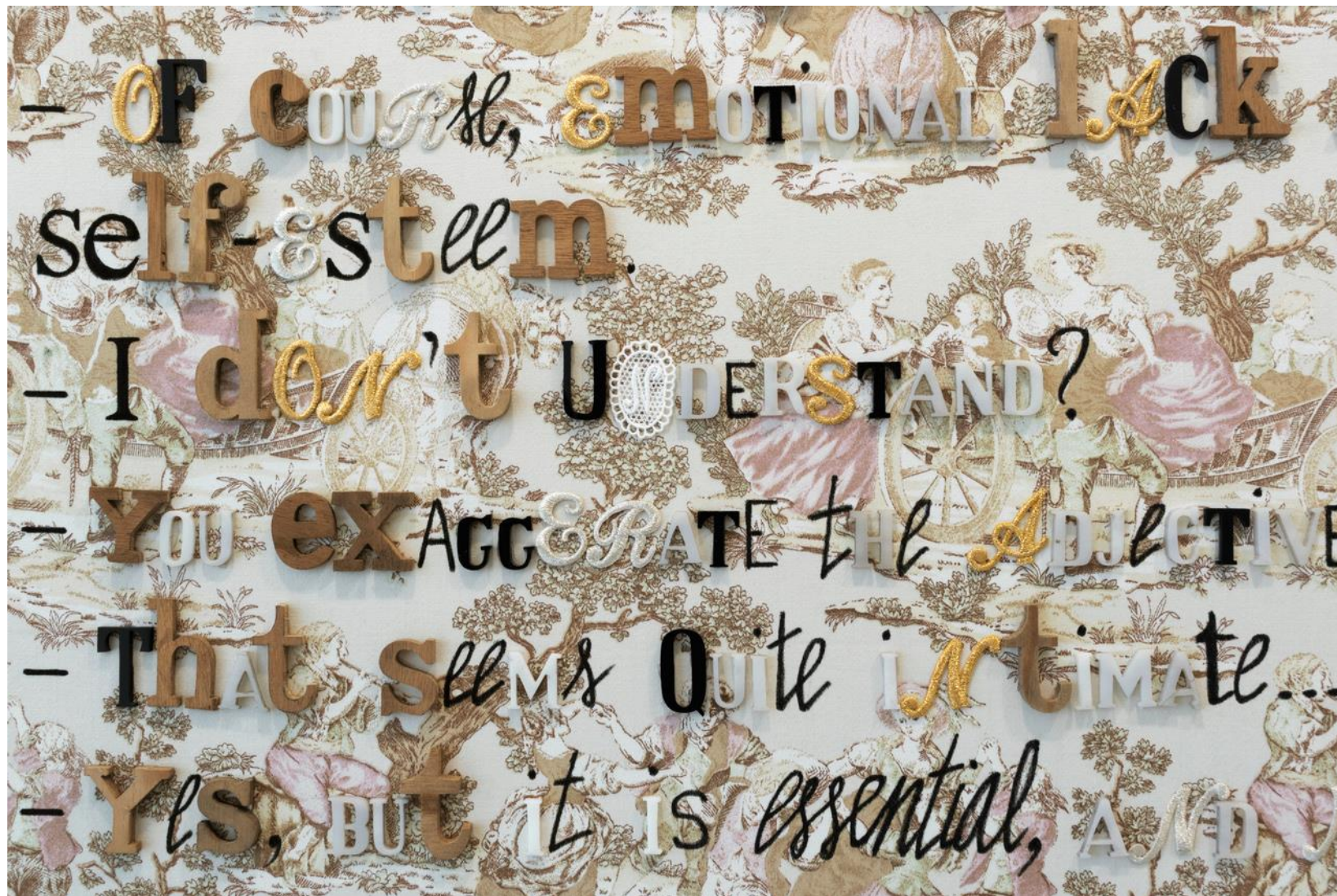
14.03.2020 – 02.05.2020







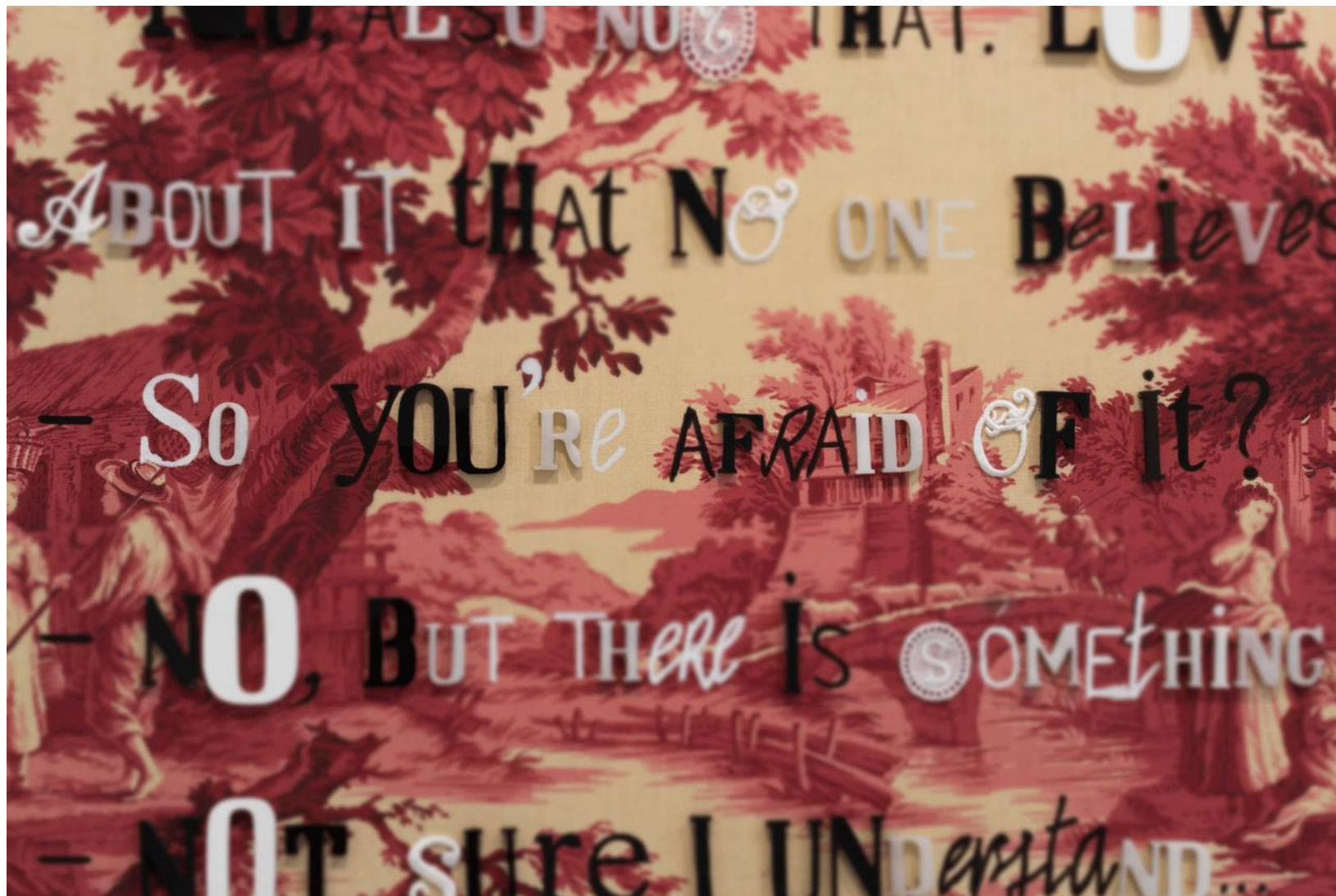




Suppose it is true after all, what then? #8, 2019







*Suppose it is true after all, what then? #4, 2019*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING VASCO ARAÚJO

Vasco Araújo is an artist whose oeuvre shows full mastery of the creative resources in the plastic arts, performance and music, namely lyrical, combined with a wide range of references in the fields of literature, cinema and cultural studies.

He is a rare example, in the global panorama of art nowadays, of what we could call tragic humanism. Humanism, in the strict sense in which neo-Renaissance curiosity for everything that concerns humans, often refers to a revisit of the ancient classics in which, however – and this is the greatest originality –, the serious awareness of the irredeemable inevitability of the tragic sense is not lost, not even in the wisest exercises of the also called games of enlightenment or postmodernist languages.

Transplurimultidisciplinary, the artist has already summoned Aristophanes, Sophocles, Euripides, Diogenes, Shakespeare, Father António Vieira, Sade, Rousseau, Kaváfis, Al Berto, Pavese, etc.

In the exhibition “Suppose it is true after all, what then?” at Galeria Presença, the dialogue is established with Oscar Wilde, namely excerpts from plays in which the author intersperses his own lines and subtle deviations – notably, in painting #1:

- *Rightly so, people speak so much now, and most of it is worthless...or rather, it's about problems that only concern them...*
- *I prefer to listen... always enjoy what others say of themselves; it allows me to get to know people without much effort...isn't it?*
- *I don't know...*
- *Is there any advantage in that knowledge?*
- *Advantage?*

There are 6 paintings over which the phrases are applied – made with painted letters or cut out in acrylic, fabric or wood – on toile de jouy canvases with idyllic and bucolic motifs from the French 18th century.

The paintings are joined by 10 lace table-mats that combine table centerpieces with excerpts from the lyrics of the song “the difference between us” by Tina Turner and with pages of a North American decoration book from the 50s/60s. “If we ever come close; If we ever discover; How to hold on and keep; Our faith in each other; The difference between us; Will keep us together”.

