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Torreão Nascente da
Cordoaria Nacional

Generalized Visual Resistance – Photobooks and Liberation Movements: Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde

Daniel Barroca, Filipa César and Sónia Vaz
Borges, Welket Bungué, Augusta Conchiglia,
Moira Forjaz, Silvestre Pestana, Grupo Zero



Exhibition organised within the context of Temporada Portugal-França 2022



curated by
Catarina Boieiro
and Raquel Schefer

28.09 – 27.11.2022

Between 1961 and 1974, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) wage Liberation Wars against the fascist and colonial Portuguese system. Founded between 1956 and 1962, the three movements fight for independence, after almost five centuries of colonial domination and resistance to it. In the context of post-war decolonization processes and African nationalisms, the Estado Novo rejects any attempt of self-determination from the occupied territories. In the face of proto-nationalist and later nationalist resistance, colonial forces perpetrate a series of massacres, such as the Mueda Massacre in northern Mozambique in 1960. The Revolution of 1974-1975 brings the dictatorship to an end and paves the way for independence. Guinea-Bissau becomes independent in 1974, followed by Mozambique and Angola in the following year. In these two countries, after independence, internationalized civil wars take place as part of the Cold War.

Anti-colonial struggles are situated in the context of transnational liberation in which political decolonization is considered inseparable from cultural, aesthetic and epistemological decolonization. The African Revolutions are a period of liberation of the word, image and forms of representation. Visual culture from this period highlights the vocation of art to reflect and, at the same time, transform the social sphere. The liberation struggle itself is seen as a cultural act. For Amílcar Cabral, leader of the PAIGC, murdered in 1973, the liberation struggle is itself a "cultural fact" and a "factor of culture". Linked to the field of symbolic production, the liberation struggle is a "cultural fact" because colonialism denies the existence of colonized culture. It is a "cultural factor" because it is considered that the transformation of the field of symbolic production and infrastructure takes place in its course, even before independence. For Cabral, political resistance is a form of cultural resistance, just as cultural resistance is a form of political resistance.

In light of Cabral's theory of culture, cultural forms emerge from a relationship of dialectical reciprocity with the material basis of society. Cultural forms reflect, anticipate and provoke social transformation. This conception presupposes a dialectical relationship between content and form, knowledge and action.

In the context of the culture of internationalist solidarity in the 1960s and 1970s, liberation struggles spark interest for photographers and

filmmakers such as Augusta Conchiglia and Sarah Maldoror. Magazines, books, photography, and cinema are seen as fundamental instruments to mobilize popular support, spread the struggle for decolonization at the international level and denounce the propaganda of the Estado Novo, bringing visibility to the massacres perpetrated by the colonial Portuguese Army, such as the Wiriyamu Massacre in Mozambique, in 1972. At the same time, they demonstrate the existence of the Liberated Zones in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, a ground for experimentation of the economic and social structures and dynamics of the nations to come. José Luís Cabaço defines the Liberated Zones of Mozambique as the “scientific laboratory” of the country that would become independent in 1975. Photographers such as Conchiglia, Knut Andreassen and Tadahiro Ogawa document the liberation struggle and life in the Liberated Zones, paying particular attention to the radical pedagogy projects developed there.

In Portugal, young deserters and absentees refuse to participate in the war and go into exile in France and other countries. The fight against dictatorship and colonialism expands internationally. Exiles work together with political movements and organizations abroad. Class struggle and anti-colonial struggle are understood as one single fight.

After independence, photobooks document the process of building the new nation states. Between militantism and formal experimentation, these publications restore the sensitive dimension of the first years of independence – a period marked by the adoption of Marxist-Leninist political models and the search for a decolonized image. These books (some collective and anonymous, others edited abroad) crystallize aspirations and ambivalences through their great formal inventiveness.

The cinematographic language also seeks to be decolonized. In Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, public film institutes are founded with the aim of restructuring and universalizing film production and distribution modes. The production company Sonimage by Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville seeks to develop a public television channel in Mozambique based on collective and horizontal modes of production and distribution. The photographic essay published in issue 300 of the magazine *Cahiers du cinéma* is one of the few traces of this unfinished project, inscribed in the tension between experimentation and propaganda.

