

fendre  
LA CRIEE LES  
CENTRE D'ART  
CONTEMPORAIN  
RENNES - FLOES

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PRESS PACK

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LICHENS  
NEVER LIE

JOANA ESCOVAL

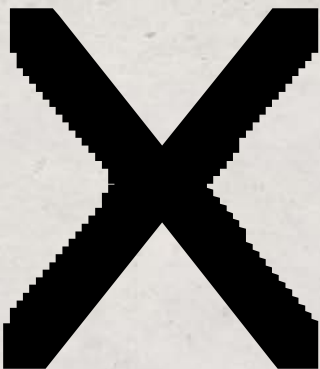
Exhibition from 10 June to 14 August 2016

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place Honoré Commeurec  
halles centrales – 35000 Rennes – France  
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# Press release

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*Lichens Never Lie* is Joana Escoval's first solo exhibition outside the Iberian Peninsula. Here the young Lisbon artist gives spare, fragile expression to the endless ephemerality of the living world and its host of mysterious meanings.

The product of minimal intervention on her part, Escoval's works are most often assemblages of materials that are rudimentary – pieces of wood, copper rods, terracotta, etc. – and/or collected from the natural world: leaves, water, stones and sometimes whole trees.

Escoval is especially attentive to her venues and the visible and invisible currents running through them, which she sees as integral to what is being shown. Her *La Criée* exhibition is a response to both the setting and the airy summer light that pervades it.

Mostly comprising works being shown for the first time, *Lichens Never Lie* revolves around the notions of passage, transition and transmission: from one state to another, one belief or knowledge system to another, one culture to another, and so on.

Thus certain pieces – *Impossible obéissance* and *Our myth is not self evident because it is a mystery* for example – indicate pathways that are possible but always open-ended, while others, like *Rational or Irrational or Rational or*, mark a tenuous, sometimes all but invisible threshold.

Still others investigate the boundaries between Nature and Culture, or between different cultures, the better to evoke their intertwining – or their effacement. In the case of *Neither Bounded nor Static* and *Untitled (for André)* it would be pointless to try to work out whether the non-human is being anthropomorphised or, on the contrary, the human is being "naturalised".

The exhibition title, discovered by the artist on a sign in a pharmacognosy and mycology lab at the University of Rennes 1, refers to an organism that is both algae and fungus, and acknowledges its capacity to act. This speaks eloquently of the porousness of things and beings, and of their representation as a core part of the artist's work and concerns.

The things Joana Escoval makes are at once evocative enough to offer our ideas ready purchase and development and nebulous enough to let them roam free: open works for savage minds, one might say.

# L/CHENS NEVER LIE

JOANA ESCOVAL

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## Exhibition

From 10 June to 14 August 2016

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## Opening

Friday 10 June 2016, 6:30 pm

## Meeting with Joana Escoval

Saturday 11 June 2016, 3 pm

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**Curators:** Sophie Kaplan, director of La Criée

**Production:** La Criée centre of contemporary art, Rennes

**With the support of** Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Camões Mission – Institute for Cooperation and Language, Portugal

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## Descriptive and tactile visit

Thursday 23 June 2016, 17:30 pm

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## Crosspiece visit by Micro-sillons

Sunday 26 June 2016, from 2 pm to 7 pm

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## Green Flash

**Joana Escoval, *It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many***

Performance

Friday 24 June 2016, 6:30 pm

—

## Address / opening hours

La Criée centre for contemporary art  
place Honoré Commeurec – halles centrales  
35000 Rennes – France

+ 332 23 62 25 10

la-criee@ville-rennes.fr

www.criee.org

## Free admission

From Tuesday to Friday: noon to 7pm

Saturday & Sunday: 2 pm to 7 pm

Close on Monday

Open 14 July, 2 pm to 7 pm

Subway and bus stop: République

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## Press officer

Marion Sarrazin

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# Green Flash

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Echoing its exhibitions, La Criée offers throughout the year events, called Green Flashes, that explore the points of contact between contemporary art and other creative fields and knowledge, through concerts, shows, performances, readings, etc..

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Joana Escoval, *It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many*

Reading performed by Pedro Gomes

Friday 24 June 2016, 6:30 pm

Excerpts from Carolus Linnæus's *Lachesis Lapponica, or A tour in Lapland*

—

An actor, lied back is reading excerpts from the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnæus's *Lachesis Lapponica, or A tour in Lapland*, being massaged by a foot massage machine.

