

PAVILHÃO BRANCO
31.10.2024–09.02.2025

My Pleasure

Joana Villaverde



curated by
António Pinto Ribeiro



My pleasure is an exhibition of large-scale oil paintings, with canvases measuring three and a half by two metres. This is Joana Villaverde's first work without any figurative or iconographic expression. It is as if they were just backgrounds, with no one, neither an eye nor a gaze, animal or human. This work is a portrait of the privilege of being able to work in freedom.

Joana Villaverde (Lisbon, 1970) lives and works in Avis. She has exhibited regularly in Portugal and abroad since 1998. The recipient of a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for the Location One residency in New York, she was also resident artist at the Qattan Foundation Guest House in Ramallah. She has published *Emma* (Cavalo de Ferro, 2003) and *Animals Nightmare* (Edições Documenta, 2017). In 2016 she developed the project *Mar*, with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Bensaúde Group. In 2018 she opened her Officina Mundi studio in Avis, where she is responsible for public programming. Joana Villaverde is represented in the Contemporary Art Collection of the Portuguese State, the EDP Foundation, the Carmona e Costa Foundation, the Foundation for Luso-American Development, the CESAR Collection, quARTel – Fernando Ribeiro Collection, the Municipality of Almada, the Diocese of Beja, and several private collections in Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Palestine, and the United States.

From the testimony of our sight then we should rather infer the infinite, since there is no object which doth not terminate in another, nor can we experience aught which terminateth in itself.

– Giordano Bruno

My pleasure is an expression of attention, of gratitude:

– Thank you, please come on in.

There is nothing new in this work. There is a huge transformation. I believe it goes hand in hand with a natural maturing, a desire for clarification. This is a large-scale painting, almost entirely oil on linen canvas. The canvases are around three metres high by two metres wide. They are now vertical skies with a bit of land at the bottom, as if they were just backgrounds, with no one, neither an eye nor a gaze, animal or human. Perhaps they are a reflection of my daily life. The result of what I see from my window in the Alentejo, where I live and work. It started from a reference to Fragonard's painting *Les hasards heureux de l'escarpolette* [The Swing], where the dramaturgical, theatrical scene is evident, which I dismantle until it is transformed into a place without beginning, middle or end, without a point of view, where the work can be seen from the side, from above, from below.

Continuing with the same palette, the paintings are transformed. They begin as I imagine abstract paintings do: at a single point. I unroll the paint as if it were a rolled carpet, the body slowly unfurling. Then I discover things I recognise. Sometimes I go in for a closer look and intervene; at other times I leave them as they are.

In this work I recognise the same physicality as always, the raw and free gesture, but with the addition of the freedom to not respond to anything. It is a work without figurative obligations. In this process of making, I glimpse infinity. A new world for me. This work is about nothing. This work is a portrait of the

privilege of being able to create in freedom. It is almost abstract. It is the realisation of a possibility, always creating, forever, and it is the enormous ambition of filling the void with silence.

I remember the contradictory feeling of freedom as I travelled daily on the road between Birzeit and Ramallah in the yellow Ford the mini buses in the occupied West Bank, where I was there free, catching the wind with my European passport in my pocket. And now in this work I'm here, free, painting the sky. It is the contradiction between freedom and suffocation, my freedom and the collapse of humanity.

This work, like all my past work, is not finished, nor do I want it to be. I'm not looking for any certainties, much less finished things. I want the impossible, things without end.

Joana Villaverde
Avis, February 2024

AGRADECIMENTOS

To the municipality of Avis, for the opportunity to work freely in a beautiful space that belongs to everyone who lives there.

To Patrícia, my love, where all the strength that I may seem to have comes from.

To my daughters, my reason for being.

To my grandson Amadeo, the joy of my life.

To my mother who loves both the stars and the lights on the river.

