

VIBRAÇÕES CENTRÍFUGAS

Héctor Zamora* and Victor Gama

Project resulting from the artistic residence
Passado e Presente – Lisboa, Capital Ibero Americana 2017

PERFORMANCES

20 and 21 April ► 10pm to 11pm

22 April ► 5pm to 6pm

galerias
municipais
PAVILHÃO
BRANCO

until 29 / 04 / 2018

tuesday to sunday



10am–1pm and 2pm–6pm

PAVILHÃO BRANCO
entrance by Palácio Pimenta
Museu de Lisboa
Campo Grande

Centrifugal Vibrations or 'Song of the Gourds'

Héctor Zamora (Mexico, 1974) currently lives in Lisbon, where, in March 2017, he presented the performance-installation *Ordem e Progresso*, the second site-specific project to occupy the MAAT Oval Gallery.

This presentation was part of the first edition of *BoCA – Biennial of Contemporary Arts and Lisbon Ibero-American Capital of Culture 2017*, in which Zamora was one of the artists invited to join the programme of artistic residencies promoted by Lisbon City Hall through the Municipal Galleries.

It is in this context that the *Centrifugal Vibrations* project was conceived and developed, in a format of research and experimentation unique to the residency programme, which initially foresaw a small presentation of the work in the studio in which it had been developed.

Composer and musician Victor Gama (Angola, 1960) was soon thereafter invited to take part in co-authoring the design of the entire sound project at the same time as the prospect of involving a full choir emerged. The size and complexity of the project was evident from early on, leading to its transferral from the studio to the Pavilhão Branco.

Centrifugal Vibrations is a performance-sound installation inspired by the shape, movement and sound of traditional Portuguese windmills and, in particular, of the ceramic gourds closely associated with them called *búzios*. Of various sizes and appearing in two different shapes, these ingenious gourds allow millers to use the resonance they produce to measure the direction and intensity of the wind and then manoeuvre the windmill sails accordingly to obtain the highest energy yield. The energy of the wind activates the rotation of the blades and the rods on which the gourds are fixed, whose weight is responsible for balancing rotation. Strategically positioned horizontally and with their mouths facing the wind, the gourds cut against the direction of the blowing wind, resulting in a distinctive sound being produced – the 'song of the gourds', as it is popularly known. Thus, from the inside of the windmill, the miller is able to manipulate the blades and align them with the wind in such a way as to optimise and best profit from their operation.

Along with Victor Gama, Héctor Zamora appropriated these objects and their sonority to create a series of sculptural and sonorous installations. Sound is the main focus of this project, while the multiple possibilities and variations created from interaction with the gourds are interpreted, experienced, edited and organised in a visual composition.

Zamora's artistic practice once again recovers an emerging subject of contemporaneity from a discussion that seemed dormant or unimportant. In today's industrialised high-tech society, many arts and crafts, techniques, methods, handicrafts and traditions face extinction, and such is the case with these wind-driven mechanical milling devices introduced in Portugal in the 16th century.

Joaquim Constantino, one of the protagonists of this project, owns a mill in the small town of Casal do Moinho de Frade in the parish of Ventosa, in Torres Vedras, which served as a basis for Zamora's research and which was an important instrument in the process of artistic production. Constantino is one of the few millers in Portugal who have resisted industrialisation and the mass production of flour. With a fascination and passion for the 'song of the gourds', he maintains his mill in operation according to the traditional system. The mill has been in his family for three generations and is a clear example of the importance that this advanced engineering equipment has had in Portuguese history and culture. In 2016, the application process for the inclusion of the traditional western Portuguese windmills for National and UNESCO Intangible Heritage listing was undertaken in an attempt to preserve their structure, original functioning and traditions. The landscape of this region of the country is strongly marked by the long-undervalued presence of windmills, the vast majority of which sit in ruins.

This performance-installation was conceived for the spatial characteristics of the Pavilhão Branco and, thus, was developed in three distinct movements. Each of them represents a physical occupation that is activated as a performative device, emphasising the physical dimension taken on by sound in the space, either by filling the void or through the circuit/pathway it traverses and defines.

