

# NUDEZ – UMA INVARIANTE Pedro Morais

CURADORIA Óscar Faria



## This heart laid bare

The legend of “Meister Eckhart and the naked boy” is well-known within monastic literature. It is a brief dialogue between a child and the medieval Rhenish philosopher, perhaps written by a disciple or follower. The allegory tells the story of an encounter in which the Dominican mystic and the young child find, in the act of renouncement, in nakedness, the way to the revelation of the essence of the heart: poverty as a fundamental virtue of existence. It is through this renouncement, by which we come closer to nothingness, that we are confronted with the fact that life and death are of equally supreme importance. We should not, therefore, waste our time:

– The Meister took the boy to his monastery cell and said,

“You may take whichever clothes you wish.”

“But then I would be king no longer!”

answered the boy before disappearing.

The boy was God himself, having come to entertain Himself with the Meister.

**até 01 / 04 / 2018**

**terça a domingo**



**10h–13h e 14h–18h**

**PAVILHÃO BRANCO**  
**entrada pelo Palácio Pimenta**  
**Museu de Lisboa**  
**Campo Grande**

“Nudez – uma invariante” [Nakedness - an invariant] is not only the title of Pedro Morais’ exhibition, but also the name of a project being revealed for the first time. This work, which occupies the first floor of the Pavilhão Branco, is dedicated both to Leonardo da Vinci, for whom painting is “cosa mentale” [something mental], and to Marcel Duchamp, who projected this idea to a fourth dimension. A third name running through this exhibition is Hogen Yamahata, a contemporary Zen master from Japan whose voice is heard reciting one of the central texts of that school, the “Heart Sutra”, including the following passage: “(...)all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are neither produced nor destroyed, neither defiled nor immaculate, neither increasing nor decreasing.”

Through this work, Pedro Morais uses painting to offer a reflection on the impermanent character of existence. This work might even be called a pictorial installation, in which primary and complementary colours are mirrored in a constant shifting of tones - the “sfumato” so favoured by Leonardo - inviting us to discover a space replete with symbolism in which we witness the passage from virgin to bride, with a central role for the figure of motherhood. L.H.O.O.Q. [“Elle a chaud au cul”], as written by Duchamp in 1919 after painting his moustache on a reproduction of the Mona Lisa.

The exhibition on the ground floor also includes a series of models with their respective boxes, together with recent works by Pedro Morais and the first two “cells” made by the artist in 1986. Viewers are thus able to experience a trajectory of rare consistency in the Portuguese art of recent decades, a work of brutal exactness in which elements of different traditions converge, including medieval Rhenish mysticism, alchemy, Zen, painting as “cosa mentale”; from Leonardo to Duchamp via Dacosta and the solitary spaces of Raymond Roussel or practice in independent workshops – architecture, painting, experimentation - not only as an apprentice but also as a teacher.

This face-to-face encounter in which any crack lets the light get in, when dust settles on the ground or clouds cross the sky, anything can happen: a stream of air, a sneeze, the appearance of a flame, the sound of running water, the glow of fireflies, golden seeds on blue earth, a blade that emerges from a wall and - of course! - the poppies. It is enough to be seated for the event, for the nakedness, to happen:

“Beyond the mind, exists nothing. Flowers are born and die - as simple as the clear night.” (Pedro Morais)

As an almost pocket-sized retrospective, this exhibition immediately transports us home, together with the heart that is, once again, laid bare.

### **Pedro Morais (Lisbon, 1944)**

He attended courses in Painting at Escola António Arroio and Escola de Belas-Artes de Lisboa, in Lisbon, and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He lived in Paris between 1965 and 1977, and was recipient of a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation from 1967 to 1968. Back in Portugal, in 1977 he taught at Escola António Arroio, in Lisbon. Between 1979 and 1994 he led the educational project “Atelier livre AT.RE”. Since 1984 he has been responsible for the programming of Lino António Gallery. Between 1975 and 1976 he annulled all of his previous art production and biographical information (1964-1976) in the actions *LETTRE OU FENETRE A SEPT AMIS – AUREVOIR PEDRO MORAIS – projectos e textos* [Letter or Window to Seven Friends – Goodbye Pedro Morais – projects and texts] (Paris, 1975) and *TU EST... , Duplo Triângulo – desenho, pintura e objectos* [YOU ARE..., Double Triangle – drawings, paintings and objects] (Paris, 1976). Since 1982 he has presented several creations and projects,

