



PAVILION OF PORTUGAL
AT THE 56th INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION - LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

The Portuguese General-Director for the Arts, Margarida Veiga, the artist João Louro and the curator Maria de Corral are presenting "*I Will Be Your Mirror - poems and problems*", the project which will be located in the library rooms of the first floor of the Palazzo Loredan, in the centre of Venice, turning this space into the premises of the Official Representation of Portugal to the 56th International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia, from the 9th of May to the 22nd of November 2015.

Okwui Enwezor, the curator, art critic, journalist and writer, is the artistic director of this year's Art Biennale. When questioned as to the forms of taking hold, examining and making comprehensible the upsetting nature of our times and considering the new stimulations, the new issues, the new futures that the changes over the last two centuries have brought about for artists, Enwezor is proposing, for this 56th International Art Exhibition, under the covering title *All the World's Futures* | *Todos os futuros do mundo*, "a project dedicated to a new assessment of the relationship between art and artists in the current state of thing."

The thrust of the project that João Louro will be taking to Venice, in response to the challenge set out by Enwezor, borrows the title of a song from the Velvet Underground - *I'll Be Your Mirror*. With new *Blind Images*, *Dead End's* and *Covers* and new protagonists in the literary world - Benjamin, Beckett, Blanchot, Rimbaud, ... - Louro sets out an overview of his career, of his artistic and cultural convictions, his concerns and aesthetic and sociological decisions. He reiterates his questioning into the meaning and symbolic efficiency of the image and language, using invisibility or erasing as strategies to remind us that access is denied to us and that the spectator is always a part of the work: the work stands as a mirror, granting the spectator with the main role.

In this context, Maria de Corral stresses the fact that João Louro "*emphasises visual language and its means of expression, seeing interpretation as a form of communication between the work of art and the spectator, trying to establish new spheres of thought for feeling, reflecting and interchanging.*"

The course of the exhibition ends with the announcing of the end, (this being the work *The End*) with a creased map, a work that for Paulo Herkenhoff, the director of the do MAR - the Rio de Janeiro Art Museum and curator of renown, is an "*emblem of the contemporary world, a place that bewilders and disorients*".

The exhibition “I Will Be Your Mirror - poems and problems” is sponsored by the EDP Foundation and has the support of the Millennium BCP Foundation and the Prado - Cartolinas da Lousã.

ABOUT “I WILL BE YOUR MIRROR - POEMS AND PROBLEMS”

María de Corral, curator - “João Louro is interested in generating new semantic aspects and questioning the norms accepted by our visual culture, creating invented places, imagining scenes and inhabiting words that allow us to cultivate our deepest desires and aspirations.”

Nuno Crespo, art critic - “It is true that we can reconstruct all of João Louro's work through a critical conception of the image. Not that his work is a theory of images, nor a critique of images, but above all a critical grammar of images. That is, his concern is not that of identifying new ways of doing or thinking images, but rather looking at the way how these images are used. That is why it doesn't matter whether the images are 'artistic', coming from popular culture or are places of iconographic condensation, because the working material are the ways that men read, experience and translate images.”

Delfim Sardo, curator - João Louro's work is tributary of two presuppositions that seem relevant for the understanding of the complexity of his production a little: a deep distrust in relation to the virtualities of the photographic image as a process of construction of any type of truth about the world, and a belief in the possibilities of language to describe that same world; he simultaneously holds a concomitant and paradoxical distrust in relation to the possibilities of the same language to describe images. The process resulting from this contradictory antimony is the use of language as a possible image.

Paulo Herkenhoff, curator and director of the MAR - Rio de Janeiro Art Museum Louro's creased map treats violence in a different manner - it forms a process of colliding disorientation, one more compatible with Diasporas, exoduses, exiles, wars and the genocides that shift multitudes that are compelled into directions that they themselves ignore. It is necessary to leave, without knowing where to, Bachelard once said. Louro's blind map is an emblem of the contemporary world, since it bewilders and disorients.

João Louro, visual artist - “My presence at the Venice Biennial, representing Portugal, a fact that fills me with great pride, as well as having the privilege of working with a curator that I greatly respect and admire with the prestige and career of María de Corral, will certainly be an important moment in my career. The happy coincidence of this exhibition taking place in the Palazzo Loredan, the main premises of the Instituto Véneto de Ciências, Letras e Artes, will be of great importance for the visibility of this event.”

On the occasion of the presentation of “*I Will Be Your Mirror - poems and problems*”, the German publishing house Hatje Cantz will publish a catalogue including texts by the art critics María de Corral, Paulo Herkenhoff, Delfim Sardo and Nuno Crespo.

THE PALAZZO LOREDAN

Palazzo Loredan is a historic, originally Gothic, Venetian palace located in the centre of Venice near to the Campo Santo Stefano and the St. Vidal River, bought by the Loredan family in 1536, and renovated by the renaissance architect Antonio Scarpagnino. The internal decoration includes ceiling frescoes from the end of the XVI century, by Antonio Aliense, Jacopo Palma il Giovane and Sante Peranda. It has been the main premises for the Instituto Véneto de Ciências, Letras e Artes since 1891, after having been the residence of French and Austrian governors. Of major importance in its history was the time of occupation of the Doge Francesco Loredan, who was the ruler of the Republic of Venice between 1752 and 1762, when he died.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

María de Corral - was born in Madrid in 1940. She is an art critic and independent curator, overseeing important collections in Spain, Latin America and the United States. She is the coordinator of the Madrid Contemporary Art Collection Association, on holding at the Valladolid Museu Patio Herreriano, and along with her daughter Lorena Martínez de Corral, is the co-director of the Expo Actual, S.L. company, which is dedicated to art management, event organisation and communication in the world of the arts. She was the director of the Spanish National Museu Rainha Sofia (1991-1994), senior curator at the Dallas Museum of Art (2005-2008), director of the Assesory Committee of the collections owned by the Spanish Fundação Telefónica (2003-2006) and director of visual arts for the La Caixa Foundation, being responsible for the exhibition programme for the foundation in Madrid and in Barcelona (1981-1991) and for its contemporary art collection. She was the director of the 51st Venice Biennial (2005) and twice director of the Pontevedra Biennial in Spain (2000 e 2002).

João Louro (1963) lives and works in Lisbon. He studied architecture at the University of Lisbon and painting at the Arco School of Visual Art.

João Louro's body of work encompasses painting, sculpture, photography and video. João Louro's work, descending from minimal and conceptual art, with special attention to the avant-garde, is a register of time that expresses his view of art and culture as self-referential systems. The platform for the reading of his works cannot be separated from the cultural horizon of modernity and of post-industrial society. It draws out a topography of references that are as personal as they are generational, with regular recourse to language as a source, as well as the written word and a review of the image in contemporary culture, starting out from a set of representations and symbols from the collective visual universe. Minimalism, conceptualism, Pop culture, structuralism and post-structuralism, authors such as Walter Benjamin, Guy Debord, Georges Bataille and Blanchot as well as artists like Donald Judd and the ever-present Duchamp, form the lexical universe through which João Louro expresses himself. João Louro participated at the 51st Edition of the Art Biennale in the exhibition "The Experience of Art" in the Italian Pavilion, curated by María de Corral.