



MARIANA CALÓ & FRANCISCO QUEIMADELA

House in movement

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Mariana Caló and Francisco Queimadela live and work in Porto. Their shared practice, begun in 2010, sits at the crossing point of experimental cinema, material research, and the observation of territory. Their works weave relations between landscapes, gestures, organic forms, and systems of signs. Through analogue film, drawing, photography, and painting, they develop a visual language in which mythology, an archaeology of images, and attentiveness to the transformations of the natural and urban world intermingle.

They belong to a rare breed of artists today whose practice can be called cosmogonic – world-creating. Provided «world» is understood not as a closed totality but as an enveloping system of things, signs, fragments, and presences, between which lines of meaning can be drawn. Rather than worlds, one should speak of «possibilities of world,» which it falls to the visitor to realize for themselves, and whose mode of habitation belongs to whoever passes through it. This ideal visitor, moving between the works over the years, from one medium and material to another, would inevitably be seduced – never seized – by an impression of fluidity and sensuality. The liquid element – overflowing milk, a mirror-pool, tide pools where children marvel, a river bearing the raft of utopia – is omnipresent in their films.

This cosmogonic dimension makes exhibition-making a medium in its own right within their work. «Estado de espírito,» their recent retrospective exhibition last year at the Galeria Municipal do Porto, offered a dazzling demonstration of this. The exhibition they conceived for sissi club is its smaller-scale

counterpart, a microcosmic variation animated by the same play of resonance and transparency.

To envelop without enclosing, never to totalize. It begins with an alteration of light: dimmed, filtered, so as to create the conditions for an attention that is at once broadened and sharpened, a receptivity to the signs of an inner universe that is not cut off from the outer world but designed to help decipher it. There are the translucent filters on the windows, and above all *House in movement*, the work that greets the visitor at the threshold. Created in situ from silk panels salvaged from an installation originally conceived for the 34th São Paulo Biennial, this mobile structure transforms the gallery entrance into a colored airlock: the red is set, and the visitor is then free to play with the mobility of the panels to compose their own effects of transparency and opacity.

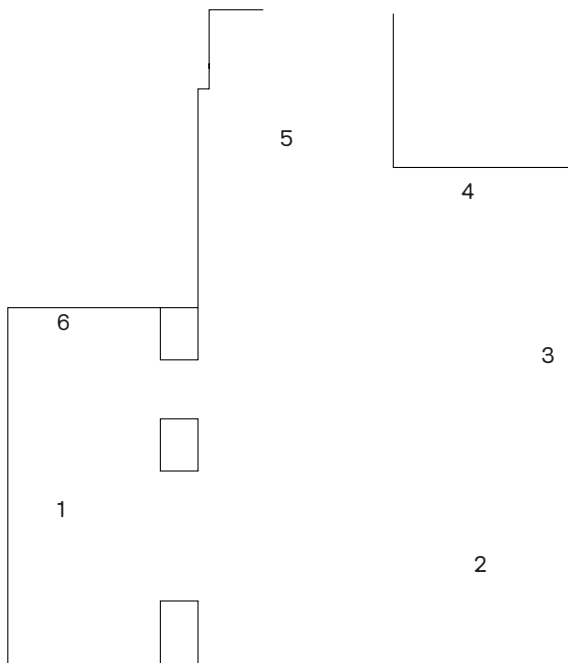
Beyond the threshold, a world opens – or a possibility of world – governed by a play of correspondence and conversion between the archaeological and the semiotic. The ruins, traces, and vestiges that make up the images projected on the screens or hung on the walls are also the signs of a possible language, whose use remains to be invented. Mariana Caló and Francisco Queimadela are relatively laconic artists, not much given to theorizing. Their speech withholds itself, receding like the waters of a reservoir whose retreat, in times of drought, lets the ruins of a village resurface. *Aceredo*, the title of the video, is the name of a Galician village submerged in 1992 during the construction of the Alto Lindoso dam. In 2025, thanks to an exceptional drought, houses and

memories resurfaced, as though time had turned back on itself. Capturing this ephemeral emergence on film produces the striking image of a very contemporary catastrophe, while suggesting the possibility of a reversal – a possible conversion of ruins into signs to meditate on, going forward.

The same plasticity of time governs the film facing Aceredo, as its reverse shot. Dessins, tactiques et signes: une archéologie urbaine is a montage of photographs taken in the streets of Porto, which wards off the ephemeral nature of traces and images scattered through public space by the act of collecting. «Walls, poles, fences, and other surfaces besides offer us clues to urban life, to forms of marginalization, social injustice, migration, and war, while also bearing the traces of activism and a longing for another world» (Caló and Queimadela). The voice of John Berger, reading a passage from his celebrated Ways of Seeing, invites us to reflect on this transformation of signs, inscriptions, and images through an altered perception and temporality.

The two films face one another: one silent, almost monochrome, the other richly colored and accompanied by a highly charged voice. Hesitating between shadow and drawing, trace and line, the two paintings hung on the wall complete the enigma. Deciphering it may begin with the movement of a dreaming eye and a thought drifting between the paintings and the films.

At the entrance or the exit – for here, space, like time, is reversible – a third painting reformulates both the enigma and its decipherment: bones, the fragments of a decomposed body, or the letters of an unknown alphabet. An illiterate alphabet.



- 1 House in movement, 2026, wood and silk pannels
- 2 Drawings, Tactics, and Signs: An Urban Archaeology, 2025, video, colour, sound, 14'24"
- 3 Inverted Karma, 2025, acrylic on canvas
- 4 Levitating Shadows, 2022, acrylic on canvas
- 5 Aceredo, 2025, 16mm film transferred to video, colour, silent, 7'
- 6 Painting No. 2, Cypher series - Analphabet Alphabet, 2018, acrylic and gouache on canvas