The performance reflects Escoval's questionings about mutual surprises from a culture to an other one and the links between the body and the spirit.

# Visuals for the press

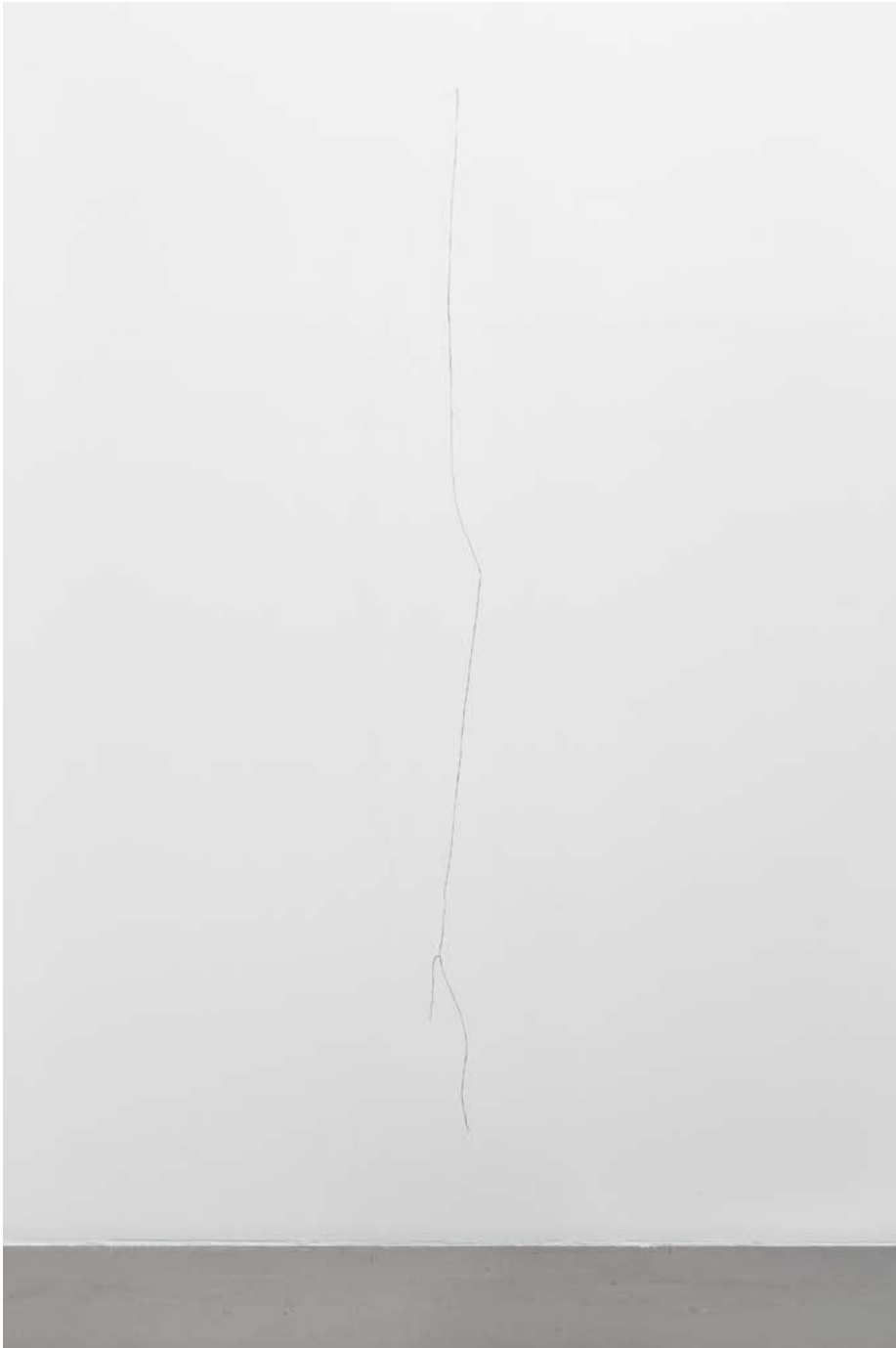
Please, respect captions and copyrights



Joana Escoval, *Neither bounded nor static*, 2016  
wood and acupuncture needle, 8 x 19 x 13 cm – photo: Bruno Lopes – courtesy the artist and Vera Cortês art agency, Lisbon

# Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights



Joana Escoval, *Our myth is not self evident because it is a mystery*, 2015  
copper and gold, 240 × 25 × 37 cm – photo: Bruno Lopes – courtesy the artist and Vera Cortês art  
agency, Lisbon



# Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights



Joana Escoval, *Our myth is not self evident because it is a mystery*, detail, 2015  
copper and gold, 240 × 25 × 37 cm – photo: Bruno Lopes – courtesy the artist and Vera Cortês art  
agency, Lisbon

# Visuals for the press

Please, respect captions and copyrights



Joana Escoval, *Untitled (for André)*, 2015  
seashells and walls with rounded corners, variable dimensions – photo: Bruno Lopes – courtesy the  
artist and Vera Cortês art agency, Lisbon

# Works exhibited

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***Impossible obéissance*, 2016**

copper, 1 % gold, variable dimensions

production: La Criée centre of contemporary art

***Neither bounded nor static*, 2016**

wood and acupuncture needle

8 x 19 x 13 cm

production: La Criée centre of contemporary art

***Our Myth is not self evident because it is a mystery*, 2015**

copper and gold

240 x 25 x 37 cm

***Rational or Irrational or Rational or*, 2015**

copper, 240 x 65 x 1 cm each

***This is a fake stone among the real ones*, 2016**

30 x 30 x 30 cm

production: La Criée centre of contemporary art

***Untitled (for André)*, 2015**

seashells and walls with rounded corners, variable dimensions

# Biography

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## Joana Escoval

born in 1982 Lisbon, Portugal

based in Lisbon, Portugal

[www.joanaescoval.com](http://www.joanaescoval.com)

represented by Vera Cortês Art Agency, Lisbon

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### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**2016**

*Lichens Never Lie*, La Criée centre of contemporary art, Rennes, France

**2014**

*Whirlpools*, Vera Cortês Art Agency, Lisbon, Portugal

**2013**

*Outlaws in Language and Destiny*, Parkour, Lisbon, Portugal

**2011**

*Mother Wild*, Halfhouse, Barcelona, Spain

*De tempos a tempos a terra treme / De temps en temps la terre tremble*, Galeria Baginski, Lisbon, Portugal

**2010**

*Onde no mundo inteiro / Where in the entire world*, Tapada das Necessidades, Greenhouse, Lisbon, Portugal

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### GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

**2016**

*Matter Fictions*, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon Portugal

*Rinoceronte — Ananás*, Múrias Centeno, Porto, Portugal

**2015**

*Cidra Da Luz Escoval Manso Mendes Romão Sena*, Ar sólido, Lisbon, Portugal

*New Artists Award EDP Foundation*, Ectricity Museum, Lisbon PT, Portugal

*Eclipse/End*, Maisterravalbuena, Madrid, Spain

*The whole wide world*, The International 3, Salford, United Kingdom

*Le Lynx ne connaît pas de frontières / The lynx knows no boundaries* (curated by Joana Neves), fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris, France

**2014**

*Europe, Europe* (curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Thomas Boutoux and Gunnar Kvaran), Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway

**2013**

*Le petit Lenormand (cartomançia e probabilidade)* (curated by Luís Silva), Vera Cortês Art Agency, Lisbon, Portugal

*Bes Revelation 2012* (curated by Carolina Rito), Bes Arte & Finança, Lisbon, Portugal

# Biography

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## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

**2012**

*Bes Revelation* (curated by Carolina Rito),  
Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto,  
Portugal

*The Sound*, Museu Nogueira da Silva, Braga,  
Portugal

**2010**

*Drawing* (curated by Pedro Silva), Espaço  
Campanhã, Porto, Portugal

*Diamonds on the soles of her shoes*,  
102-100 Galeria de Arte, Castelo Branco,  
Portugal

**2009**

*O sol morre cedo / The sun will die soon*, City  
Museum – Pavilhão Branco, Lisbon, Portugal

*Geological Museum*, Geological Museum, Lisbon,  
Portugal

*Seven days project* (curated by Margarida  
Mendes), Trindade Theatre, Lisbon, Portugal

*History of the Future*, "estates-general" cycle at  
Arte Contempo, Lisbon, Portugal

**2008**

*Eurasia*, Dr. Anástacio Gonçalves' Historical  
House, Lisbon, Portugal

**2007**

*Antes que a produção cesse / Before production  
ceases*, Avenida 211, Lisbon, Portugal