Featuring an unprecedented set of books, photographs and documents produced between the 1960s and 1980s, this exhibition draws a spatial and temporal constellation of liberation aesthetics while exploring its ramifications, as is the case of the film cooperative Grupo Zero in Portugal. Thematic and formal parallelisms are traced between the visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s and contemporary artistic practices. The works of Daniel Barroca, Welket Bungué, Silvestre Pestana, Filipa César and Sónia Vaz Borges reflect on the history and memory of this period, re-elaborate the visual forms of liberation aesthetics and examine the persistence of colonial structures in the present.

Catarina Boieiro and Raquel Schefer
Exhibition curators

Sarah Maldoror
Regards de Mémoire, 2003
 France, Guyane, 24'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados

Sarah Maldoror
Léon-Gontran Damas, 1994
 Algeria, 26'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados

Sarah Maldoror
Toto Bissainthe, 1984
 France, 4'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados

Sarah Maldoror
Et les chiens se taisaient [And the Dogs were silent], 1974.
 After Aimé Césaire's play
 France, 13'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados and Centre national de la recherche scientifique

Sarah Maldoror
Un masque à Paris - Louis Aragon [A Mask in Paris - Louis Aragon], 1978
 France, 20'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados

Sarah Maldoror
Monangabee, 1969
 After Luandino Vieira's *O fato completo de Lucas Matesso*
 Algeria, 17'
 Courtesy Annouchka de Andrade and Henda Ducados e Arsenal - Institut für Film und Videokunst, Berlin

4. Moira Forjaz
 From the series *Mozambique 1975-1985*
 Photographic prints (2022), b&w,
 32 x 22 cm
 Courtesy the artist

From left to right (texts by Moira Forjaz):

a) Samora Machel
 President Samora Machel is at ease during this 1977 rally, smiling at the participants crowding Independence Square in central Maputo and happy that the future is looking bright. Everyone always went to listen to Samora, not just because he was a brilliant orator, but because he only called a rally when he had something specific to impart – a policy change, a solution for a national problem, a vision for the nation...

b) Graça Machel
 Graça Machel is seen here on a visit to Chilembene, the large village in Chökwe/Bilene district of Gaza province where her husband Samora was born and brought up. His parents were later forced to move to where they could be under the watchful eye of the local police station. After independence Samora built a new family compound to which he and his wife and children frequently returned.

c) Graça Machel
 Graça Machel is dancing with members of the Mozambique Women's Organisation (OMM), who have just elected her as President at their first post-independence congress. The tool most representative of women throughout Africa, the hoe, is much in evidence, but in the new official symbol, it has been joined by a hammer, representing aspirations for women's professional advance in other sectors of the economy.

d) Miriam Makeba
 Miriam Makeba was a special guest at the Traditional Music Festival in Maputo. She opened the festival with a newly composed song called "Mozambique - A luta continua".

e) Stone town

f) João Costa (Funcho)
 Funcho arrived in Mozambique as a baby

with his parents. His father was an officer in the Portuguese army; his oriental characteristics are attributable to his half-Japanese mother. He studied engineering and later on worked as a medical photographer at the university. After independence he trained at the National Cinema Institute (INC) as a film/lighting cameraman, and filmed many of the documentaries and newsreels made during this period. As cinematographer he was awarded many prizes for short and feature films, and has worked throughout southern Africa.

g) Jean-Luc Godard
 Godard was invited to give a course in cinematography to young students to contribute to the creation of cinema in Mozambique. I caught him in a characteristic pose, smoking as he listens and ponders, perhaps then to pronounce during this work session at Eduardo Mondlane University.

h) Chilembene Gaza Province
 Local school children perform a pretend military parade as a way of welcoming Samora Machel when he came to spend time with his family.

i) Coal Miners
 Kok Nam and I were sent to Moatize to investigate the 1977 mine disaster. It was a difficult assignment; the mineworkers were tense and suspicious. We were there to assess the conditions of the mine.

