

Making the body of the world become visible

Cristina Ataíde's work discloses itself through the latent contamination between «being as sculpture» and being on the verge of incorporating the «being as drawing», or even being any other thing outside those labels that comfortably range and designate ways and outcomes of artwork.

Her work also shows the depth of the «self» (of her «self»). It gets loose and envelops. It merges with materials in a quest to show that which cannot be seen. A kind of journey that is made despite being tied to its ontological roots and expresses itself through a never-ending wish to let go of a huge load of luggage (she has accumulated in the places she has been to), while a movement in the opposite direction attempts to fill in the empty space.

Her works on display at Casa da Cerca dialogue with the notion of «path», of a permanent «journey»: wooden sticks enveloped by anonymous wishes written in black on a red ribbon evoking a pilgrim's wandering; suspended boats that are shown as if the spectator walked on the bottom of the sea, the red reflection of which can be seen there; mountains; airports, places of passage, of departures and arrivals.

The world she carries with her is immense: it clings stubbornly on to her body and is later transformed into her work, which subsequently becomes the body of that world. In order to share it, Cristina Ataíde reverses scales and reduces the outside world to the size of that which can be seen. Vantage points which can only be reached through this miniaturisation of the real become possible. The possibility of mastering and visually possessing landscape gives us a strange feeling of plenitude (as well as smallness) compared to the vastness of what is shown. In these opposite dimensions, it fits the world's own dimension.

Her work is also made of words – hers and those of

others. Her countless lists start from a theme or a pre-text. She takes notes (of everything/anything) and organises what would otherwise be scattered or even go unnot(ic)ed. These places of order and stability seem to be a sort of counterpoint to the mobility she imposes upon herself and which is reflected on her work, yet coexist and complete themselves in the same space with no conflict whatsoever.

In this sense, Cristina Ataíde's work has a strong metaphorical side, from which comes an extreme, subtle, delicate sensitivity, which is almost fragile and transparent. Whether in sculpture, drawing, photography or video art, Cristina Ataíde works matter in a sensitive way, moulding it, giving it her own strength and accuracy and becoming part of the (frequently ephemeral) outcome.

It is these records of herself that Cristina Ataíde has carried Casa da Cerca and O Chão das Artes. We thank her for the «journey», the paths she invites us to follow, as well as her availability and the enthusiasm she has showed and given to this project.

Ana Isabel Ribeiro