## **Óscar Faria (Porto, 1966)**

Art critic and essayist. He is currently pursuing a doctorate in Contemporary Art History at Universidade Nova de Lisboa with a thesis about the work of Álvaro Lapa. In recent years he has served as curator at Sismógrafo (Porto), Fundação de Serralves and Culturgest. From 1992 to 2011 he was a journalist and critic at the newspaper *Público*. He was a grantee of the American Center Foundation in 2008 and, from 2012 to 2013, the artistic director of Galeria Quadrado Azul. His work as editor of the television programme *Magazine Artes* (RTP 2) in 2004 and 2005 resulted in the production of approximately 100 programmes. He is the creator of the documentary “A Segunda Casa” [The Second House] (RTP 2, 2005) about the work of Helena Almeida.

He has collaborated with several national and international publications, including *Purple Prose*, *Camara Austria*, *Concreta*, *Jornal dos Arquitectos*, *Flauta de Luz* and *Confidências para o Exílio*.

He has written numerous essays, among which some highlights include those about the works of Rui Baião, Hernâni Reis Baptista, Vasco Barata, Artur Barrio, Gil Heitor Cortesão, Luis Paulo Costa, José Pedro Croft, Paulo da Costa Domingos, Priscila Fernandes, Renato Ferrão, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Heinz Peter Knes, Álvaro Lapa, Pedro Morais, Paulo Nozolino, Rui Nunes, Bruno Pacheco, João Queiroz, Sebastião Resende, Thierry Simões, Francisco Tropa, Pedro Sousa Vieira and Danh Võ.

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## **ONE-DAY EVENT**

**24 March (10am – 12pm / 3pm – 5pm)**

### **To be seen: around the work of Pedro Morais**

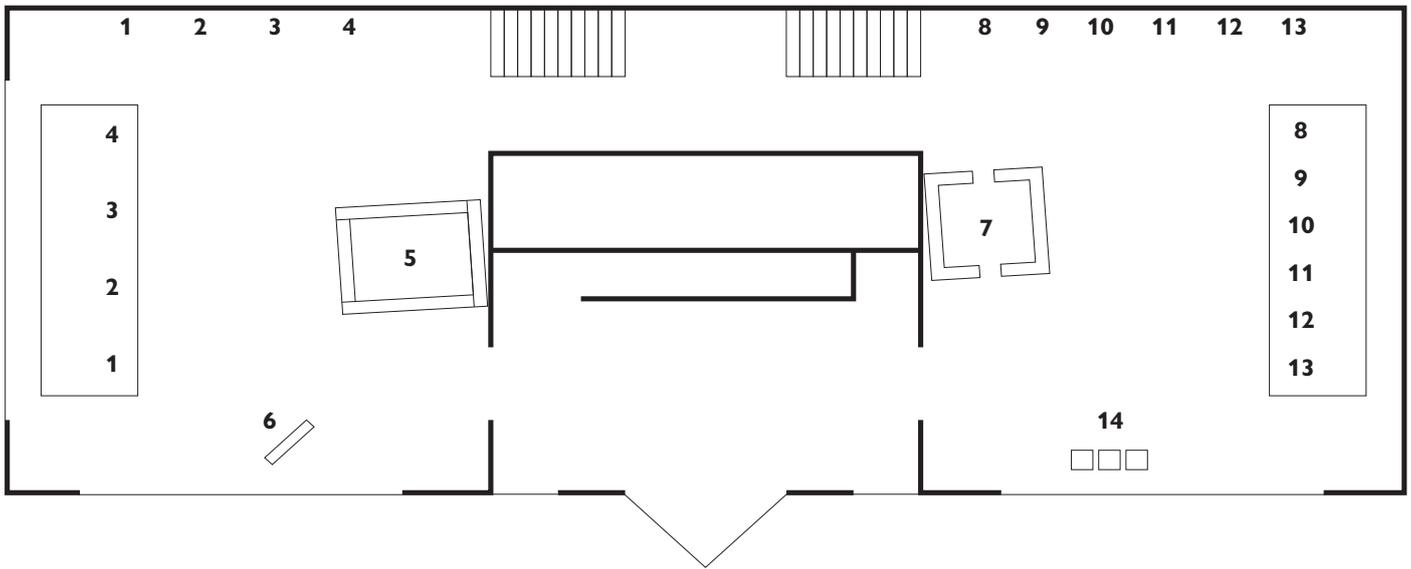
As part of the exhibition “Nudez – uma invariante” [Nakedness - an invariant], a one-day event will be held on 24 March to deepen knowledge of Pedro Morais’ work. “To be seen”, the title of the event, will bring together a number of people associated with the artist either through their writing, curation or in the context of the artist’s teaching.

