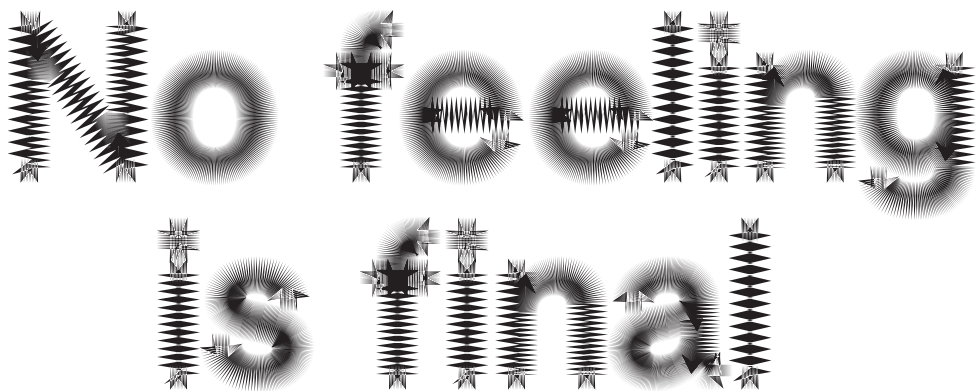


GALERIA DA BOAVISTA

16.04–23.06.2024



João Motta Guedes

curated by
Luís Silva

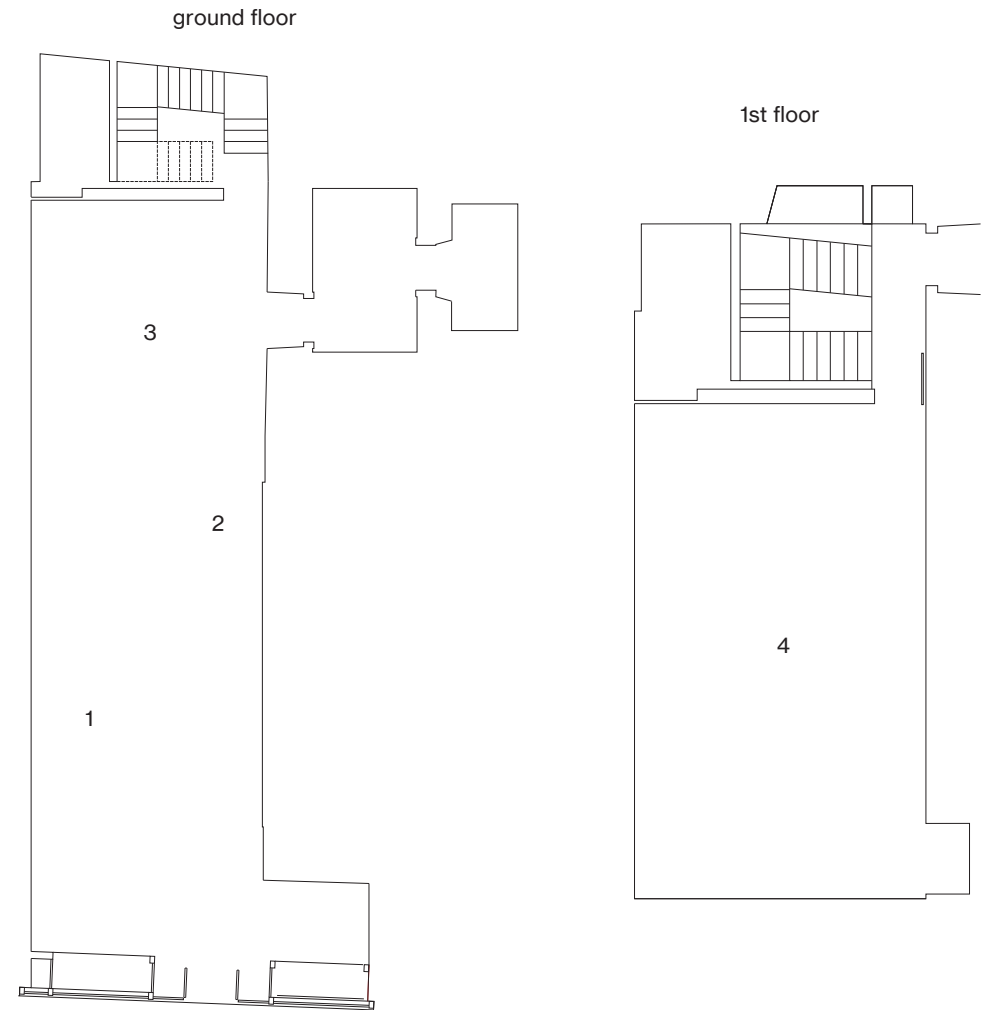


The work of João Motta Guedes (Lisbon, 1995) constitutes an ongoing reflection on a set of ideas and feelings that can broadly be defined as freedom, vulnerability, love, and violence. At times closely related, at others in explicit contradiction, but always starting from a deeply personal perspective and from a place of self-exposure, these concepts give rise to a body of work in which life can be better understood through the metaphor of the journey: a continuous inner journey that is built on the infinite possibility of individual and collective trajectories which facilitate the exploration and sharing of experiences about what it means to be and feel human. To this end, he makes use of a non-hierarchical multiplicity of expressive means – installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, sound, poetry – in an approach that can be understood as the successor to a post-conceptual ontology of the artistic object. Yet this programme does not prevent him from developing a strongly poetic and narrative discourse, in which a dreamlike universe leads us through a utopian vision of life and the world around us.