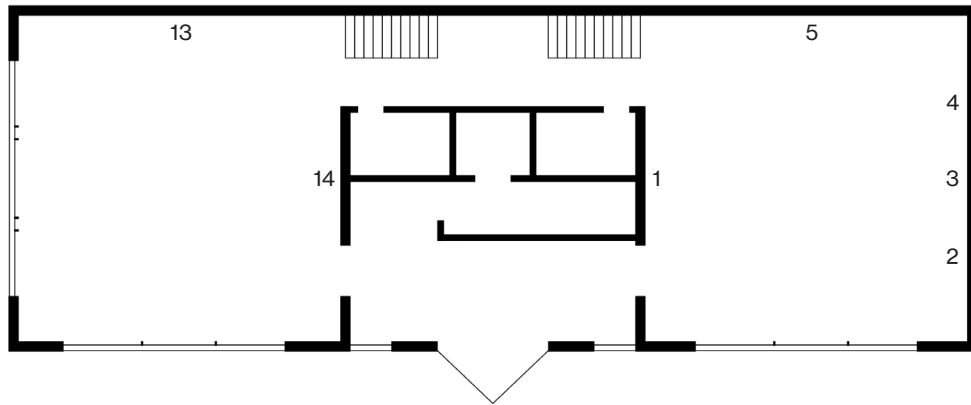
To the friends who have supported me along the way, Cristina Reis, Dinorah Lucas, Inês Nogueira, José Pedro Croft, Manuel Costa Cabral, Noé Sendas, Rui Calçada Bastos, thank you very much!

To Margarida Carreiras, who has gradually come to understand that this thing we do is both beautiful and hard, and perhaps that's just how it's meant to be.

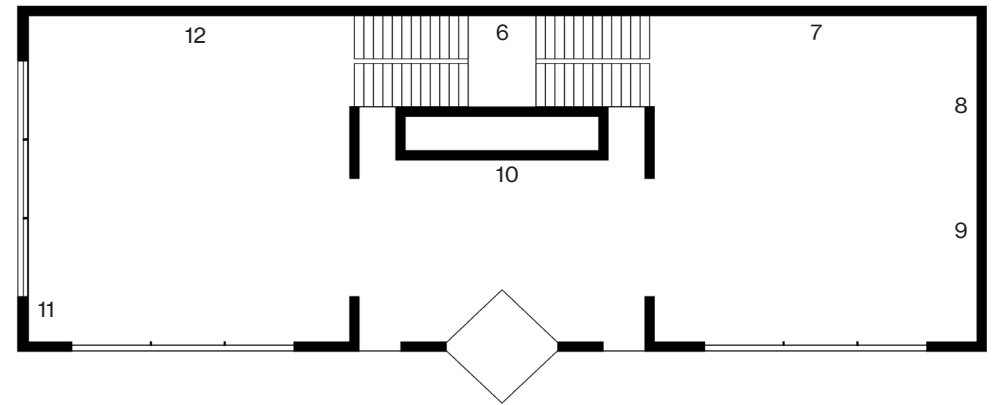
To Vitor Cardoso, for writing a beautiful text for the catalogue of this exhibition, and for being the one who tells us, from a reliable source, that This is actually all connected.

And of course to the entire team at the Municipal Galleries who have sustained me thus far.

ground floor



1st floor



1.
Verde alto, 2024
Oil on canvas, 338 x 200 cm
Courtesy of the artist

5.
Verde, 2024
Oil on canvas, 198 x 338 cm
Courtesy of the artist

2.
Céu e terra 1, 2023
Oil on canvas, 305 x 138 cm
Courtesy of the artist

6.
Céu e terra 3, 2024
Oil on canvas, 305 x 138 cm
Courtesy of the artist

3.
Céu e terra 4, 2024
Oil on canvas, 305 x 138 cm
Courtesy of the artist

7.
Amarelo e vermelho, 2024
Oil on canvas, 198 x 339 cm
Courtesy of the artist

4.
Céu e terra 2, 2023
Oil on canvas, 305 x 138 cm
Courtesy of the artist

8.
Azul, 2024
Oil on canvas, 339 x 198 cm
Courtesy of the artist

9.
Vermelho, 2024
Oil on canvas, 339 x 197 cm
Courtesy of the artist

13.
Uma espécie de Fragonard V, 2024
Oil on canvas, 198 x 339 cm
Courtesy of the artist

10.
Vigia, 2024
Oil on canvas, 203 x 122 cm
Courtesy of the artist

14.
Verde com pingos, 2024
Oil on canvas, 127 x 304 cm
Courtesy of the artist

11.
Cabeça de cão, 2023
Avis clay, 21 x 18 x 8 cm
Courtesy of the artist

12.
A cena dos violinos, 2024
Oil on canvas, 198 x 339 cm
Courtesy of the artist

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