

**MARIA LAET**  
***pela superfície on the surface***  
**15 NOV 2013 – 11 JAN 2014**

O Eu e o Outro – Impulso, Relação, Fronteira.  
*The Self and the Other - Impulse, Relationship, Frontier.*

It seems that in the *delicate foam* that any gesture leaves engraved on the *vast planes of memory*, still resides – remotely frozen - the original and clear intention of that *first impulse*. But this primal action is now, also, *gathered* and united with its own *uncertain journey*: with the effect its own *active body* made in the world. Thus, the surface that welcomes but also transforms this intention/message into *something else already embodied* - this clear frontier that separates but also gives expression - not only determines and enables but also interpenetrates and adulterates, always, the first action, the original, the initial one. The border/outer distance, is also *screen* and *surface*: like two available and perverse characters of a sole *power*, always reigning, conditional and absolute.

This unavoidable merge/metamorphosis – of a medium/support that conditions and integrates any content, subject or message - underlines the primordial and eternal separation between the subject and the world, emotion and word, idea and action, the Self and the Other. But, obviously, this *transformative stage* is also, as we well know, the effective and instantaneous essential messenger of the *physical world*: that which unites and brings together these two fundamental *dimensions of reality*. Two *powers* that would be – we believe, otherwise - eternally divorced. And so apart: in a far and crystallized distance, with no appeal, path, possibility, or concrete exit or solution, of a mutual encounter or expression.

So it shall be *on the surface* - on it, but above all, *through* it –, in a poetic and *factual* valorization of the cruel paradox in the relationship between *form* and *content*; in the critical - deeply creative but also *resigned* and contemplative - acceptance of this *limiting condition*; that we will improvise meetings and speeches, stares and relationships, innovation and answer. So we shall project our greatest will in the world: in spirals of intent, strength and beauty, of uncertain but real purpose and effect. Like seeds born loose in an open field, in a conditioning landscape, of an *impure nature*.

Then, in rehearsals made in our interior *own theatre*, that we want truthful for it is intimate – of exchange, giving, true opening and expression - we look, sometimes surprised or even dazzled, as our words are differently defined, through another way; as our gesture is diversely read; as our action is received amended and wasted. Whether objectively in its own *surface/physical support*, - that it assigns and embraces its body -; whether in the person that listens and looks, attentive and available, interpreting, interacting. The world, the *outside*, is the totalized answer of what was there invested, felt and more delivered.

It is therefore also on all of this that Maria Laet is working and discoursing, through diverse and delicate processes,

from which sometimes she only reveals the brief effect or result, in the enigmatic and subtle delicacy of someone sharing, slowly, a wonderful and precious secret, only hers to have.

So here we find, *on the surface*, some *active elements* that permeate the curious *making process* of the artist, and that inhabit her work - differently expressed through various disciplines, media and performative practices. These works look like mere *manifestations* arising from a single creative line, experimental, open and dedicated; and in which the support - the surface - symbolizes and embodies the *pragmatic sum* resulting from interaction and conversation, in a *final intersection*, organic and very much alive. In the transversality that is revealed in this selection, we recognize a delicate and poetic practice, detailed, the contemplative recognition of the beauty within the organic elements, clear but distant traces of memory, and a slow, intense and thick temporality.

In some cases we wish for a glimpse of the action that led to the work, as in *Sem Título (Série Diálogos, Sopra)*, remnants of encounters with black paint serving as the *vehicle*; or in *Sobre o que não se contém*, the route of a sunken and overflowing dirty linearity, questioned as *inside and out*. But it is indeed about what remains, about the silence after the gesture, about the mark after the touch, about the mute echoes of the written word, about what is touched, and merged, and separated then slowly, that we navigate through as we walk around these works.

In the strict formality of her process, which clearly embodies results and elements of the most *unavoidable exteriority*, the artist performs a fundamental *collapse/encounter* at her most *intimate reality*. Through very concrete, but also very poetic and *freed* actions and proposals; through the projection of a firm and conscious - but open and available – *will*, and well aware of its very natural pragmatic mutation and of an always inevitable arrival to *another reality*, already realized.

*On the surface* we are slowly coming to the important core of something, like gestures, the few words we possess and loose, like slippery whole verbs ever singing so low. And in the remnants that are left over and still rise slowly from the shadows we see ourselves, finding in that sight the true color of what was much to do, the illusory and weak repetition of a memory, black and dull, like the lost palms of both hands (in *Dois*), joined together, in the sole center of a blank white space.

Jorge Emanuel Espinho, 2013