The first half of the event will seek to reflect on Pedro Morais’ teaching at the António Arroio art school in Lisbon, where he not only founded the mythical “open workshop” but also programmed the Lino António Gallery. The second half of the event will focus on his artistic career, especially on his exhibitions at the National Museum of Ancient Art and the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art.

“To be seen”, organised by Óscar Faria in collaboration with the Municipal Galleries of the EGEAC, also features the participation of Rui Calçada Bastos, João Fernandes, Tomás Maia, Edgar Massul, Pedro Morais, José Luís Porfírio, Marta Soares and Francisco Tropa.

**10am to 12pm** | Pedro Morais, Óscar Faria, Rui Calçada Bastos, Edgar Massul, Marta Soares and Francisco Tropa

**3pm to 5pm** | Pedro Morais, Óscar Faria, João Fernandes, Tomás Maia, José Luís Porfírio



## level 0

**1.** Model and technical drawing  
*Locus-Solus I*, Oct. 87 / Apr. 88  
Polystyrene painted grey

**2.** Model and technical drawing  
*Locus-Solus II*, Apr.91  
Polystyrene painted grey

**3.** Model and technical drawing  
*Locus-Solus III*  
Polystyrene painted grey

*Locus-Solus III*  
Hollow wall made of painted lime and running water  
Museu Serralves, 2000/2001

**4.** Model and technical drawing  
*Dokusan III*  
Plaster and aluminium blade

*Dokusan III*  
Museu Serralves, Feb. 04 / Dec. 05  
Blade and anamorphosis on a whitewashed wall

**5.** *Locus Solus (Cell1)*, 1987/2018  
Concrete blocks, water, island (sandstone cone and gas burner) canvas and net

*Borrowed Landscape*, 1988/89  
Wood on marouflage,  
111 x 111 cm

**6.** *Duplicata*, 2012  
Double-pane glass, one side painted with black oil paint and suspended with a steel rope,  
111 x 111 cm

**7.** *Cell I*, Oct. 87 / Apr. 88 – Jan. 18  
Concrete blocks. Crumpled and smooth sheets of paper

**8.** Technical drawing and photographs\*  
*Desert IIIA, Desert IIIB and Desert IIIC*  
*Desert IIIA*  
National Museum of Ancient Art, Feb.83 / Aug. 84  
Triptychs room (Room 7 – Sixteenth century painting)

*Desert IIIB*  
National Museum of Ancient Art, Feb.83 / Aug. 84  
Triptychs room (Room 9 – Sixteenth century painting)

*Desert IIIC*  
National Museum of Ancient Art, Feb.83 / Aug. 84  
Zurbaran room (Room 13 – Seventeenth century painting)

\* © Edgar Massul

**9.** Model and technical drawing  
*MU – Moon on a dirt floor*  
Cardboard and balsa wood

*MU – Moon on a dirt floor*, Dez. 06 / Jun. 09  
Earth, viroc, paint and light

*Borrowed Landscape*, 1988/89  
Wood on marouflage,  
111 x 111 cm  
CAM – Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

