



CENTRO DE ARTE MODERNA
GULBENKIAN

Luiz Vaz 73

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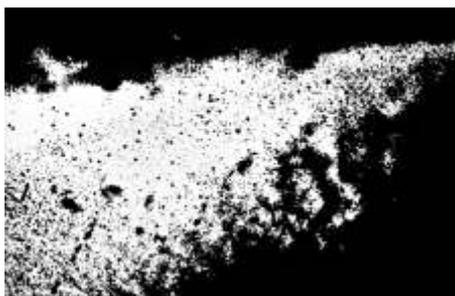
Ernesto de Sousa and Jorge Peixinho

Featuring live acoustic instrumental improvisation
by the Lisbon Contemporary Music Group

2 June, 18:00 and 20:30

Stage of the Grande Auditório
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Cover: Slide from the series 'Letters ("Out-of-Tune Lyre")', 1975–81



Slides from the series 'Abstracts', 1975–81

In the centenary year of the birth of the multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker, curator, critic and essayist Ernesto de Sousa (Lisbon, 1921–1988), the CAM, in collaboration with the Foundation's Music Department and musicologist Jaime Reis, presents on the stage of the Grande Auditório *Luiz Vaz 73* (1975–81), a mixed-media work by Ernesto de Sousa and composer, pianist, maestro and professor Jorge Peixinho (Montijo, 1940–Lisbon, 1995). The presentation also marks the incorporation of the physical work and associated documentation of the two artists in the CAM Collection (inv. 19E1908), in 2019, thus completing a cycle of works of conservation (restoration, digitalisation of analogue slides and digital transcription of magnetic tapes), study and material and historical reconstitution of the work.

The title *Luiz Vaz 73* evokes the work *Os Lusíadas* [The Lusiads], by Luiz Vaz de Camões, published 400 years previously in Lisbon, in 1573. The ten cantos of the epic poem inspired the composition of a work of electronic music – an electronic 'symphonic poem' – with the same title, produced by Jorge Peixinho in Ghent, at the Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music, between 1973 and 1974. As part of his training at this Belgian institute, Peixinho had already composed one of his first electronic works, entitled *Elegia a Amílcar Cabral* [Elegy to Amílcar Cabral] (1973), in homage to the Bissau-Guinean politician and revolutionary, assassinated on 20 January 1973.

This historical and political present reappears in the mixed-media work *Luiz Vaz 73*, a 'musical/visual involvement' begun in 1975 by Jorge Peixinho and Ernesto de Sousa, based on four of the ten cantos of the aforementioned 1973–74 composition.

The collaborative work *Luiz Vaz 73* is simultaneously a spatial project – 'tending to represent an "involvement", that is, the art-of-space' (Ernesto de Sousa in the catalogue of *Luiz Vaz 73*, 1976) – and a visual and sound project, based on a structural coincidence and simultaneity between sound/music and images/projections (or between visual images and sound images), in other words, the dialogic encounter between a visual structure and a musical structure, derived from a literary text.

With a strong performative component, the work takes place in a 'common', informal and non-hierarchical space (in contrast to a traditional show or concert), conceptualised to receive the visual matter, sound matter, corporal presence and experience of the spectators, in a sensorially dense and intense involvement.

The spatialisation of the sound sources (distributed in quadraphony) and the multidirectional projection of the images constantly call on our attention/movement, our free will (we must choose) and our imagination (or *imagery*). In the current re-presentation, due to restrictions imposed by Covid-19, the audience is sat on the stage of the Grande Auditório in predefined places, it not having been possible to recreate the informal experience of the spectator's free circulation in the space.

Luiz Vaz 73 incorporates a set of black-and-white and colour slides, produced from photographs by Ernesto de Sousa, some made specifically for this project, others recycled from previous projects, a gesture we also come across in the musical composition. This set of slides, taken from the six historical presentations of the work, between 1975 and 1981, was organised into structural thematic series – 'Rocha/Paisagem' [Rock/Landscape], 'Mar' [Sea], 'Fogo' [Fire], 'Automóveis' [Cars], 'Corpo' [Body],



Slides from the series 'Rock/Landscape', 1975–81

'Cartazes' [Posters], 'Fuga das Ninfas' [Flight of the Nymphs] (which gave rise to the work *Olympia* in 1979), 'Areia' [Sand] and 'Letras/Poema "Lira Destemperada"' [Lyrics/Poem 'Out-of-Tune Lyre'] – alternated or repeated between the cantos. In the intervals or interludes, Ernesto de Sousa introduces images which he entitles 'Arame Farpado' [Barbed Wire], 'Guerrilheiro' [Guerrilla] (allusion to the African independence struggles) and 'Confraternização na Guiné' [Fraternisation in Guinea] (between Bissau-Guinean and Portuguese soldiers in Guinea-Bissau). The artist invokes both the 'universe' and its elements or states of matter (earth, air, water, fire), and, in a reference to the present and to modernity, the 'monsters' or monstrosity of the war (car wrecks), the political propaganda which invades the streets in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary period (the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974), the intimist and poetic presence of the body, sometimes in erotic representations of the female body, and the written word/poem which exhorts a 'deaf and hardened people' ('Out-of-Tune Lyre' from Canto X of *Os Lusíadas*). The work ends visually with the words/images 'barricada' [barricade] – 'difícil poema' [difficult poem] – 'd'amor' [of Love].