The actions unfold in an itinerant way on the two floors, divided into short successive performances that, while seeming almost autonomous, are in fact interdependent, creating a narrative that makes up the project.

On the ground floor, where the structure of the building separates the space into two symmetrical rooms, the performance is divided into two movements.

In *Movement I*, a choir of 24 – divided into four suits and directed by João Barros – performs a piece by Victor Gama, exploring through the plasticity of the voice the hypnotising sonority of the 'song of the gourds'. The composition incorporates a 6-channel audio recording of the actual sound of the mill, captured and edited by Gama. The choir, positioned in a circle around the perimeter, invites the audience to experience the performance from the room's centre, with their voices creating the illusion of a multidirectional surround sound system in synchronised centrifugal movement.

In *Movement II*, 4 performers use 4 instruments specially designed for this project, and in particular for this exhibition, rotating small jars along a longitudinal axis. These instruments are inspired by the bullroarer, a prehistoric musical instrument from the Paleolithic period, used in ceremonies and rituals. The bullroarer had a rotating mechanism that gave it its characteristic vibration and sound which, at a certain frequency, was capable of being heard from kilometres away, making it an important, sophisticated and fascinating long-distance communication technology. Similar to the manipulation of the bullroarer, the circular kinetics and sound generated are direct references to the windmill, but with an interpretation in which the sonic intensity makes use of a completely different scale and speed.

Movement III takes place on the upper floor, where the performers give an authentic wind and percussion concert with instruments appropriated from the various shapes and sizes of a mill's gourds and jugs. The 'musical' arrangement proposed by Victor Gama begins with a certain structure that gradually opens up the space. The arrangement of the various pieces in space corresponds to the formation of concentric circles, in which the larger gourds sit on the floor while smaller jars and gourds are suspended from the ceiling, creating a sculptural dimension closely linked to the codes and formalities of ritual.

The voices, wind instruments, percussion and centrifugal movement combine to create a performance that awakens the senses and proposes the rediscovery and reinvention of the sounds of the wind.

As usual in Héctor Zamora's work, the exhibition is the result of action. It evokes the memory of space, of time and of people who have determined an event, and whose traces suggests an absence from which a new presence emerges.

His works must be received, seen, heard and experienced by people in a spirit of social involvement, as if at that moment they constitute a small community.

Sílvia Gomes



Héctor Zamora

Born in Mexico in 1974, he has worked in Lisbon since 2016.

Some of his major works have been presented in public spaces, including *An Essay on Flow*, an intervention in the building of the music school of architect Vittorio Garrati at the 12th Havana Biennale, 2015; *Errant*, a garden suspended over the Tamanduateí river, São Paulo, Brazil, 2010; *Atopic Delirium*, a public intervention at Av. Jimenez, Bogotá, Colombia, 2009; *Paracaidista, Av. Revolución 1608bis*, a shelter built on the façade of the Carrilo Gil museum, Mexico City, Mexico, 2004.

Some of his most important solo exhibitions are: *Ordem e Progresso*, MAAT, Lisbon, Portugal, 2017; *Memorandum*, Museo Universitario del Chopo, Mexico City, Mexico, 2017; *Dinâmica Não Linear*, CCBB, São Paulo, Brazil, 2016; *Ordre et Progrès*, Palais de Tokyo – SAM Art projects, Paris, France, 2016; *La réalité et autres trumperies*, Frac des Pays de Loire, Nantes, França, 2015; *Paradigma Panglossiano*, Redcat, Los Angeles, CA, EUA, 2012; *Reductio Ad Absurdum*, Architecture + Art, SMoCA, Scottsdale, Arizona, EUA, 2012; *Inconstância Material*, Galeria Luciana Brito, São Paulo, Brasil, 2012.

