

CAROLINE PAGÈS GALLERY // PRESS RELEASE



Some tools used in the preparation of the exhibition © Armanda Duarte, 2012

Armanda Duarte

Desculpa, grilo, roubei a tua casinha

Opening Saturday, September 29, from 6 to 9 pm

September 29 - November 24, 2012

Caroline Pagès Gallery

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Opening hours: From 3 to 8 pm every day except Sundays, and by appointment.

Division, work and proportion.

In the work of Armanda Duarte we frequently find signs of a compromise between the object we recognise and that same object as something different, subject to an artistic practice that is systematic, methodical and austere. At times, this feeling of austerity resides in an act which gives it a simple, stripped down appearance, which the artist develops as a task with a precise aim, with a very narrow underlying connection between her thought and its relationship with the meaning of the objects and qualities of the materials used, uncovering a need which arises from their being handled and transformed.

This practise, which is present in works such as *Action Line* (1999) or *Meio Caminho* (2009), for example, is a constant underlying theme in her work, in that all the work contains a very strong poetic and conceptual density. It is, nevertheless, reduced to the essential and separated by devices or artifices which are not necessarily critical to the work which confronts us. On the other hand, the materials used lay bare the weakness apparent in their manufacture and expose a memory of this process in the workshop, allowing us to challenge the sometimes exalted precondition of the exhibition as atypical and necessarily distant from the relationship that the viewer can construct from the work of art.

In this exhibition, entitled "Desculpa, grilo, roubei a tua casinha", (Forgive me, cricket, I have stolen your home) Armanda Duarte presents a series of works guided by a proportional (and metric) rationale which is mathematical in origin and which has also informed her research and subsequent collecting, as well as the procedures and decisions underlying the whole working process. Some of the titles of the works exhibited are exemplifications of this process: "net weight", "drained net weight" or "copy of a dinner dish". In this latter work, the artist copies an earthenware dish onto cotton material. The finished work is the result of a mould which acquires the original shape of the domestic object and can be taken as a piece of design, a practise known as "overt design". In the other two works, the idea of weight evokes first and foremost domestic, daily activity, reinforced by the fact that the materials (beans, oranges, tins of preserved food, etc.) will usually be used in this context. Both "net weight" and "drained net weight" use the name and weight from instructions written on the packages that once contained them. Added to this system of relations is her use of colour, such as reddish stone dust, which resembles the colour of red beans. This is a product of searching and collecting beyond a continual, physical action (a task) which is repeated until the stone is completely crushed, turning it into powder, thereby reviving the artisanship used in other more traditional areas, such as in the preparation of pigment.

With this way of working, Armanda Duarte displays a mound of earth on an opened plastic sheet. This work, entitled "Abertura" (Opening), is the result of flattening a plastic sack which contained the earth we see, to confront us in a surprising way with the definitively illusory experience, in that it deconstructs the idea of measurement, volume or equivalence, changing our perception of the models and canons we internalize. The artist, however, takes as her point of departure common actions and practices, without losing sight of a strongly poetical component and the almost physical idea of design as a modulator of thought and artistic practice.

The title of this exhibition is the cornerstone which puts us to the test, confronting us with the deconstruction and inversion of a close and familiar world which suddenly seems to disappear from the world of our convictions.

João Silvério

September 2012

Armanda Duarte (Portugal, 1961) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Lisbon and regularly exhibits in museums, institutions, biennials, galleries and independent spaces in Portugal and abroad. *Desculpa, grilo, roubei a tua casinha* is the artist's second solo exhibition at the Caroline Pagès Gallery.

Her most recent solo exhibitions were *Três degraus, uma laje* curated by Bruno Marchand, in 2010, at Chiado 8, Lisbon, *Uma Combinação (2)*, at the Centre d'Art La BF15, in 2009 in the city of Lyon, France, and *Uma Combinação*, curated by Francisco Vaz Fernandes at the independent space Plataforma Revólver, Lisbon, 2008.

Collectively, she recently participated in the travelling exhibition *Zona Letal, Espaço Vital - Obras da CGD*, curated by Sara Antónia Matos shown at the MACE (Elvas), Tavira Municipal Museum and at the Museu da Imagem em Movimento (Leiria) between 2011 and 2012. Also in the exhibition *Res Publica*, curated by Helena de Freitas and Leonor Nazaré, at the Gulbenkian Foundation (2010) and in *A Luz, Por Dentro*, at the Quinta da Fonte da Pipa, Loulé, curated by João Silvério (Program ALLGARVE 2009).

The artist also exhibited at Centro Cultural de Lagos (*Armanda D., Angela F., Ana V., F. Fernanda, Maria L., Susanne T.*, curated by Alexandre Barata, 2007) and in the Belém Palace (*Jardim Aberto*, curated by Filipa Oliveira, 2007). Since 2000, the artist took part in many collective exhibitions among which the one at the JAP Modern Art Centre in Lisbon (*Meeting Points*, 2004), the ones at Culturgest Lisbon (*Mediterrâneo: um novo muro?*, curated by Fátima Ramos & António Pinto Ribeiro, 2001 and *Um oceano inteiro para nadar*, 2000), the ones at Culturgest Porto (*A colecção Ivo Martins*, 2004 and *Novas aquisições da CGD*, 2002), and the one at the D. Luis I Foundation in Cascais (City Desk Sculpture Prize 2001).

Her work can be seen in the public collection of the Caixa Geral de Depósitos (Culturgest Portugal) and is represented in the private collections of Ivo Martins and artist Pedro Cabrita Reis as well as of other collectors in Portugal.

For more information and visuals please contact the gallery.