The work *Luiz Vaz 73* is thus part of an 'archive' of images based on the artist's poetic, affective, cognitive and political relationship with the world, an 'archive' which Ernesto de Sousa recycles and reuses in other mixed-media works, like *O Teu Corpo é o Meu Corpo* [Your Body is My Body] (1965–75), *Nós Não Estamos Algures* [We Are Not Somewhere] (1969), and *Almada, Um Nome de Guerra* [Almada, Nom de Guerre] (1969–72), the latter two also produced with the collaboration of Jorge Peixinho.



Slides from the series 'Fire', 1975–81

In *Luiz Vaz 73*, the visual and sound images simultaneously evoke the poem of Luiz Vaz de Camões and contemporary Portuguese history, where the recent past of the dictatorship, colonialism and war converges with the present of the joyful triumph of democracy and African independences and a possible future 'absolutely other to utopia' (ES, 'Camões e o Absolutamente Novo', in *Ser Moderno em Portugal*. Lisbon: Assírio e Alvim, 1998, p. 257): 'from a formal point of view I was particularly interested in the constant interaction between past, present and future and, on the other hand, the opposition between historical and mythological levels. From an ideological perspective, I tried to project onto the present day the progressive values emanating from the poem' (Jorge Peixinho in the catalogue of *Luiz Vaz 73*, 1976). These references to *Os Lusíadas* and to the present day are made, however, without renouncing the autonomy of the images, in favour of 'a certain abstract, intimist arbitrariness' and of a free 'polysemy of optical and sound images' (ES in the catalogue of *Luiz Vaz 73*, 1976).

Spatially, the diaporamas, based on the thematic groups, are distributed, inside each canto, across three or four screens, arranged on the lateral limits of the 'scenic space'. The current re-presentation, which follows the script of the 1976 project, presented in National Gallery of Contemporary Art of Belém, arranges four projector screens (P1, P2, P3 and P4) in the space, the last of these larger than the others, which also display the images of the interludes. The presentation of *Luiz Vaz 73* in Belém also involved the visual collaboration of Fernando Calhau, namely in the conception of the space, in one of its more detailed versions, which features in the poster created for



Slides from the series 'Erotic', 1975–81

this event. Here, the space is heavily marked by a geometric and modular design which encompasses the support structures, like the platforms for musicians and the projector screens (four screens instead of the three used in the previous presentations and, possibly, in the subsequent ones). Fernando Calhau had already collaborated with Ernesto de Sousa and Jorge Peixinho on the mixed-media work – or 'exercise of poetic communication' – *Nós Não Estamos Algures* [We Are Not Somewhere], on lighting and the production of posters, the latter alongside Carlos Gentil-Homem. For the presentation in Belém, a catalogue/brochure was also published with photographs and texts by the two artists, on the visual and musical structure of *Luiz Vaz 73*, and with a text by Godfried-Willem Raes, entitled *Revelações Portuguesas no 5.º Festival Internacional de Mixed-Media Gand 1975* [Portuguese Revelations at the 5th International Mixed Media Festival, Ghent, 1975], originally published in *Colóquio-Artes*, no. 22, April 1975.

In its sound component, as well as the recorded electronic musical composition, the work features live instrumental improvisation, originally directed by Jorge Peixinho, using the regular instrumental performers of the Lisbon Contemporary Music Group (GMCL). Founded by Jorge Peixinho in 1970, the GMCL will have been present at all public presentations of the work, although their participation varied in number and configuration. The improvisation, which happens primarily in the moments of interlude and transition between cantos, uses instruments outside the conventions of Western erudite music, including 'little instruments' (of which Peixinho made frequent use during this period) and traditional African instruments.



Slides from the series 'Posters', 1975–81

The current re-presentation, under the direction of Jaime Reis, who is responsible for the spatial transmission of Peixinho's electronic music, features GMCL members Ana Castanhito (harp), Jorge Sá Machado (cello), José Sá Machado (violin), João Pereira Coutinho (flute), Luís Gomes (clarinet) and Ricardo Mateus (viola), all of whom also improvise with the aforementioned unconventional instruments (most of them the originals used by Peixinho). The presence of the musicians and the acoustic instruments in(side) the space – on the modular platforms – is also a visual and performative presence.

