

Elizabeth Xi Bauer presents: *É a lama, é a lama*

Featuring Maria Thereza Alves, Tapfuma Gutsa, ikkibawiKrrr, Oswaldo Maciá and Uriel Orlow

Curated by Maria do Carmo M. P. de Pontes

*É a lama, é a lama* is one in a lineage of urgent exhibitions addressing the rising temperature of our planet. Many such shows have taken place in recent years, reflecting the escalation of the problem. By repeating a same idea through different aesthetic iterations, art professionals hope not to bore the viewer but to emphasise the need for a change in attitude. Far from an end product meant to be purely contemplated, what one sees on display in this show aims to invite the viewers to up their game for the health of our planet.

The exhibition title, Portuguese for 'it's the mud, it's the mud', is borrowed from Tom Jobim's eponymous *Águas de Março (Waters of March)*, which the musician wrote in both English and Portuguese. By doing so, Jobim signified the rain-showers that are characteristic of March – or at least used to be – through two geographical perspectives: the Global South, where the rains signal summer is over, and the Global North, whereby the phenomena welcomes spring.

The announcement of the mud has an eerie parallel with **Maria Thereza Alves'** sculptural painting *Rio Doce: Sweet No More* (2017), which depicts the Samarco dam disaster from 2015 that released several dozens of millions of cubic metres of mine tailings into the Doce River, in Brazil – a major water source for the Krenak people. An activist invested in both preserving the environment and decolonising narratives, Alves gathers these two causes in a series of small watercolours. In them, she takes nations accountable for their colonial past in face of their present notions of borders, through a combination of text and flora.

**Oswaldo Maciá** exhibits frescoes and watercolours where natural phenomena such as typhoons and wildfires take central stage. Though these events may occur naturally, there is no question that climate change is speeding and intensifying the frequency and scale in which they take place. The artist also exhibits a sound piece where he creates a symphony using only sounds of nature. This is exhibited as a vinyl playing on headphones, thus becoming the official soundtrack of *É a lama, é a lama*.

The environmental impact of the show was kept to a minimum, at times in detriment of curatorial decisions. While we would have loved to exhibit more pieces by **Tapfuma Gutsa**, an artist notorious for his up-cycling of nature, to fly artworks for an exhibition addressing the environment would be a contradiction in terms. We therefore celebrate his production with *The Cypher* (2002), a sculpture composed by objects found in nature – that is, the artist's signature modus operandi.

The collective **ikkibawiKrrr** – an artistic trio whose name is a 'neologism comprised of: ikki (moss), bawi (rock) and krr, an onomatopoeic Korean word that indicates a rolling motion' – employs a type of humour that's reminiscent of Jacques Tati to, as of the late Frenchman, address important issues. Whereas their gaze often turns to the migration of people and their right to land, in *The Vine Chronicle* (2016) they address the migration of trees to discuss how nature is systematically being destroyed in the name of urban development.

The migration of plants is also at the heart of **Uriel Orlow's** *Himalayan Drift* (2022), where he investigates temperature shifts by assessing the native vegetation of the Himalayan mountains and how they adapt to changes. In a site-specific installation, the artist takes the same group of mountains as a case study to illustrate how the planet got hotter between 1900 and 2020, by using a colour stripe system developed by Ed Hawkins at Britain's University of Reading.

While global warming will only significantly slow its pace when nations and industries reconsider their actions, individuals can, and should, act rather than despair. These are some ideas:

#### How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Through Transportation:

- Drive less
- Go easy on the acceleration and brakes
- Regularly service your car and keep tires properly inflated
- Carpool
- Use cruise control
- Cut down on air conditioning
- Consider purchasing a hybrid or electric vehicle
- Avoid flying if possible
- If you must, fly nonstop

#### How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint Through Food:

- Eat less meat and stick with fruits, veggies, grains and beans
- Choose organic and local foods that are in season
- Reduce your food waste
- Compost
- Use reusable cups, plates, utensils, bottles and containers

#### How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint at Home:

- Turn down your water heater to 50°C
- Lower your thermostat in winter and raise it in summer
- Turn off lights and unplug appliances when not in use
- Change incandescent light bulbs
- Use a low-flow showerhead
- Choose renewable energy
- Do an energy audit of your house
- Recycle effectively
- Insulate your home
- Donate old clothes
- Wash your clothing in cold water

#### How to reduce your carbon footprint when shopping:

- Buy only what you need
- Bring a reusable bag
- Invest in quality products that last
- Don't buy fast fashion
- Buy vintage or recycled clothing
- Support and buy from companies that are environmentally responsible and sustainable

#### How to reduce your carbon footprint by taking action:

- Purchase carbon offsets
- Talk to family and friends about climate change issues and carbon footprints
- Find local climate action groups
- Speak to your local representatives and vote on policies that protect the environment