

Monkey Business

João Paulo Feliciano

Opening 19 January | 10 pm
20 January to 7 March



João Paulo Feliciano's artwork is defined by a relentless experimental approach through which everything that surrounds him can be appropriated and converted into pliable substances. Within his body of work we can list images, objects, paintings, sculptures, sound installations, music, text, lyrics and several other strongly performative actions. All these contribute to outline his practice as an author that chose to refuse the possibility of being classified through the media he uses as well as through a particular style.

His filiation as an artist, concerning both visual arts and music, strikes us as unusual by not being the natural result of an academic evolution and education in these areas, but the consequence of a compulsive attention to other authors, their medias and works, resulting in a sharing, self-learning process.

We can say that Feliciano is an independent artist as, in a broad sense, he does not restrict himself neither to a fixed artistic genre nor the traditionally evolutive hegemony of a curricular path, aligned with the rules of the art market and the system of relations and protocols it imposes.

Under the title *Monkey Business*, the exhibition reveals a political, ironical stance that brings into question, once more, the position of the artist and the gallery within the universe of contemporary art. João Paulo Feliciano does not yield to the temptation of using a political discourse as expression of an activist or interventional action. On the contrary, he reveals his working processes using the gallery space as an extension of his daily activity as an artist and cultural producer. The exhibition is not built as a system of relations between different pieces but as a discourse that flows between the presentation of recent work and the appropriation of the space by displacing part of the imaginary contents of the artist's studio to the gallery. As if the exhibition was just one more moment in his daily life.

Converting and reframing spaces, different media and objects, is a recurring strategy and distinguishing feature in JPF's work. A sculpture composed by two similar deactivated electronic organs disposed back to back, united by a flat mirrored surface dislocates the observer's perception while at the same time the artist bombards the acknowledgement processes we are subjected through the semantic internalization of the work's title, *A Pair of Pairs*.

Funky Junk I and *Funky Junk II*, images printed on canvas, depict a stack of keyboards (still lifes?). These pieces inhabited the artist's working space, stored at random and haphazardly handled, bordering abuse, they were later recovered to reveal a daily routine where the production of the artwork is a momentary process that solely depends on the artist decision.

This approach to production process is transferred to the gallery space through the presence of several objects, pertaining to different typologies and cultural references: merchandising (related with his music work), music albums, catalogues and books produced in different moments of his career both as musician and as an artist. The absence of art pieces in the last room of the gallery disrupts the context of the show. There, we can find a heterogeneous collection of objects for sale. It is as if the gallery and the show incorporate a garage sale of personal items, all available for a small price. A flea market that ironically questions the status of the art market and consumers. This intervention, abruptly discontinuing the exhibition, emphasizes the desire of the artist to use strategies and actions unrelated to the hierarchy of the art object as a trade value.

Monkey Business can be seen as an index of João Paulo Feliciano's body of work. The exhibition offers clues to his actions, signs of a cumulative, kinetic, multidisciplinary and transgressing artistic process. Returning to the title of one of Feliciano's first pieces, *Mind Your Own Business*, we can recover this open approach on his work. Dating from the early nineties, this video confronts the viewer with the impossibility of perceiving the rapidly changing images. An ironic moment that stems from the everyday life of an author fuelled by the stimuli that impel him to think about the artistic practice as a way of life.

João Silvério

January 2012

João Paulo Feliciano (Caldas da Rainha, Portugal, 1963)

JPF is a visual artist and musician whose work spans a broad spectrum of media and creative strategies. Selected shows include: *Sonic Boom – the Art of Sound*, Hayward Gallery, London, 2000; XXVI São Paulo Bienal, 2004; solo show at the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Oporto, 2004; *The Possibility of Everything: JPF selected works 1989-1994* (major survey show), Culturgest, Lisbon; *The Blues Quartet*, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. As a musician he has collaborated, among others, with Rafael Toral, Christian Marclay, Phill Niblock, Lee Ranaldo or David Toop. In 2009 he founded the dance orchestra Real Combo Lisbonense, dedicated to exploring the heritage of early portuguese pop music. At the same time he launched his own record label – Pataca Discos – through which he has released the music of Real Combo Lisbonense as well as debut albums for singer and songwriter Márcia and the band You Can't Win, Charlie Brown.