

# ARQUIPÉLAGO



EXHIBITION BY OTO HUDEC

23<sup>th</sup> may — 6<sup>th</sup> june 2015

Oficinas do Convento, Montemor-o-Novo

The artistic project ARCHIPELAGO that started in the beginning of year 2014 connected two distant places: a rural region of Trás di Munti in Santiago island in Cabo Verde and the immigrant neighborhoods in Lisbon.

In the village Trás di Munti people live in harmony with nature, between the mountains, on a plateau with a sea-view. The inhabitants live a life based on traditions, depending on the earth, rain and the sea.

The inhabitants from the suburban neighborhoods from Lisbon region, as Cova da Moura, Fim do Mundo, or Santa Filomena live in a urban reality, with a precarious work, or unemployed and in some cases facing the danger of losing their house, because of the decisions of local government motivated by private interests. These places are connected by immigration:

a life in transition, continuous, driven by a dream of a better life.

The reality of these locations is shown in the exhibition in Oficinas do Convento, Montemor-o-Novo through various artworks: sculpture, documentary videos and drawings. These artworks are often realized with participation of youth or in case of the village in Trás di Munti with participation of women ceramists.



The principal piece of this exhibition is the *sculpture of a turtle* approximately 2,5m long, hanged from the ceiling. The turtle is a symbol of Cabo Verde, but also a representation of a life of the immigrant who travels long distances between the islands of origin and European continent and its countries where he looks for the livelihood for his family. On the top of the turtle's shell there will be installed the models of houses created by youth from these neighborhoods. The piece will be covered with a red clay powder, to be painted later on with fragments of the urban poetry of these youth; raw or even abstract.

The second part of the exhibition are documentary videos that present various participatory activities realized in Lisbon and in Cabo Verde, especially ceramic pieces created in Trás di Munti: the plates made by ceramists with paintings of their hands and a documentary of the realization of murals on the house of Isabel, one of the ceramists who still produces her pieces in a traditional way. These films, more than a report of an artistic work are a portrait of a rural life in Cabo Verde, an homage to the manual work of the women of this village.

## Massa Pé

That's how it is called by the inhabitants of Trás di Munti, the clay that sticks to their feet during rainy season. Very red and plastic, a fine and fertile powder.

With this clay the pieces of pottery are painted acquiring an orange tone, becoming polished and more beautiful. .

In Marcia hands, on the island, the drawing. In the room Chapel, in the Convent, the three-dimensional object. On a shell/hill, covered with ruddle from Monfurado in Alentejo, the sharing moments are suspended, the breaks in the journey, in one of those breaks the possibility of young rappers make the inscription of fragments of their poetry,



urban, they were born here in Europe, walking on a concrete floor in their suburban neighborhoods. And through their art giving visibility and sense to their lives.

In the beginning of 2014 we traveled often in Vadi's car, from Tarrafal village to this community in the extreme north of Santiago Island, situated behind Monte Graciosa. A plateau with wind and sea as a background, in

the distance. The children play with cars made of wire and cans. In this exhibition the models are shown as toys laser cut MDF. Memories from those travels in Cabo Verde where people and cargo circulate day by day, pick ups covered by bonnets advertising of our consumer society, which are removed for wedding processions.

Oto Hudec finishes his PhD in Bratislava and it is in the framework of the Faculdade de Belas-Artes de Lisboa that he accomplishes these artworks and his practical research. The Oficinas do Convento in Montemor-o-Novo welcome him showing the results of his work.

Coming and going started a long time ago, flying between islands creating archipelagos of affections, trying, perhaps, to inscribe and claim happiness in each thing, the same happiness mentioned by Mariazinha when, in the documentary, she speaks about taking care of her animals.

These works close and open new cycles. They question the role of the artist when working in such contexts. Confront us with our falling apart worlds. An opportunity for visibility offered by art for new political positions, necessary for a change.

*Si nhós kre nu ta bai Portugal. Nu ta bai inxina fazi poti na skola. (Kreole)*  
(If you want, then we will go to Portugal. We will go and teach how to make pots, in the school.)

Virgínia Fróis

On the shoulders of time that  
passes  
I still saw a past  
present, in the face  
Of the people, who's youth  
was  
already missing  
All of that  
I found in Trás di Munti.  
Gentle ones confounded  
with art  
An art half manufactured with  
clay  
The more was done  
More was poetry  
And even more art

Mário Loff  
Tarfalal



*Arquipélago de Trás-os-Montes*, 2014. Acrylics on wall, 400 x 230 cm. Trás di Munti primary school, Santiago Island, Cabo Verde with the participation of Trás di Munti primary school students.



Above: *Mariazinha and Cow*, 2015. Acrylics on wall, 500 x 450 cm. Assomada de Trás di Munti, Santiago Island, Cabo Verde. Below: *The House of Isabel*, 2015. HD video, 20:23, movie still.

Here it seems Africa  
The culture is present  
it breaths, it lives  
Nobody will take it away, Ham

It has people who wake up  
5 in the morning, without a hiss  
To clean  
The Lisbon offices

Despite all Kova da Moura  
Is a good piece of ground  
with people of a good heart

Ermelindo Quaresma aka Lord Strike  
From the song Kova da Moura



*Union di Ghetto*, 2015. HD video, 04:07, movie still. Documentation of Nu sta djunto event in Quinta da Princesa neighborhood.



Above: *Hands of sr. Martinho*, 2014. Laser print on paper and acrylic on wall, 200 x 150 cm. Cova da Moura, Lisboa. Below: *Hands of Isabel*, 2014. Acrylic on wall, 750 x 650 cm. Cova da Moura, Lisbon. Realized with participation of children from Cova da Moura neighborhood.

All photos courtesy of  
Gandy gallery  
[www.gandy-gallery.com](http://www.gandy-gallery.com)

Artist's website:  
[fishisflying.blogspot.com](http://fishisflying.blogspot.com)

Website of the project:  
[archipelago-art-project.blogspot.pt](http://archipelago-art-project.blogspot.pt)



*Turtle*, 2015. Plywood, polystyrene, plaster, ocher powder, ceramics, 250 x 180 x 120 cm. Oficinas do Convento, Montemor-o-Novo realized with participation of youth from Cova da Moura, Fim do Mundo and Torre neighborhoods, Lisbon. Photo by Tiago Fróis.