Another structural element of the work is time – 'rupture times, rhythmic supports and spatial equivalences' (ES in the catalogue of *Luiz Vaz 73*, 1976) – established by the musical composition, a temporality or a time which signals each of the four moments, which marks the rhythm of the sequence of images inside each moment, and which determines an experience of the total duration of the mixed-media work (approximately 90 minutes). The four moments are based on four of the ten cantos of *Os Lusíadas* – cantos I, III, IX and X – the 'most relevant of the poem' (JP in the catalogue of *Luiz Vaz 73*, 1976). The initial electronic musical composition of *Luiz Vaz 73*, produced for the whole poem, will never have been presented publicly.

One of the main formal and documentary elements of the work is the existence of various scripts, written by the two artists for the different presentations. The scripts are open, with instructions whose interpretation leaves room for subjectivity, recalling the scores of the Fluxus movement; scripts which determine the rhythmic, thematic and temporal sequence (duration) of the four moments/cantos which structure the work and its interludes,



Slides from the series 'Cars', 1975–81

but which leave open the sequence of images within each theme/projection and the instrumental improvisation. Historically a diaporama – a projection of analogue slides, digitalised in the current re-presentation – the presentation of images was also determined by the characteristics and limitations of the technological equipment, leaving more room for improvisation and the unexpected.

The mixed-media work *Luiz Vaz 73* was presented for the first time in January 1975, at the 5th International Mixed Media Festival of Ghent, in Belgium. In April of that year, it featured in the event '24 heures communication', in the Palais des Beaux-Arts of Brussels. The first presentation of the work in Portugal took place in February 1976, in the National Gallery of Contemporary Art in Lisbon (then also known as the Belém People's Market pavilion/gallery). The work was also presented in the Monastery of Santa Clara-a-Velha, in Coimbra, during the Week of Art in (of) the Street, organised by the Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra (June 1976); in Garcia de Resende Theatre, in Évora, in the context of the National Encounter of Amateur Film making (June 1977); and at the Viana do Castelo Music Academy in the context of the Second International Congress of Electroacoustic Music (November 1981).

Posthumously, the work *Luiz Vaz 73* was re-presented in the Multi-Purpose Room of the CAM, as part of the exhibition *Anos 70. Atravessar Fronteiras* [70s. Crossing Frontiers] (2009), after intense research and collaboration, namely with composer and musicologist Jaime Reis, confirming the possibility of preserving it and re-presenting it to future generations, after the artists' passing, and opening the door to its future incorporation into the CAM Collection, in 2019.



Slides from the series 'Nymphs', 1975–81

Twelve years after this last public presentation, a new gaze and curatorial reading of the sources, the documents produced by the artists (some unpublished), the physical materials of the work (restored and transcribed slides and magnetic tapes) and the technological supports (historical and current) was needed. The acquisition of the work also allowed for the location of Jorge Peixinho's original magnetic tapes, making it possible to access to the electronic musical work in its entirety (dated 1973) and to identify the parts of the cantos used in the mixed-media work from 1975 onwards. Furthermore, with a view to the future, so that other researchers and curators may propose new presentations and readings of the work, an extensive documentary record of its state of preservation and reconstitution was made. Now, as in the bygone years of the 1970s, we can become, once again, spectators in the flesh.



Slide 'Guerilla', 1975–81

barricada

**dificil
poema**

d' amor

Slides 'barricade', 'difficult poem', 'of love', 1975–81

Luiz Vaz 73

Ernesto de Sousa and Jorge Peixinho

A CAM production, in collaboration with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Music and Central Services Departments

Credits

Curators: Rita Fabiana and Jaime Reis with Diogo Marques and Sofia Mendes

Audio processing and restoration: Jaime Reis

Image processing and restoration: Lupa – Luís Pavão, Ida. and Sónia Casquiço

Scenography: Sofia Mendes (adaptation of the scenic project by Fernando Calhau for the Galeria de Belém in 1976)

Musicians: GMCL – Lisbon Contemporary Music Group, with the participation of Ana Castanhito (harp), Jorge Sá Machado (cello), José Sá Machado (violin), João Pereira Coutinho (flute), Luís Gomes (clarinet) and Ricardo Mateus (viola)

Musical direction and sound spatialisation: Jaime Reis

Stage direction: Helena Simões

Technical coordination: João Hora

Stage lighting: João Cachulo (team leader), João Marcelo, Jorge Filipe Gonçalves, Pedro Santos and João Teixeira

Video: José Gouveia, João Hipólito, Ricardo Silva, Jorge Serigado and Artur Machado

Sound: Tiago Jónatas, Nuno Silva and João Dionísio

Stage set-up: Ricardo Santana (team leader), Jorge Gonçalves, Althieris Leal, José António Vasconcelos, Danilo Veloso and Ricardo Junceiro

Stage machinery: Leonel Picareta (team leader), Ricardo Rosa, Tiago Santos and Alexandre Vitorino

Leaflet

Text: Rita Fabiana

Text editing and proofreading: Patrícia Rosas and Ana Teresa Santos

Translation: Kennistranslations

Graphic design: Pedro Leitão

A special thanks to Isabel Alves.