

TQat

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DANIEL BLAUFVUS

*the day
are numbered*

“A diary is also an act of resistance.”

Daniel Blaufuks

We create time, but it soon overpowers and devours us. Memory is our way of trying to trick time; attempting to evade it, trying to undo the erosion of this dark water that corrupts from within the salt statues of our lives, our achievements, our views of the world.

João Pinharanda, in the book *The Days Are Numbered*



Daniel Blaufuks

the days are numbered, 2024

Ink and instant photographs on paper;

21 × 29.7 cm

Daniel Blaufuks has worked on the relationship between public and private memory, a constant theme of inquiry in his work as a visual artist, pursued chiefly through photography and video and presented in installations, books and films. In 2007, he published *Sob Céus Estranhos* (Tinta-da-china) – based on his film *Under Strange Skies* from 2002 – which earned him the award for best photography book of the year in the international category at PhotoEspaña. He was also awarded a prize in 2007 for his work about a concentration camp in the Czech Republic, additionally presented in the book *Terezín* (Steidl, 2010) and the film *As If* (2014). In 2016, he won the

AICA/MC/Millennium BCP Visual Arts Award for the exhibitions *Attempting Exhaustion* and *Léxico*. More recently, he has published *Não Pai* (Tinta-da-china, 2019) and *Lisboa Clichê* (Tinta-da-china, 2021). He has a PhD from the University of Wales, for which he wrote his thesis on the relationship of photography and cinema to the work of W. G. Sebald and Georges Perec and to the themes of memory and the Holocaust. His films – “expanded photographs” – have been shown at various film festivals and his latest works examine the resistance to German occupation in Brittany and colonialism in São Tomé and Príncipe.

The Betrayal of Time

This diary is the perfect example of the work Daniel Blaufuks undertakes in all of his prior or parallel photographic and video works. In simple, horizontally placed sheets of A4 paper, the artist numbers the days/years as they pass by. Onto them he glues instant photographs (rarely more than one or two per page) and a few cut-outs from newspapers and magazines, adding handwritten or stamped phrases (often his own or quotations without any reference to the author or source) in the languages he is most fluent in (English, German, Portuguese and French). There is rarely any explanatory logic to the relationship between these different elements – their autonomy is only constrained by the visual composition, and each “day” imposes a pronounced poetic freedom in which the power of the written word often underpins the repetitive ordinariness of the images.

We created time and immediately felt hemmed in and devoured by it. Memory is a betrayal of time. We have always tried, without success, to escape it, to negate its erosive influence – a Sisyphean task in which Blaufuks, who exposes to the world the weight of the myriad epochs and memories (family, personal, historical, political, cultural, ...) he carries, participates.

According to the artist, keeping the diary (begun in May 2018) has become a life-long task. Shown here are the entries from 2023 alongside a selection of days from previous years and the first few months of 2024. By exposing his memory, his own days and those of the world around him intersect. The artist reacts to his surroundings, fighting time’s voracious race against things. He may not cancel it out, but at least he retards it, delaying their erasure. But it is significant that he calls this work a “non-diary”, and that he refers to the faces of some of the interlocutors he puts on these pages as “non-portraits”. This double negative classification is a confession of impotence that exposes the inevitable contradiction of all memory records – that they are destined to be forgotten.

In the inexorable productivist accounting of time (that shredder of lives) “days are numbered”; but what occurred in them or what Daniel Blaufuks retains from them is reduced to an image devoid of identity, a “subject-less” phrase or a context-free fact (personal or collective). Losing, often almost immediately, their value as testimonies of any identifiable historical period, these images are part of a process of collective and programmed amnesia. Individually or jointly, the diary’s pages assert themselves more as successive states of mind vis-à-vis the manifestation of the eternal return of things, of seasons, of places, of facts... Before the predictability of the domestic scenarios, marked by the repetitive presence of a table and a window, where the circular movement of the light marks the time and the wilting of the flowers the days; and before the vertiginous carousel of his journeys, between the mundanity of wars and injustice and the marking of certain more notable political and cultural events, one witnesses the inexorable death of Blaufuks’ friends and heroes, the blossoming of water lilies in his garden and his ghostly exposure.

João Pinharanda

Daniel Blaufuks
the days are numbered
17/07 - 07/10/2024

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Agenda
Masterclass with Daniel Blaufuks,
followed by a conversation with
João Pinharanda in the exhibition:
05/09/2024, 15.00 and 18.30

Publications
The book *The Days Are Numbered*
is published on the occasion of
the exhibition.
Available at the museum shop.

Follow the museum's channels
for more information.



visit guide



17/07/2024 → 07/10/2024

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