

Ana Linhares

Cabinet of Constellations: How to tell the story of a gap

26 January 2018 - 16 March 2019

'How to tell the story of a gap' is developed as a second part of the project Cabinet of Constellations, nominated for the prize Novo Banco Revelação 2018 and exhibited at Serralves.

The second part of this project constitutes an approach to narratives and a fragmentary imaginary of collections of images, objects and references gathered and organized during the last year.

'Cabinet of Constellations' (Part I), developed between 2017 and 2018, is a project based on the exploration and research of references and narratives related with a colonial past and the storytelling in a family.

This project starts with a photograph I took to a friend in the south of Spain, in which he stands alone and is confronted with the landscape, in the horizon is possible to see the coast of North Africa. I considered this image as a metaphor to the contemplation of domination forced upon distant territories and the impact of this violent legacy. This image is linked to several objects, references and images through a methodological approach in the attempt to explore connections and narratives. Each montage potentiates new links, new narratives.

The point here is not so much the historical veracity or correspondence but the narratives and storytelling empowered by this 'reading' and interaction and interpretation of these links, images and stories. In this sense, the way a country with a colonizing past teaches and represents history is not surprisingly, through a white occidental and patriarchal lenses. Not always we recognize this legacy that subjugated other territories to oppression and obliteration of their cultures, language and memory. It is important then, to consider the possibilities of unlearning History or considering it from a Transhistorical point of view. The practice of storytelling and exploration of narratives can be a powerful tool for understanding/reconsider history and social contexts.

The family objects displayed belong to my parents and were passed through generations, and some of them are difficult to know what they are or the context in which they were acquired. Were these objects bought to local artisans in colonies or in a more complex market system to please the occidental customers taste of 'exotic' cultures? In which circumstances are these objects and images related? What do they mean in a family context or in a broader context?

Ana Linhares (Vila do Conde, 1990)

Has a degree in Fine Arts by the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto and she is currently attends the Fine Arts and Design Master degree by the Hogeschool voor de Kunsten Utrecht (HKU), in the Netherlands where she works and lives. Ana Linhares explores the image in an experimental and conceptual way, playing with different levels of meaning besides their medium and technical characteristics. The artist works with themes around territory, colonial domain, memory and fictional intervention, construction of narratives and manipulation of stories. Her work is part of collections in Portugal, Spain and Brazil. She is currently working at Ellen de Bruijne Projects in Amsterdam. She participates regularly in projects and collective and individual exhibitions since 2012. This year she won the Residency Award by the Fundación ENAIRE, JustMad 9, Madrid and she was one of the finalists of the Novo Banco Revelação 2018 Award.

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How to tell the story of a gap?

The stories passed from generation to generation, together with objects and images can tell only a fraction of a story in a context that doesn't belong to us.

What stays hidden? What is intentionally removed?

There are things that are left unsaid or unexplained.

Stories that lose a narrator. Details left behind.

Objects that lose their function. Images that do not correspond anymore.

Gaps between narratives.

Curatorial research allows experimentation of concepts and methodologies not just in the exhibition-making process but also on the production of knowledge. In this way, it made sense to me to present one of my readings 'The Transhistorical Museum' (2018), which is composed by several texts on the concept of transhistoricity, as well as temporality, and the way some institutions and curators approach collections, challenging the established narratives of Western History. Considering that the conception of Museums and collections is a Western invention based on colonial dominance, the history of exhibitions and private collections (for example Cabinets of Curiosities) takes on an unreal organization of its objects not understanding or considering their histories and narratives, presenting them on an occidental and patriarchal lenses.

In this context, this show establishes an attempt to approach material and this historical burden in an interrogative way, experimenting montages, links and fictions. The exploration of archives and material develops in a processual and performative dynamics approaching research material in a montage table specially designed for this exhibit. This table sets a ground for exploration of research material and the approach to decolonization curatorial practices, the work on archives, unlearning and deconstruction of established narratives and what is missing or erased.

In this show, it will be present a display of research methodologies and its articulation with fragmentary narratives in approaches to archives and how a gap and erasure dimension can potentiate interpretations and superimpositions of narratives. The artist approaches these themes and problematics through image installations, as well as a performative-lecture on the fiction/ essayistic nature of this show, intervening with the material and references.

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1. SMITH, L. T. apud CLAVO, M. I., LÓPEZ, O. F.; *The Transhistorical Museum*; Valiz; Amsterdam; 2018.