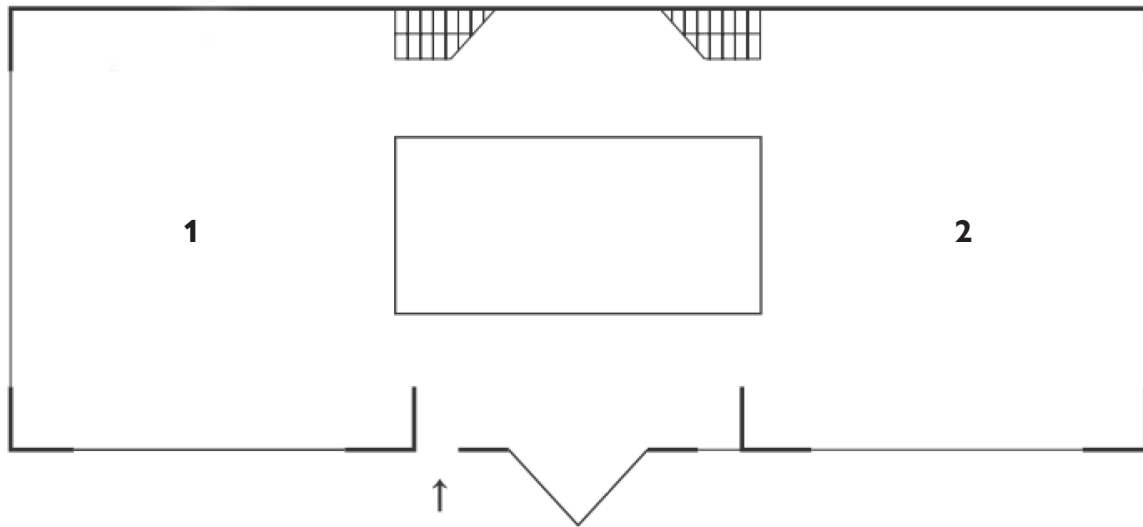
He currently participating in the 11^a Bienal de Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brasil, 2018. Participated in the 4th Ural Industrial Biennial Ekaterinburg, Rússia, 2017; in the 14th Lyon Biennale, Lyon, France, 2017; in the 8th Shenzhen Sculpture Biennale, China, 2014; in the 13th Istanbul Biennale, Turkey, 2013; in the 53rd International Biennale of Art in Venice, Italy, 2011; in the Encuentro Internacional de Medellín 2007 (MDE07), Colombia; in the 27th São Paulo Art Biennale, Brazil, 2006; in the 12th Cairo International Biennale, Egypt, 2010-11; in the Busan Biennale 2006, Busan, South Korea, 2006; and in the 9th Havana Biennial, Cuba, 2006. He has presented work in the following collective exhibitions: *Buildering: Misbehaving the City*, Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA; *PER/FORM*, CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid, Spain, 2014; *Blind Field*, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois, USA, 2013; *Resisting the Present*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris/ARC, France, 2012; and *Disponibile*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California, USA, 2010; among others.

He was one of the members of the *BMW Guggenheim Lab Mumbai*, India, 2012-13.

Victor Gama

Victor Gama was born in Angola in 1960. He is a composer, musician and creator of contemporary instruments. In his work of permanent research, he makes use of dynamic and variable elements arising in the composition process, including the conception, design and construction of the instruments with which the work is executed, thus giving rise to the *INSTRMNTS* series of instruments and installations. He has attracted commissions from ensembles and institutions such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, National Museums of Scotland, the Kennedy Center in Washington, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Tenement Museum in New York and the Prince Claus Fund in the Netherlands. Since 1997, he has developed the first digital archive of music and musicians from inland Angola with the *Tsikaya – Músicos do Interior* project. Among several works written for his instruments and chamber orchestra, he recently wrote the multimedia opera *3 mil Rios*, which he has performed in Amsterdam, Lisbon and Bogotá.

Trained as an electronic engineer, he has a master's degree in Organology and Music Technology from the Metropolitan University of London and has recently been artist-in-residence at Stanford University and MIT in Boston. His published works include the album *Pangeia Instrumentos*, produced by Aphex Twin for Replex Records, and *Naloga*, published by PangeiArt.