In *No Feeling is Final*, a project the artist developed specifically for his solo exhibition at Galeria da Boavista, the concept of travelling is understood through the transience of the emotional states that define human experience. The title of the exhibition is taken from *Go to the limits of your longing*, a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, in which the Austrian poet declaims ‘*Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final.*’ Recognised for a body of work that celebrates the transcendental union between the world and humanity in a kind of ‘cosmic space,’ it is no surprise that Rilke lends Motta Guedes the emotional intensity and transcendence required for the path the artist suggests we take.

This journey begins on the ground floor of the gallery with a triptych of stained-glass windows which share the title of the exhibition. Working with light in a chromatic way, as matter, and without denying the place stained-glass windows have always occupied in history, Motta Guedes represents a group of vaguely human figures in an apparent state of flux or transformation. This state of potency, permanently fixed in the colours of the painted glass, recovers and reinterprets a larger narrative of psychedelics and altered states of consciousness as a form of self-knowledge and discovery, of liberation and potential emancipation. On the top floor we find *May I read you a poem?*, a sculpture that does not reveal itself easily, but which on closer inspection reveals a metallic tangle from which three megaphone-like shapes emerge and contain a poem written and read by the artist himself. Varyingly hesitant and confident, the texts bear witness to the artist's inner life, feelings, and desires. A ball of emotions that has taken on a physical form, albeit uncertain and difficult to define, and which is expressed not in one but in several voices, intensities, and affects. We might say this is the multiplicity and transience of emotional states turned into a physical body.

This perpetual inward but also outward movement, of going but also of returning, characterised by uncertainty, by the mystery of discovering what exists within us, but also of what exists beyond ourselves in the world, is what defines *No feeling is final* – a sincere attempt to understand who we are and the place we occupy in the world.



1.
No feeling is final (part I), 2024
 Stained glass
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria NAVE

2.
No feeling is final (part II), 2024
 Stained glass
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria NAVE

3.
No feeling is final (part III), 2024
 Stained glass
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria NAVE

4.
May I read you a poem?, 2024
 Iron, sound, 7", loop
 Sound landscape in collaboration with
 Alakebythemöön
 Courtesy of the artist and Galeria NAVE

Poem XIX

Time is passing by
as an endless stream of things
moving fast in every direction
moments people places birds clouds
floating in the horizon so they can see the sun
dreaming hopeful
of the most joyful things to come

Within your gentle heart you try to grasp the world
this huge interstellar space waiting
for everything there is to discover:
so much to do
so much to feel
so much to be
so much to love
so much to enjoy
so much to devour and to be devoured
by the great chaotic and balanced and cosmic energy that some may
call life

A day is not so short even though it is not so long
and it is ok to take your time seeking the essence of all things:
the essence of touch
the essence of smell
the essence of sound
the essence of vision
the essence of taste
the essence of otherness
wanting with voracity to search where do all gateways lead to
and somehow smiling in the distance some of them open to us
so close yet so far
like waking up from a eery dream I can no longer remember

Reset is sometimes necessary on the cosmic path
so potent and so full of possibilities
my hands try to find them ever seeking the stars
falling down from the great beyond
like some sort of knowledge or experience you can hold on to

as you live and learn
as you cry and laugh
you don't have to always start anew
And yet you can, always
marvel at the wonders in front of you and ask
- will this this dream come true?

— JMG

Poem XXVI

when I am happy
I feel with the intensity of each second
joy and dream and fire
bound together but expanding
beyond the reach
of every movement

you might be surprised by the natural state of things
sometimes awake
sometimes dreaming
but what does it matter
if the wind carries us

with haste, you get up
and look for the horizon
and there you come and go
you come and go
thinking of this new day
where each road follows the last
great, great red balloon
flying into the blue

and to keep on going
and to keep on searching
is to bite life itself but not let it smother
you know, my heart leaves trails of smoke when I think of you

I am right here
you are right there
why is it not possible to build bridges through the abyss?

the smiting sun rises
the swelling sun sets
and the mountain stays the same
but those who walk through it
gaze upon the stars
and let rivers flow

— JMG

Poem XXII

Dear stranger,
I hope one day we can get back to dreaming together
sometimes waking up
is the most dangerous thing to do

to survive the essence is to be light
travelling with the road renewed and with the stars
glimmering in the distance

everyday
wherever you are
flying is a matter of letting go
all the unnecessary weight,
and to go with those who propel us higher
is a thing of beauty
that may last forever

like a rocket firing into space
like a child singing a freedom song
like a dance naked at the first sunlight

This is so much fun!

This is so much fun!!

I feel so full of love and of will to live
I could embrace the whole world

My dear, come, u can leave when u wanna,
the road goes as the road goes
and absolute freedom
is only true when shared

Summer of life, here we go
with joy and balance, discovering new skies
(even if for some moments...)
I AM GOING TO LIVE ANYHOW
ALERT !!! ALERT !!!

DANGER !!! DANGER !!!
VOOOOOM !! VOOOOOM !! PI PI PI
THIS MESSAGE IS A SIGN OF LOVE
AN ACT OF FRIENDSHIP FOR ALL TIME

—JMG

GALERIAS MUNICIPAIS – GALERIA DA BOAVISTA

Rua da Boavista 50, 1200-066 Lisboa

Tuesday to Sunday 10am–1pm and 2–6pm

Free entrance

Guided tours by appointment

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