The aesthetic effects are inseparable from specific social and cultural contexts that are manifested according to rules of good conduct and good taste in socialization, conversation and decoration. However, even the most elegant quote or appropriation of fragments from those consecrated codes, doesn't leave them immune to the possibility of expression deviations through which the shadows of badly woven webs or irreconcilable schisms fall on our senses.

The read words, the dialogues, the imagined voices, are protagonists of a polyphony in which, as in Oscar Wilde, it seems to prevail the mood of a lightness that we pretend to lead to the point of confusing it with the sheer joy of the exercise of beauty in the most cynical and smart

word games. However, all the beauty of what we see, all the glare of what we read, everything we want to feel as just the joy of a virtuous experience, are not enough to completely eliminate the resonance of the instability of identities, the misfortunes of truth, the deviations of feelings, the misdirections of destinies, of so many afflictions, that human beings cannot consider unrelated.

Alexandre Melo

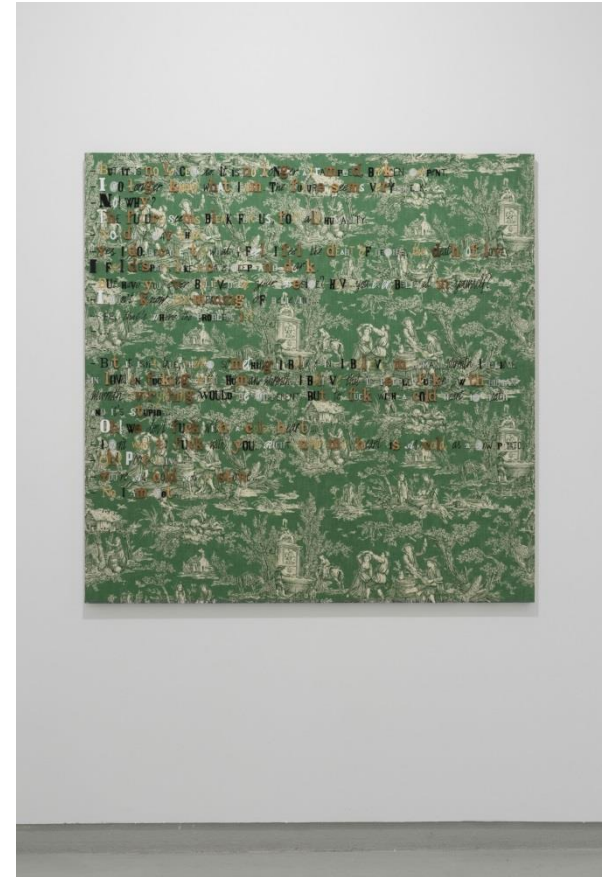
## Biography

**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.

Amongst his solo exhibitions have been “A moment apart”, MAAT, Lisbon, Portugal (2019); “Vasco Araújo”, M-Museum, Leuven, Belgium (2018); “Decolonial desires”, Autograph ABP, London, U.K. (2016); “Potestad”, MALBA - Museu de Arte Latino-Americana de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2015); “Under the Influence of Psyche”, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada (2014); “Debret”, Pinacoteca do Estado de S. Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2013); “Avec les voix de l’autre”, Musée d’art de Joliette, Joliette, Canada (2011); “Mais que a vida”, Fundação C. Gulbenkian/CAM, Lisboa and MARCO, Vigo, Spain (2010); “Eco” Jeu de Paume, Paris, France (2008); “Vasco Araújo: Per-Versions”, the Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, USA (2008); “About being Different”, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, U.K. (2007); “Pathos”, Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain (2006); “Dilemma”, S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium (2005); “L’inceste”, Museu do Azulejo, Lisbon, Portugal (2005); “The Girl of the Golden West”, The Suburban, Chicago, USA (2005); “Dilema”, Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2004); “Sabine/Brunilde”, SNBA, Lisbon, Portugal (2003).

Amongst his group exhibitions, the most important have been his participation in the “Triângulo atlântico” Bienal Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2018); “All that Falls”, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2014); “Investigations of a Dog”, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2009); “Everything has a name, or the potential to be named”, Gasworks, London, U.K. (2009); “Em Vivo Contacto”, 28ª Bienal de S. Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2008); “Artes Mundi”, Wales International Visual Art Exhibition and Prize”, National Museum Cardiff, Cardiff, Wales (2008); “Kara Walker and Vasco Araújo: Reconstruction”, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas (2007); “Drei Farben – Blau”, XIII Rohkunstbau, Grobleuthen (2006); “Experience of Art”, La Biennale di Venezia, 51st International Exhibition of Art, Venice, Italy (2005); “Dialectics of Hope”, 1st Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia (2005); “Solo (For Two Voices)”, CCS, Bard College, New York, USA (2002); “The World Maybe Fantastic” Sydney Biennial, Sydney, Australia (2002); “Trans Sexual Express”, Barcelona, Spain (2001); “A Classic for the Third Millennium”, Centre d’Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona, Spain (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 Colecção 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).



*Suppose it is true after all, what then? #6, 2019*