

COLLECTION OF LOVERS

by Raquel André

Raquel collects rare things. She collects people.
She collects lovers.

Between Lisbon, Ponta Delgada, Rio de Janeiro, Loulé, Minde, Paredes de Coura, Sever do Vouga, Ovar, Manaus, Barreiro, Bergen, Stavanger, Oslo and Warsaw she has already collected 167 lovers to date. She will collect lovers for 10 years, from 2014 to 2024. People of all nationalities, ages and genders, who agree to meet her in an unfamiliar apartment for both of them and, in an hour, build a fictional intimacy captured by memory and over 7000 photographs as of August 2018.

André puts herself at the service of the meetings and gives the responsibility to the lovers to think how they want to present the intimacy. She lets herself be available. She lets herself go. And she goes. Full-bodied, she's in service of the violence of love and affection, of whoever appears in front of her, with whatever intentions they might have. She makes her lovers the performers of her life story, her diamonds in series and one night stands. Every city she travels, she collects more lovers, and the collection accumulates the new encounters.

In her world, everything remains open, as something that is not over yet. A learning possibility and a book of pleasures. The encounters bring up pictures of romance, skin on skin, small mirrors of the intensity she found in others. Photos with secrets, desire, baths, hugs and conversations. Mismatches, too. Laughter, tears and shared meals.

Each time the door opens for a new lover, Andre falls into the abyss that is the other, and fiction and reality are confused in her peculiar, ephemeral and infinite collection. Therefore, if all you see or read of her seems fictitious, there is no right or wrong, truth or lie. Maybe it's her way of controlling her life and telling the version of the story she wants to remember. Maybe it's her way of revitalizing herself and continuing to live. Maybe it's the lack you feel after you leave someone. We don't know now and neither does she. Maybe we'll know later when the collection continues through other cities and crosses more lives.

From her collection lies the accumulation, the journey, the dates, the numbers, the me and you, a time crystallized to infinity and a network of people who, however much she shares them, will live with her and only with her forever and ever. We must see and contemplate the manifold transformations she gives them, enter into this world, let ourselves be collected, and observe that, here too, lies a piece of the lives of the people of our time.

Collection of Lovers is the first part of Collection of People: Lovers, Collectors, Artists and Spectators. It has been multiplying itself as a theater performance, a book, a TV film, an exhibition and other formats ready to be explored under this research of collecting the ephemeral. This is the premiere exhibition of André's Collection of Lovers.

Antonio Pedro Lopes

Co-created by António Pedro Lopes, Bernardo de Almeida and Raquel André

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Photos from the archive of Collection of Lovers.

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CAC exhibition of Collection of Lovers

Co-curated by Drew Klein and Steven Matijcio

Installation directed by Joe Civitello and David Dillon

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