

Catarina Simão is an artist and researcher. She lives and works between Maputo and Lisbon. Simão has been working with the notion of Archive, especially engaged with colonial history and the independence of Mozambique. Since 2009, her films, essays and installations have been presented internationally, namely at the Serralves Museum, Africa.cont, Manifesta 8, Reina Sofia Museum, Ashkal Alwan, New Museum, The Kyiv School, Kino Arsenal, Garage Museum, MASP, among others.

Catarina Simão is a member of Oficina de História (Mozambique).

[www.catarinasimao.com](http://www.catarinasimao.com)

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Ana Barata, António Bettencourt, António Ntimbanga, Bernhard Guttsche, Catarina Mateus, Catarina Real, Carlos Pina, Corinna Lawrenz, Fernanda Gurgel, Filipa Vicente, Giselher Blesse, João Bento, João Farelo, João Pedro George, João Santos Vieira, Jorge Freitas Branco, Markus Ruff, Paulo Costa, Pedro Guilherme Kulyumba, P. Cotton Mehboob, Ruis Luis, Ruy Guerra, Sónia Casquicho, Susanne Sporrer, Vavy Borges.

# CATARINA SIMÃO

## R-HUMOR

Curator: Cristiana Tejo

26.01 – 05.04.2020

Despite the importance of the body of work Catarina Simão has been developing over the past ten years, carefully diving into Mozambique's colonial archives, it has not yet been cohesively shown in a solo exhibition in Portugal. In addition to giving more visibility to women artists, we believe that it is urgent to deepen discourse around the Portuguese colonial past and its resonances today. Creating an exhibition of Simão's work is challenging: she is an artist-researcher whose practice questions the notion of the archive through ongoing and lengthy projects. Her process is always open to review and implies collaborative partnerships and different forms of public presentation. Her exhibition displays include documentation, texts, videos, sound, and drawings, with films and video installations as her main forms of expression. How do we present art with such dense research to diverse audiences?

*R-humor* is not a retrospective, but it weaves together an overview of the issues and documents present

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in most of the artist's works from her most recent research on the Nampula Museum (1956) located in the North of Mozambique, and her photographic inventory of the Makonde art collection, recently located in a German museum. The material comes from the fifth volume of studies on the Makonde done by anthropologists Margot and Jorge Dias during the colonial period. Their research, which forms the central core of the exhibition, was neglected for presenting the clear influence of art by whites on Makonde sculpture. In these records, the transgressive strategy of these colonized artists is evidenced when they use satire, irony, and humor to portray their colonizers (Portuguese icons and agents of the colonial system) in a disruptive game of being critically positioned in a subtle way. The exhibition's title connects the words rumor and humor when it comes to realizing the trick of what can and cannot be said, and how it can be said. According to Simão, it refers to "the circulation of knowledge that belongs to both the public and secret domains, and that identifies with a particular type of violence. Thus, the historical perspectives constructed around the very imagery that the documents reproduce assume an awareness of the normalization underlying the construction of a concept of time (historical, chronological, evolutionary) reinforced by the idea of 'progress'."

The works that comprise the exhibition consist of materials from public and private archives with varying degrees of confidentiality, such as extracts from propagandistic televisual information from Mozambique, Portugal, Germany, and the United States (from 1930 to 2019). The artist organizes this information in a large index that must be decoded by visitors.

Cristiana Tejo, curator

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

### **R-humour conversations**

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-humour* 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-humour* 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, 4pm**

#### **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, 4pm**

#### **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, 4pm**

#### **Conversation with Caio Simões de 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, 4pm**

#### **Conversation with João Pedro George, Filipa 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.