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## RESIDENCIES

**2015**

Fiorucci Art Trust, Curated by Milovan Farronato,  
volcanic island of Stromboli, Italia

**2013-2014**

Residency Unlimited, New York, United States

**2011**

Halfhouse, Barcelona, Spain

**2007**

Eira 33, Lisbon, Portugal

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## GRANTS / AWARDS

**2015**

Finalist EDP Foundation New Artists Prize 2015

**2013**

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  
FLAD Grant

**2012**

Bes Revelação Award

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## OTHER PROJECTS

**2015**

*Wandering talk*, curated by Margarida Mendes,  
Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Portugal

**2011**

Co-founder of Palmario Recordings – Editions  
for attentive listening of field captures and  
translations for the ear ([www.palmario.com](http://www.palmario.com))

**2010**

Curator of the exhibition *In Sardegna tutto è  
tondo*, Vera Cortês, Lisbon, Portugal

**2009**

Co-Curator of the exhibition cycle  
*Estates-General*, Arte Contempo, Lisbon, Portugal

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## EDUCATION

Degree in Fine Arts, FBAUL, Lisbon, 2002-2008

Leonardo Da Vinci Scholarship, Berlin, 2009

Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze, Florence, 2008

Fine Arts class, UMA, Madeira Island, 2001-2002

# Bibliography

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## PUBLICATIONS

*Outlaws in Language and Destiny*, published by ATLAS Projectos Lisbon, 2016

*Novos artistas Fundação EDP*, published by Documenta, Lisbon, 2015

*Beings that accept and embrace the growth of other beings*, published by ATLAS Projectos and Palmario Recordings, Lisbon, 2013

*Bes Revelation 2012 Award*, published by Serralves Foundation, Porto, 2012

*Halfhouse 2009/2011*, published by Halfhouse, Barcelona, 2011

*Onde no mundo inteiro / Where in the entire world*, (in collaboration with Nuno da Luz), published by Parmario Recordings, 2010

*O Sol Morre Cedo*, edition CML, Lisboa, 2009

*ATLAS PROJECTO DE DESENHO*, published by ATLAS Projectos Lisbon, 2008

*Eurasia*, edition CML and Dr. Anástacio Gonçalves' Historical House, Lisbon, 2008

*Antes que a Produção Cesse / Before production ceases*, author's edition, Lisbon, 2007

▮ Com formação em Pintura, a prática artística de Joana Escoval tem contudo privilegiado a produção de peças escultóricas que se distinguem recorrentemente pelas suas formas simples, como corolário de uma economia de gestos mínimos, mas também pela proliferação de diversos tipos de materiais – como o vidro, a madeira, o barro, a prata e cobre, até aos materiais directamente recolhidos da natureza, como as pedras, as folhas, a água e o ar. O seu trabalho assenta num processo fortemente intuitivo e colaborativo com as características físicas e funcionais dos materiais, explorando as suas possibilidades de (de)construção e (re)combinação de modo a articular uma prática escultórica na qual o desenho – como experiência das formas – assume uma presença matricial e equilibrante.

A escolha dos materiais bem como o horizonte das suas relações muito devem ao interesse de Joana Escoval pelas temáticas da natureza, a vitalidade dos elementos e as suas interligações, a sua energia e os fluxos que determinam a constante mutabilidade da natureza. Todos estes motivos são convocados ou simplesmente evocados como referências essenciais de um imaginário – visual e físico – que procura restituir as possibilidades de uma experiência sensível e pregnante com o silêncio e com a sobriedade dos gestos e das coisas que a natureza e os sentidos do corpo nos proporcionam.

As obras de Joana Escoval podem ter origens muito diversas, a partir de vivências ou temáticas da vida quotidiana ou de um leque muito amplo de interesses, das várias ciências da natureza à Antropologia, da Arte à Literatura. Recentemente, a artista esteve numa residência artística (a convite da Fioruci Art Trust) em Stromboli, a ilha vulcânica situada no Sul de Itália tornada célebre pelo filme homónimo de Roberto Rossellini. No topo da ilha e próximo da cratera a artista fotografou uma nuvem de fumo negro resultante de uma erupção. Posteriormente, uma parte dessa imagem foi impressa e colocada no interior de um cilindro transparente. A peça chama-se *Fiducia Incorrebbibile*. Posicionado na vertical, o cilindro reenvia-nos para a configuração de uma chaminé ou um de um enorme tubo de ensaio. A forma cónica e montanhosa do vulcão foi suprimida, restando porém o

▮ With a background in Painting, Joana Escoval has favored the production of sculptural pieces in her artistic practice. Resulting from minimal gestures, these pieces are often characterized by their simple forms, but also by the proliferation of certain materials – glass, wood, clay, silver and copper, and the materials the artist collects from nature, such as stones, leaves, water, and air.

