

## SARA & ANDRÉ

20 JUN – 31 JUL 2008

Even though they had an exhibition scheduled for the month of June in the gallery, Sara & Andre decided to go on vacation! They might have not resisted to the so expected sun that had finally showed up in the Portuguese sky. Or perhaps they wanted to be present at the inaugurations of "Allgarve". Or simply, they are just keeping fidelity to their design of "making the possible minimum". So, it was due to the director of the gallery to decide about the tragedy: present an exhibition on Sara & Andre without any artwork of the artists. After a short negotiation with the artists, it was officially defined - as it can be verified in the contract at the entrance of the gallery, that Jorge Viegas is the only one responsible for this individual show of Sara & Andre, not being able to be imputed to the pair any responsibility on it. Taking previous proposals as an example already presented by the artists which question the knowledge of fame, authorship and work, Jorge Viegas opted to follow the model of the Foundation Sara & Andre, appealing to other artists represented by 3+1. Ana Perez-Quiroga, Andre Trindade, Pauliana Valente Pimentel, Pedro Kaliambai, Susana Guardado and Yonamine soon revealed solidarity with Viegas's anguish and immediately decided to create artworks on the pair in order to fill the exhibition space. It was not for this solicitude, we would have reproduced, in plain century XXI, a not deliberated remake of the famous exposition/happening that Yves Klein carried out at the Galerie Colette Allendy in 1957, titled "the Emptiness".

Well, this is the idea, the fiction. With that in mind and fully convinced of its veracity is how we should face the exhibition.

The truth is that Sara & Andre have always been here!

Why all this stage, then?

Everything started in 2005, at Andre's graduation exhibition from the Fine Art School of Caldas da Rainha. Already accompanied by Sara, his final work could not be displayed side by side to the ones of his colleagues, as its accomplishment would only be possible after the opening of the show - "Sara & Andre visit the exhibition" (video). This action caused the intended effect, generating enough tension among students and teachers to unbalance and question the academic organization, initiating small talk about the pair.

When, in the following year, they concurred for the *Anteciparte* Awards, Sara & Andre showed themselves in Lisbon to a much larger and unknown public as "Very Important People" pursued by false *paparazzis*, well known artists for whom fame is part of their daily lives. In an Award dedicated to young

artists, which offer them a first hypothesis of recognition, the pair mixed up the habitual system order with a fictional jump over the “period of fight” that constitutes the beginning of a career.

Tired of the stage lights, the artists went backstage to start then a new project: Sara & Andre Foundation. The idea of this institution came after the innumerable artworks that other artists offered them, as gifts for their celebrity. At least, it is what they pray in the constitution of the Foundation. But we cannot forget the fact that it appeared at the very moment of the polemic talks about the creation of two other entities dedicated to contemporary art: Berardo Foundation and Ellipse Foundation. A satirical approach or just positioning ahead of all, the certainty is that Sara & Andre Foundation appeared in the right country at the right time. The works that compose its collection are always fruit of offers or commitments to other artists to produce pieces concerning the pair.

This proposal could be considered as a self-centered attitude, an obsessive desire of making themselves portrayed/represented by other eyes, an endemic necessity to possess their own image. However, we can go beyond this simple reading. More than a presentation of representations or a mere gallery of portraits, the Foundation’s works compel to the questioning of the idea of authorship. The works not only belong to them (right of ownership) but they generally are of them (copyright). The commission is always followed by a contract where the artist – the producer of the work, abdicates of its copyright. In that a way, it also become a creation of Sara & André.

The artists collect their own works, even not having produced them, enabling the coexistence between the desire of not to do (or do the least) and the growth of the body of work. Ultimately, leaving aside all implications of their attitude in the current art system, we can find here a balanced and effective economy in the act of doing, in which the percentage amount of invested thought is inversely proportional to the physical energy dispensed, without any loose of material dividends.

If at this point the confusion is already installed, let’s then analyze the exhibition at 3+1 Contemporary Art Gallery. By proposing the artists of the gallery to create artworks about them and for them, but without neglecting their manufacturing process or the layout of the exhibition, Sara & André added even more aspects to their artistic personalities: first artists, then collectors and now curators and “theme” of the exhibition.

Sara & André trap the art from all possible fronts, building an apparently hidden and passive fence that seeks in its holes the possibility to advance. Using irony and self-referential satire as weapons, combined with a deep knowledge of art history and an almost dilettante attitude, Sara & André do not want to make a revolution but rather remain in a state of permanent guerilla.

Their victory lies more on the possibility of questioning the contemporary art system than in conquering it. Therefore, they interrogate the roles of different artistic agents, confusing them and reshaping them, using the questioning as a method, being the question the only possible solution.

In his book "One, No One and One Hundred Thousand" Luigi Pirandello says: "The tragic aspect of life is this law that obliges men to comply, to be one. Everyone can be one, no one and one hundred thousand, but the choice is an imperative need". Sara & André flee the law, working as one, disguising as no one and claiming the possibility of being several. Perhaps because from the outset they are at least three: she, he and the double.

Rita Sobreiro, June2008