5.
 Posters by OSPAAAL - Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America

Lázaro Abreu
untitled, 1968
 Offset, 33 x 53 cm

Heriberto Echeverría
untitled, 1971
 Offset, 33 x 53 cm

Lucio Martínez
untitled, 1972
 Offset, 33 x 53 cm

Daysi García
untitled, 1969
 Offset, 33 x 56 cm

Collection Hubert Cavaniol and courtesy Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris

Founded in 1966 in Havana during the Tricontinental Conference, the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL) seeks to establish links between international liberation movements with a view to world revolution. Also active in the spheres of art and culture, OSPAAAL has produced a series of posters on the liberation struggles of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. The posters' inventive design exemplifies the articulations between political engagement and aesthetic inventiveness that characterize Cuban and internationalist visual production in this historical period.

6.
 Grupo Zero (coord. Solveig Nordlund)
A Luta do Povo: Alfabetização em Santa Catarina, 1976
 b&w, sound, 29'
 Copy preserved in 2004 from the 16mm negative
 Featuring Alfredo Martins and the population of the village of Santa Catarina, Alentejo
 Courtesy Solveig Nordlund and Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema

Exemplifying the interweaving of a political content and an experimental form (or the inextricability between both), this film is an important document on the history of cooperatives - of workers and filmmakers - in the context of the PREC in Portugal. Thematic and formal parallels

link this production of Grupo Zero to the revolutionary cinemas which proliferated worldwide during this period. As with other objects in the exhibition, popular literacy emerges as one of the most important fronts in the struggle of the revolutionary process.

“Alfredo, a rural worker, learns to read and write. We follow his work in the New Hope cooperative during the day and his struggle to learn to read and write at night. Alfredo tells us about his past and how the Revolution of 25. April 1974 changed his life. He believes that he will understand life and society better when he learns to read.

A month and a half later, we went back to Alfredo's village to show him the material we had recorded. We found a new, more self-assured Alfredo, able to sign his name when his cooperative is legalised at the notary's office. As a whole, the village then takes stock of the first year of Agrarian Reform. The film was made between April and June 1976.” - Grupo Zero

7. Daniel Barroca

Uma distância perfurada, 2011

Needles in inkjet print mounted on MDF, 20.5 x 29 x 39 cm
Courtesy the artist

8.

Daniel Barroca

Eye, 2022

Iron and prosthetic eyes,
50 x 20 x 153 cm
Courtesy the artist

In his work, Daniel Barroca interrogates the experience and memory of the Portuguese soldiers who fought against the liberation movements. Starting from an auto-biographical domain - the artist is the son of an ex-combatant of the colonial army in Guinea-Bissau - Barroca questions the processes of construction of the gaze, pointing to the possibility

of a sensitive deperspectivation of the dominant historical narrative.

9.

Welket Bungué

I am not Pilatus, 2019

11', video, color, sound

Courtesy the artist

This “film-intervention” was produced from two viral videos filmed in Portugal in 2019. The film revisits scenes of racism and police violence that triggered an important public debate about structural racism in Portugal.

10.

Silvestre Pestana

Necro Eco Pietà, 1979

Series of ten black and white photographs, 28 x 18,5 cm (4); 18,5 x 28cm (6)
Serralves collection. Courtesy the artist

“The performance *Necro Eco Pietà* was part of a set of performative actions in homage to Fernando Pessoa on his birthday, 13 June 1977, which took place on the stage of the Auditorium of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Porto (former ESBAP). The photographs document the registration of the homonymous video artwork produced during the same academic year in the ESBAP Cine Video studio.” - Silvestre Pestana

During the performance *Necro Eco Pietà*, Silvestre Pestana, a former absentee and exiled in Sweden during the final period of the Estado Novo, reflects on war and the relationship between the human and the machine. The performance operates a *détournement* of the iconography and iconology of the figure of the Pietà.

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Events

14.10.22 / 16h - 19h

Guided tour of the exhibition with the curators Catarina Boieiro and Raquel Schefer (16h), followed by a conversation with artists Daniel Barroca and Silvestre Pestana (17h).