

ÂNGELA FERREIRA PORTUGUESE PAVILION 52ND VENICE BIENNALE 2007

Fondaco Marcello
San Marco 3415 (Calle dei Garzoni)
30124 Venice, Italy | 10 Jun - 21 Nov 2007
www.iartes.pt/veneza2007

Portuguese Ministry of Culture – Institute of the Arts

ÂNGELA FERREIRA
PORTUGUESE PAVILION
52nd INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Official opening: 8 June 2007, 6pm
Press and professional previews: 6 June - 9 June 2007, 10am - 8pm
Exhibition: 10 June - 21 November 2007

Ângela Ferreira to represent Portugal at the 2007 Venice Biennale

Ângela Ferreira is the artist representing Portugal at the 52nd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, to be held from 10 June to 21 November 2007. The official Portuguese representation, organized and produced by the Institute of the Arts, is curated by Jürgen Bock.

Ângela Ferreira's work will be presented in Venice, following Helena Almeida (2005), Pedro Cabrita Reis (2003), João Penalva (2001), Jorge Molder (1999) and Julião Sarmento (1997).

The Portuguese exhibition is to be held at the Fondaco Marcello, a high profile venue located on the banks of the Grand Canal, between the Academia and Rialto bridges. Under a lease concluded with the Portuguese State, this venue will also host Portugal's shows for the 2008 Architecture Biennale and the 2009 Visual Arts Biennale.

Ângela Ferreira (b. Maputo, 1958) has shown regularly since 1990. Driven by political issues, Ferreira scrutinizes the use of theories – in particular art historical theories – and their relationship with and impact on contemporary art, calling for art's inherent communicative potential to negotiate complex subject matter.

Ferreira subtly stimulates the viewer to articulate questions in their encounter with her objects, which take the shape of skillfully executed and aesthetically appealing modernist sculptures, often combined with texts, photographs and videos. The questions instigated interrogate what we have come to consider as 'given' in art history; however, if we consider history is a construct, one might ask: 'what history, whose history and history to what purpose?' Venice – a city with its own unique track record of more than a century of biennales, with its national presentations of art in a wide range of 'national' modern buildings and its never-ending negotiations with (post) modernity – is a perfect platform for Ferreira to tackle these issues.

Ângela Ferreira was born in 1958 in Maputo / Mozambique. She spent the 1980s in South Africa and has lived and worked in Lisbon since 1992.

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Ângela Ferreira

Any attempt to classify the work of Ângela Ferreira soon becomes a real challenge, given that classifications are precisely one of the topics she tackles in her works.

Born in 1958 in Maputo (at that time, Lourenço Marques), capital of Mozambique, Ângela Ferreira lived in the city until 1973, then moving to Lisbon, where she lived through the intense revolutionary period following on from 25 April 1974. In 1976, like many Luso-Mozambicans, she moved to South Africa, studying visual arts in Cape Town.

The years she spent in South Africa were decisive for the development of Ângela Ferreira's cultural conscience, a conscience with a high degree of sensitivity towards political issues, which from an early stage translated itself in her work. During the 1980s, South Africa was the target of an international economic and cultural boycott that attempted to bring apartheid to an end. Due to this blockage, and while she was an art student, Ferreira was politically constrained and physically distant from the established centres of art production and the discourses circulating there, which left her without the opportunity to make direct contact with the works and the artists, even though their work was studied as part of the Cape Town Art School curriculum. All the Modernist discourses from Europe and the United States were thus transmitted as theory but first hand experience of their materialisation never took place, or, as the artist once commented 'the only materialisation that ever existed was through slide projection, the "originals" never arrived'.

This situation led to the practice of an art derived from the 'originals' that existed on the far away walls of museums in the cultural capitals of the western world. This phenomenon can for geographical and political reasons be observed in peripheral locations, although it is also visible in the so-called centres of production of art and theory, a fact that was observed by the artist during her studies. This is still reflected in the ironic and autobiographical perspective of her work, both in relation to a culturally isolated South Africa and a pre- and post-revolutionary Portugal.

Geo-political questions are the starting point for all of Ferreira's work. They become vehicles for the investigation of the definition of 'objective truths' in certain fields of art, history, and gender politics, or even for interrogating the cultural definitions of countries and their societies. To put it in extreme terms, one might say that Ferreira uses and analyses the normative structures of Modernism to, from a two-fold perspective, African and European, question their necessity or uselessness. The appropriation and negotiation of these normative structures, as carried out by the artist in her work, is relevant in the African context because of the relationship of strategic cultural dependence initiated by European colonialism. But it also exists in the European and North-American context in relation to the methods of constructing meaning within art.

Jürgen Bock, January 2007

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Ângela Ferreira

Born in Maputo in 1958, lives and works in Lisbon since 1992.

Ângela Ferreira has shown regularly since 1990. Her many individual shows include: 'Ângela Ferreira', Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (1990); 'Sites and Services', South African National Gallery, Cape Town (1992); 'Double Sided I and II', Chinati Foundation, Marfa, USA and Íbis Art Centre, Nieu Bethesda, South Africa (1996); 'Casa Maputo: An Intimate Portrait', Museu de Serralves, Porto (1999); 'No Place at All', Museu do Chiado – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon (2003) and 'Random Walk', Galeria Filomena Soares, Lisbon (2005).

She has also participated in various group shows and international biennials, including the 1st and 2nd Johannesburg Biennial (1995 and 1997); Istanbul Biennial (1999); 'Signs of Life', Melbourne International Biennial (1999); 'Squatters', Museu de Serralves, Porto, and Witte de With, Rotterdam (2001); 'In the Meantime', De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (2001); 'Continuare', Maia Biennial (2003); 'Re-Location / Shake the Limits', ICCA-MNAC, Bucharest (2004); 'L'Universel? Dialogues avec Senghor', Joal Fadiouth, University of Dakar, Senegal (2004); 'Territorio Oeste', MACUF, Corunha (2006), '(Re)volver', Plataforma Revólver, Lisbon (2006), and, forthcoming, 'Troca de Olhares', Instituto Camões, Maputo (2007).

Ângela Ferreira is a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Lisbon.

Jürgen Bock

Born in Germany in 1962, lives and works in Lisbon since 1993.

An independent curator, Jürgen Bock has been responsible, amongst other projects, for the programme of the 1st Project Room at the Centro Cultural de Belém (2000-2001), presenting works from Eleanor Antin, Nathan Coley, Harun Farocki, Renée Green, Nuno Ribeiro, Allan Sekula and Heimo Zobernig, for the 2003 Maia Biennale and for the German Pavillion at the New Delhi Triennial/India in 2005, with the artist Andreas Siekmann.

He edited the book *From Work to Text – Dialogues on Practice and Criticism*, with texts by various authors (CCB, Lisbon, 2002), and organized the publication in Portugal of *TITANIC's wake*, by Allan Sekula (Portuguese version, Maumaus, Lisbon, 2003) and *Negotiations in the Contact Zone*, by Renée Green (Assírio & Alvim, Lisbon, 2003).

Jürgen Bock is director of the Maumaus School of Visual Arts, in Lisbon, and teaches on the Master's Course in Contemporary Art Practice, at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto.

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Portuguese Pavilion

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