**10.** Model and technical drawing  
*Ma – The Dance of the Fireflies*  
Cartão pintado

*Ma – The Dance of the Fireflies*  
Gypsum board, steel structure, platform and waxed pine flooring, led lamps, electronic system, computer cooling fan, pigment, stone dust and theatre spotlight and tripod, lamp and light filter  
Chiado 8 Arte Contemporânea, Jan/Mar 2015

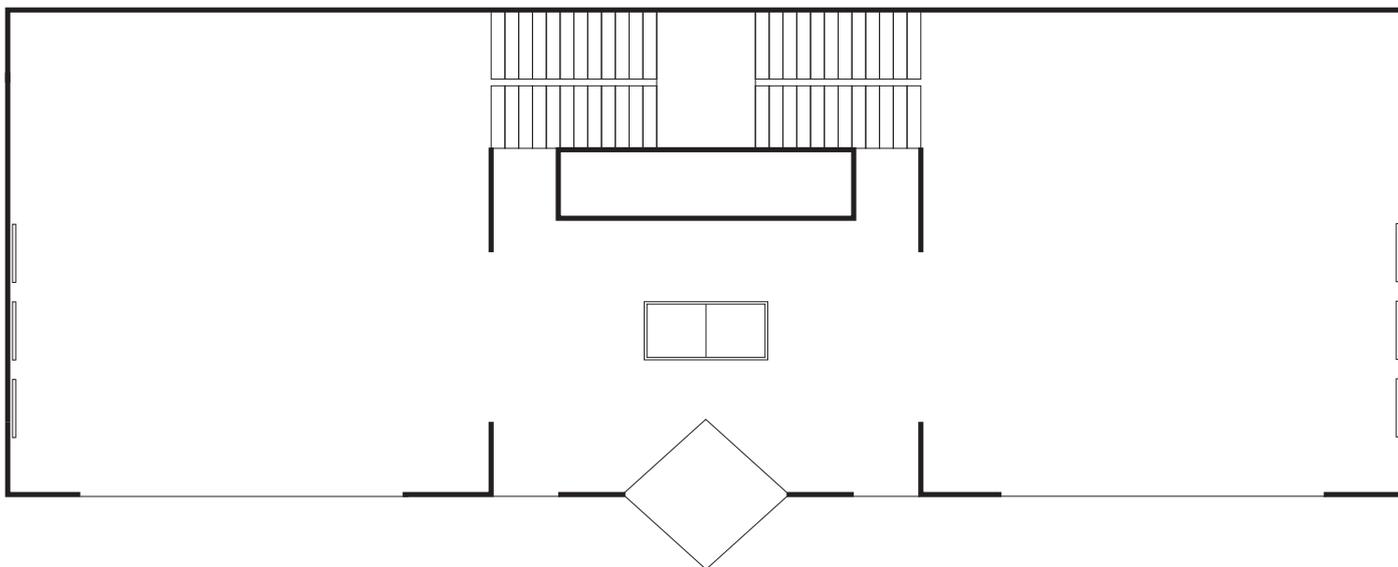
**11.** Model and technical drawing  
*MA – A Deep Blue Square*  
Painted cardboard and balsa wood

*MA – A Deep Blue Square*  
Viroc, pigment, granite block, glass, kerbstone, gravel and lamp  
CAM – Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

**12.** Model and technical drawing  
*TBlue Triptych– Look!*, Nov. 12  
Cardboard and balsa wood

**13.** Model and technical drawing  
*Ah! The poppies*, Sep. 15  
Painted cardboard

**14.** *Is (3 Still Lifes)*, 2015  
Dry earth painted blue and gilded olive, persimmon and pine tree seeds



## level 1

***Nakedness – a variant***, 2013/2018

***Nude Veil A (Yellow)***

***Nude Veil B (Blue)***

***Nude Veil C (Red)***

Oil on canvas, gilded frame, brass tubes  
and smoke machine

***Nude: Maternity***

Oil on canvas (white and black) neon  
and gilded frame

***Heart Sutra***

Recording. Voice of Zen Master Hogen  
Yamahata

***Nude Veil D (Violet)***

***Nude Veil E (Orange)***

***Nude Veil F (Green)***

Oil on canvas, gilded frame, brass tubes  
and smoke machine