Her work is based on a strongly intuitive process that takes in account the physical and functional characteristics of the materials as she explores their possibilities for (de)construction and (re)combination, articulating a sculptural practice in which drawing – as the experience of forms – assumes a balancing and archetypal presence.

The choice of materials and the configuration of their relations owe much to the artist's attention to the issues concerning nature, to the vitality of the elements and the way they interconnect, to their energy and to the fluxes that inform nature's constant fluidity. All these reasons are convoked (or simply evoked) as essential references of a visual and physical imagery that tries to recover the possibilities of a sensual experience, pregnant with the silence and the temperance of the gestures and things offered to us by nature and by our senses.

The works of Joana Escoval may have diverse origins, parting from lived experiences and themes of everyday life or from an ample variety of interests; from natural history to anthropology, art and literature. Recently, the artist participated in an artistic residency (at the invitation of Fioruci Art Trust) in Stromboli, a volcanic island located in the south of Italy, which was made famous by the Roberto Rossellini film of the same name.

On the top of the island, near the crater, the artist photographed a cloud of black smoke resulting from an eruption. Afterwards, a part of this image was printed and placed in the interior of a transparent cylinder. The piece is entitled *Fiducia Incorrebbibile*. Positioned vertically, the cylinder reminds us of the structure of a chimney or test tube. The conical mountainous form of the volcano was suppressed, leaving only the primordial, an allusion to a tragic nature, fascinating and frightening, rude and uncontrollable, via an image which documents the phenomenon of ascending expulsion so characteristic of volcanic activity.

primordial, a alusão a uma natureza trágica, fascinante e assustadora, rude e incontrolável, através de uma imagem que documenta o fenómeno de expulsão ascensional tão característico da actividade vulcânica.

Uma outra peça, *Our myth is not self evident because it is a mystery*, parece sugerir um movimento inverso, o da queda. Uma tira de liga, de cobre e 1% ouro e com cerca de 2,40 metros de comprimento, descai do alto de uma parede em direcção ao chão, terminando numa pequena bifurcação. A tira é constituída por pequenas parcelas de 5 cm, unidas pelos limites opostos das suas extremidades, sugerindo um processo em cadeia, como um movimento líquido ou um relâmpago.

São obras que confirmam as motivações de Joana Escoval em restituir uma relação com uma natureza essencial, misteriosa e transcendental, procurando deste modo explorar as possibilidades de um imaginário criativo livre de hierarquias e convenções pré-estabelecidas e no qual todas as articulações e convivências são potencialmente férteis, através de reconduções plásticas e semânticas, que reiteram a natureza necessariamente polissémica de todas as coisas.

Em *It wraps around the body like it once wrapped around the animal* discernimos um corpo desenhado por tubos estreitos de cobre. As dimensões e proporções parecem corresponder com as de um corpo real. Vemos as linhas das pernas e dos braços, da bacia e da espinha, mas no lugar da cabeça está uma espiral em cobre, retirado de um alambique. Ligados às pernas estão dois pés de borracha impressos com o mapa da reflexologia podal. A utilização do cobre é aqui particularmente significativa, porque acentua a ideia de um corpo condutor, sem cérebro nem razão, “reduzido” a um circuito nervoso, digestivo, energético...

Com efeito, as referências que perpassam pela obra de Joana Escoval surgem como indicações susceptíveis de mobilizar uma imaginação imensamente prolífica, disponível para gerar ligações improváveis e até certo ponto inexplicáveis, passagens e ligações inusitadas entre mundos e sistemas muito diferenciados. Observe-se a peça *It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many* em que um muro baixo revestido de seixos (como se fosse um banco corrido)

Another piece, *Our myth is not self-evident because it is a mystery*, seems to suggest an inverse movement, that of falling. A strip of metal alloy, composed of copper and 1% gold, approximately 2.40 meters in length, descends from the height of a wall towards the floor, ending in a small split. The metal strip is constructed of small 5 centimeter segments, united at their opposite ends, suggesting a chain reaction, such as fluid motion or a lightning strike.