FLOOR PLAN LEVEL 0

Room 1

Movement I, 2018

Chorus of 24 singers + sound piece (edition of the audio taken from the mill in operation)

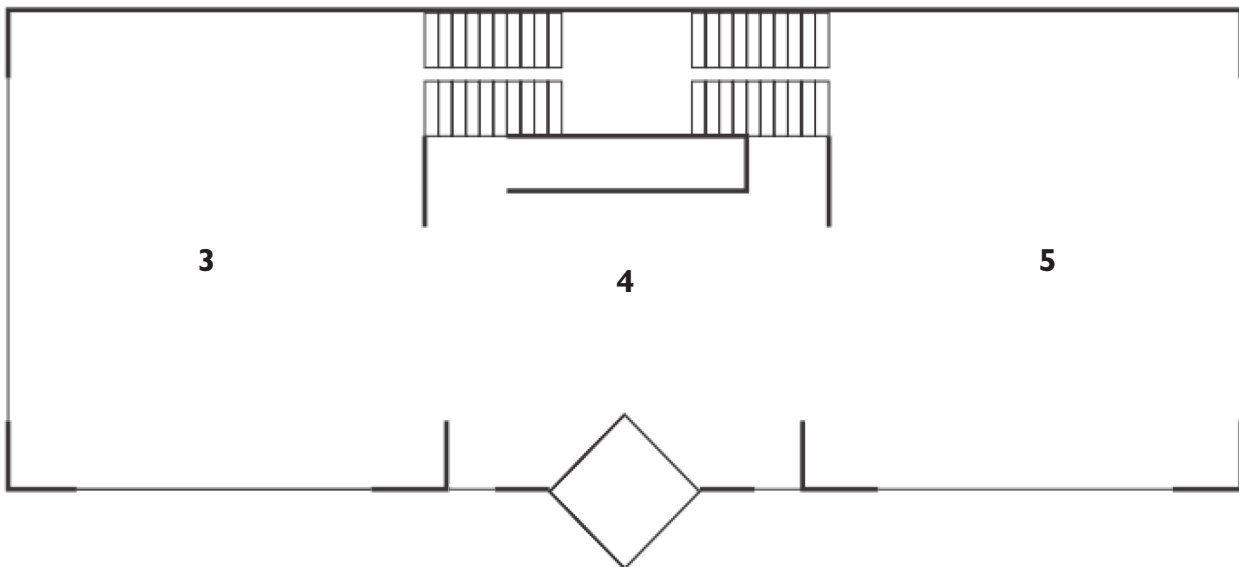
Choral Composition Victor Gama | Editing of the sound piece

Victor Gama | Direction João Barros

Room 2

Movement II, 2018

4 performers and 4 instruments (*Vibrocentrifugos*)



FLOOR PLAN LEVEL 1

Room 3

Movement III, 2018

Installation with 20 whelks and 32 windmill pitchers

Room 4

Sobre o Centrifugo, 2018

Video 00'28" FULL HD

Room 5

Movement IV, 2018

Sound installation with 20 whelks
Audio Editing Victor Gama

Acknowledgements

David Maranhã

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Luís Firmo

Paulo Franco

Paulo Machado

Rodrigo M. do N. Machado da Costa

Sara Maia

Choir of young musicians

Afonso Arruda (tenor)

António Leão (tenor)

Alice Galvão (soprano)

Bianca Varela (contralto)

Carolina Hovers Falcato (soprano)

Ema Sá (soprano)

Francisco Leite (bass)

Jiaying Liu (soprano)

João Coutinho (tenor)

Madalena Oliveira Martins (soprano)

Mariana Maia (soprano)

Mariana Preto (contralto)

Markéta Chumová (contralto)

Martim Líbano Monteiro (bass)

Pedro Fanica (tenor)

Ricardo Pereira (bass)

Rita Carvão (soprano)

Rita Miranda (contralto)

Rita Santos (contralto)

Rosa Vieira (contralto)

Sara Maia (soprano)

Sara Pacheco (soprano/contralto)

Simão Andrade (tenor/bass)

Teresa Ribeiro (soprano)