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Rui Moreira Transe

The title chosen by the artist for this exhibition, *Transe* [trance], reveals the intensity he puts into creating his pieces and the energy he attempts to transmit through them. Deriving simultaneously from the summoning of primordial forces and erudite references, they require a process of slow and profound execution and meticulous realisation.

Over roughly 20 years of work, Rui Moreira has built a personal mythography of myriad meanings. There are implicit narratives in his figurative works, where the clothes, props and gestures (references collected from Japan, North America, Trás-os-Montes, India and Amazonia) accentuate the symbolic and composite value of the figures: human, animal and vegetal (at times sharing the space and at others metaphorically merged). In turn, the non-figurative images are chiefly composed of discrete elements (crosses, linear segments or polygons) whose organisation creates hypnotic zones that resemble Islamic art, oriental mandalas and medieval rose windows, or even the illusion of a modernist or rational composition. But in reality, every creation accumulates signs of deviating and escaping from any rules. Finally, land, sea and sky merge in his landscapes, multiplying and superimposing viewpoints.

As a whole, Moreira's images almost replace the descriptive and interpretative word: they unite to the sound of the world (obsessive percussive music or the repetitive chanting of magic rituals) and its movements (the frenzied dances of the trance-like beings possessed by spirits who inhabit his drawings).

The artist constructs his work out of opposite extremes: travelling in the deserts of Morocco, participating in the ceremonies of the *Festas dos Caretos* (pre-Roman rituals that survive in Trás-os-Montes), focusing on the literary, artistic and cinematographic cultures of places such as Japan or Russia, and incorporating details from visual artists, writers, film directors or musicians who share the same vision of the world as an extreme experience.

By combining all of these references, Moreira is simultaneously shown to be the only living Portuguese artist who persistently and consistently uses folk art as a source of inspiration and one of the few Portuguese artists who intersects with non-Western culture from an interior and non-illustrative perspective.

What connects Moreira to the present is what distances him from an ephemeral present; what unites him with the past is his connection to a living past, to a world of traditions and cultures which, submerged by global uniformity, can only be seen from a future imagined today.

João Pinharanda

Moreira can take months to complete one puzzle: drawing and colouring day and night, shut in the studio like in a diving chamber, an anechoic chamber – it can be in Lisbon, with the noisy city around him, which he neither hears nor sees; it can be in Trás-os-Montes, with the village, mountains, fast-flowing brooks, birches shimmering in the morning light, shut in with his small drawings and walking as if he might find a pack and could howl and hunt with the wolves. But it was also thus when he drew in the Desert – he wove a halo of light and heat around him, sat down and saw the landscape from this translucent cocoon, his eyes blinded by the sun, confusing sand and water, dunes and waves, mountains and clouds.

Rui Moreira's pieces dispense with chronological order; they are separate narrative moments, but they wish to be seen (understood) as "complete narrative sequences", because the themes he develops interlace and constantly return to themselves. To link them together, we can use copulative conjunctions, as if between each piece there were no causal, consequential or finality articulations..., but just an accumulation, a series of "ands". Adversarial and oppositional ones exist; we've seen that Moreira's work is made from successive pairs of opposite or contradictory meanings; this crack, however, exists in each image (or each series), and it is unproductive to seek it between each image or series. Therefore, one can also talk, in many works, of collage techniques – a discipline that the artist uses autonomously at certain times (some film posters, the montages at the start of this catalogue, etc.). Not fusional collage but collage by accumulation or overlapping, with the elements blending in the image without merging.

Excerpt from the text "Rui Moreira: *Lhiêngua de Artiston*" by João Pinharanda, included in the book published on the occasion of the exhibition.

¹ A reference to one of Álvaro Lapa's literary works (Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim, 1994). Lapa was a painter and writer who is one of the essential references in Rui Moreira's work.



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Rui Moreira (Porto, 1971) studied at ar.co – centro de arte e comunicação visual in Lisbon and at the Art Institute of Chicago. His work is often based on his travels and explorations. Through his creations, he experiences and restores the physical and psychological perceptions inherent in places like the Morocco desert, the source of the Ganges, the Amazon jungle, or the Trás-os-Montes region in northern Portugal.

In 2014, the Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean presented *I Am a Lost Giant in a Burnt Forest*, a major exhibition of his work. In 2015, Rui Moreira's work entered the Collection Société Générale. In 2016, a set of ten works was exhibited at the Pavilhão Branco /

Galerias Municipais in Lisbon. Entitled *Os Pirómanos*, this exhibition was then shown at CIAJG – Centro Internacional das Artes José de Guimarães, in 2017.

In 2018, his work was included in the group exhibition *Saudade – Unmemorable Place in Time* at the Fosun Foundation in Shanghai and the Museu Coleção Berardo in Lisbon, and in 2023 in another group exhibition entitled *I III III IV V – five decades of ar.co – centro de arte e comunicação visual*, held at the Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, in 2023.

Rui Moreira has been working with the gallery Jeanne Bucher Jaeger since 2008, presenting several solo shows, the most recent of which was *The Passengers*, in 2022.



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1 *The Machine for Entangling Landscapes III*, 2009
Gouache and gel pen on paper; 120 × 160 cm

2 *Big Black I*, 2013
Archival pen and Indian ink on paper; 215 × 140 cm

3 *Telepath III (dedicated to Herberto Helder)*, 2015
Gouache, gel pen, Indian ink and colour pencil on paper;
215 × 140 cm

All images courtesy of the artist and
Galerie Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris-Lisboa

Rui Moreira

Transe

26/02/2025 → 02/06/2025

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Agenda

Guided tour with Rui Moreira
and João Pinharanda:
22/03/2025, 18.30-19.30

Masterclass with Rui Moreira:
06/05/2025, 10.00-22.00

Conversation with Rui Chafes,
Filipa Correia de Sousa,
Rui Moreira and João Pinharanda:
22/05/2025, 18.30-20.00

Publications

Available in the museum shop, the
book *Rui Moreira - Transe* combines
unpublished texts by Filipa Correia
de Sousa, Rui Chafes, and
João Pinharanda with reproductions
of numerous works by the artist.
Also noteworthy is a work that
Rui Moreira made with André Cepeda
specifically for this publication.

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exhibition guide



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