These are works which confirm the motivations of Joana Escoval in re-establishing a relationship with the essence of Nature – mysterious and transcendental – seeking in this way to explore the possibilities of a creative imagery which is free of hierarchies and pre-established conventions. One in which all the articulations and interactions are potentially fertile, which through semantic and material redirections, seeks to reiterate the multiple meanings which are to be found in the nature of all things.

In *It wraps around the body like it once wrapped around the animal*, we can discern a body drawn by narrow copper tubes. The dimensions and proportions seem to correspond to those of a real body. We see the lines of the legs and arms, the pelvis and the spinal column, but in place of the head is a metal spiral, taken from a copper still. Connected to the legs are two rubber feet imprinted with reflexology maps. The use of copper here is especially significant, because it accentuates the idea of the body as conductor, without brain nor reason, “reduced” to a nervous system, digestive, energetic...

The references which permeate the work of Joana Escoval arise as indications, susceptible to put in motion an immensely prolific imagination, ready to generate improbable, even inexplicable connections. Unusual passages and by ways between worlds and systems, which are very different from one another.

In the work, *It arises not from any cause, but from the cooperation of many*, in which a low wall is covered in river stones, as if it were a bench, is placed next to an electric foot and leg massage machine.

At first glance, they are two relatively distinct objects, in respect to form, function, and materials: on one side, we have the stones with their irregular and peculiar forms (a result of



é colocado junto a massajador elétrico de pés e pernas. Num primeiro instante, são dois objectos relativamente discrepantes no que diz respeito à forma, função e composição material: de um lado, temos os seixos com as suas formas peculiares (como resultado da acção prolongada e paciente da natureza, como uma massagem) agora utilizados para cobrir um elemento construtivo rudimentar e prosaico frequente numa certa arquitectura vernacular; do outro lado, uma máquina com as suas formas altamente estilizadas e que assinala a crescente preponderância da robótica e, correlativamente, dos processos de substituição dos corpos pelas máquinas. Porém, nesta mesma peça podemos imaginar um corpo sentado no muro, sob o efeito do contacto com os seixos, ao mesmo tempo que os seus membros inferiores são massajados. Nesse momento, podemos pensar a obra como um confronto, paradoxal e intuitivo, entre duas culturas, dois tempos e dois modos de trabalho sobre o corpo.

Igualmente decisivo no trabalho de Joana Escoval é o trabalho de disposição espacial das obras, reforçada nesta exposição pelo encurvamento dos cantos da sala: neste caso as paredes constituem uma obra quase invisível, que abraça e observa (através de dois *olhos* – dois búzios – incrustados na parede) o interior da sala. Pela sua intencionalidade e marcação cénica, as opções expositivas de Joana Escoval acentuam a teatralidade intrínseca da escultura, pela forma como determina o lugar das coisas para serem observadas e relacionadas. O percurso expositivo, sem princípio nem fim e propenso a variações (de atenção, proximidade, escala, profundidade), radica-se numa espacialidade que se dirige para a presença do observador, como figura que, finalmente, dará sentido ao acto de expor.

Sérgio Mah

the prolonged and patient action of nature, like a massage) now utilized to cover a rudimentary structural element – frequently used in a certain vernacular architecture.

On the other side, a machine, with its highly stylized form heralding the arrival of the robotic age, and the corollary process of substituting bodies with machines. However, in this piece we can imagine a body seated on the wall, coming into contact with the stones, simultaneously massaging the lower limbs. In this moment, we can consider the work as a confrontation, paradoxical and intuitive, between two cultures, two time periods and two ways of working on the body.

Equally decisive in the work of Joana Escoval is the special arrangement of the works, a facet that is re-enforced in this show by the round corners of the gallery space: in this case the walls are almost an invisible artwork that embraces and observes the viewer (through two eyes – two cowrie shells – embedded in the wall). Largely due to its intentionality and scenic quality, the choices made by Joana Escoval accentuate the theatricality intrinsic in sculpture, the way in which she determines the placement of the objects to be observed and related to. The path of the exposition, without beginning and without end, shows a propensity towards variables (such as attention, proximity, scale and depth) roots itself in a spatiality which speaks to the presence of the observer, as a figure which, finally, gives meaning to the act of showing.

Sérgio Mah

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