

**R-HUMOR.** Artist: Catarina Simão. Curator: Cristiana Tejo. Exhibition from 26<sup>th</sup> January to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Galeria Avenida da Índia 170, Lisbon.

Over the last ten years, Catarina Simão (Lisbon, 1972) has developed a practice at the intersections of art and research, drawing out the contradictions in the images and narratives obscured from history. Simão consecutively translated these disciplinary practices into an essay-like work that makes use of installation, documentary, video, writing, and photography. The main work of the exhibition questions a symbolic venture, activated by a set of 245 ethnographic photographs, which the artist found in the archives of the Grassi Museum of Ethnology in Leipzig, Germany. For the most part, these photographs represent the original 1961 collection of Makonde Art in the Nampula Museum of Ethnology – a Portuguese heritage colonial museum in northern Mozambique. Are those images a caricature of whites? Mimicry? A distortion of the “African art” tradition? Bad taste? Anticolonial subversion? An untimely message? What are the origins of the ideas formed in these photographs (or despite them)? In an operation of explicit recursiveness, these images speak or are made to speak, granting intentionality to involuntary, affectionate, or accidental “disfigurations” – which are always violent. The installation of R-Humor reminds us of how important it is not to lose sight of a kind of knowledge circulation that belongs to both the public and secret domains. Propaganda, ethnographic images, war photographs, and all sorts of official documentation contain and convey in them, their regime and their contract with institutions and power: bearing specific information, images know what is not to be known. Virtuality, secrecy, laughter and rumor, myth and satire: these carry the force of a public secret. Thus, R-Humor foreshadows artworks that are based on a suspended program. As a political form or an artistic form, they are part of a temporarily closed archive, in which the secret is not eradicated by exposing it.

### **R-HUMOR Conversation**

These conversations will bring together guests with different experiences within the fields of cultural activism, journalism, film research, photography and history. The challenges offered by the archive for the operation of its incompleteness, the devices developed to work on issues that involve intense struggle and, as such, find themselves on unstable ground. These issues are raised in the *R-humor* exhibition with a decentralised and demultiplied perspective of the dominant disciplinary tradition. Photographic collections, films, essays and documents exhibited will be the starting point for a conversation with each of the guests, whose interests and career paths overlap to some degree with research that Simão has carried out for the *R-humor* exhibition and which invariably involve the history of Southern Africa and Mozambique, but also historical inferences to European countries such as Germany and Portugal in particular.

**February 8, 4-6pm.** Conversation with Leonel Matusse, Tania Adam and Catarina Simão.

TANIA ADAM is a Mozambican journalist and cultural producer. She lives and works in Barcelona and is the founding editor of *Radio Africa Magazine*. Her work focuses on analysis and thought generated in the African diasporas of the world, with special emphasis on artistic disciplines such as music and photography. She has curated Public Programmes such as *Microhistórias da Diáspora. Experiências incorporadas na dispersão feminina* ('Microhistories of the Diaspora. Experiences in female dispersion', La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, 2018-2019) and the exhibition *Making Africa* (CCCB / ICUB, 2016). LEONEL MATUSSE is a journalist for *Jornal Notícias* and lives in Maputo. He is the coordinator of the website *Mbenga.co.mz* (the platform of which he is one of the founders), a lecturer at the School of Journalism, a literary, music and film critic and a researcher. In 2018, Matusse initiated a series of reports in Mozambique on the issue of the restitution of African heritage, leading to the first seminar on the subject, organised by the academic association Oficina de História (Mozambique) in 2019.

**February 22, 4-6pm.** Conversation with Omar Thomaz, Raquel Ribeiro and Catarina Simão. RAQUEL RIBEIRO is a journalist, writer and professor of Portuguese Studies at the University of Edinburgh. She is a member of the Cuba Research Forum at the University of Nottingham. OMAR RIBEIRO TOMAZ is an anthropologist and lecturer at Unicamp, Campinas. He has developed research in the area of the anthropology of war and conflict. He has conducted research in Brazil, Germany, Portugal, France, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and in territories of central and eastern Europe (in particular Serbia, Bosnia and the former East Germany).

**March 1, 4-6pm.** Conversation with Caio Simões Araújo and Catarina Simão. CAIO SIMÕES DE ARAÚJO completed a degree in International Relations at the University of Coimbra and is a researcher. He has worked specifically with issues raised by the intersections between diplomatic and international history, histories of colonialism and decolonisation in the Global South and transnational stories of race and (anti)racism. He is currently developing projects at the Centre for Indian Studies in Africa (CISA) at Wits University in Johannesburg.

**March 7, 4-6pm.** Conversation with João Pedro George, Filipa Lowndes Vicente and Catarina Simão. FILIPA LOWNDES VICENTE is a researcher in history at the Institute of Social Sciences at the University of Lisbon. Her historical research work involves transnational and transcolonial approaches, focusing on the modes of production of knowledge and the intersections between visual, material and written culture and colonialism. JOÃO PEDRO GEORGE is a sociologist, chronicler and literary critic. He is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of International Relations (IPRI) in the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at *Universidade Nova* in Lisbon.