

# Animas farrã

uma exposição de / an exhibition by:

João Maria Gusmão

curadoria por / curated by:

MARCO BENE

## Press Release ZDB

### *Animal Farm* by João Maria Gusmão curated by Marco Bene

Esteemed Comrades, following the resounding success of the New York iteration of *Animal Farm* – presented at 99 Canal earlier this year – João Maria Gusmão’s solo 16 mm exhibition, will, at long last, open at Galeria Zé dos Bois in Lisbon, curated by Marco Bene, on the 20th of May.

*Animal Farm* entices the observer on a visual odyssey exalted by pastoral solace, animist minstrelsy and metaphysical riddles – ghosts, ghouls and goblins – offering fleeting glimpses of an alterity existing between techne and poiesis, the human and the non-human, the nocturnal and the diurnal. Through over fifteen new 16 mm film projections we are invited to explore the latest toils in a long-lasting inquiry into analogue means and analogue concepts. A journey towards an eco-friendly estrangement from the extractivist rural landscape.

For this endeavour, the Portuguese artist is proposing a distinctive approach to his craft, shaping the instances of aesthetic contemplation and anchoring them to the tipsy revelry of Lisbon’s Bairro Alto. Whence in this exhibition we may flee the gaudy and incessant hubbub henhouse of gaiety, to be daunted by yet another grange, where the domestication of fire produces moving images; the domestication of history produces myths; and the domestication of all kinds of figures produces ghosts.

While one might liken *Animal Farm* to Orwell’s fairy story, Gusmão concurrently unfurls a structuralist conundrum: the spectral nature of the cinematographic medium itself, pointing us towards a “weirding” phenomenology; a hauntology of sorts – the study of the nature of what lies between being and non-being among domesticated and wild ranch critters – a vicarious ontology!

Within *Animal Farm*, Gusmão submerges us into his idiosyncratic world of para-historical, para-scientific and para-philosophical exploits and opinions, intricately interwoven within each celluloid strip. In the rooms lit only by film projections, one might notice (or not) a mountain of Snow White’s favoured baking powder; the mute crowing of a Rooster at dawn signalling the beginning of yet another day;

a Ghost tape that echoes the sounds of its own demise; a squadron of ducks waltzing through a still life titled Landscape with Boat and River; Half a horse; a humble estate devoted to the exploitation of the sun, that is, a Solar farm; Fermented Foam, an enigmatic goo reminiscent of a dairy product, flanked by Flat cows make nice Yogurt, a vivid account of genetically modified bovines with spongiform encephalopathy – ferall!; a collection of purgatory Bedrooms; yours truly gazing with nostalgia at MyUncle’s Castle, once my grandfather’s and now my cousin’s cottage, immersed in a mise en abyme of resentful inheritance and birthright; Day for night, a motion picture salute to Magritte’s The Empire of Light; a tarragon Mustard piece imbued with scatological overtones; a Sunflower at dusk swept away by a nuclear storm; an eastern Disney like feature film folded 3 times for paradoxical reasons; The wondrous pumpkin farm; Mozart’s piss stone, the menhir once marked by Amadeus himself with the gasoline of a stone-age spacecraft.

Science is fiction!

And, so, the term coined by Derrida whilst delivering a lecture entitled “The Animal that Therefore I Am” reverberates once more: zoopoetics!

*Forward, comrades! Long live the windmill! Long live Animal Farm!*  
George Orwell

#### Links:

[Animal Farm, 99CANAL, NY](#)

[Vídeo Animal Farm, 99CANAL, NY](#)

[Animal Farm, ZDB, Lisbon](#)

[Animal Farm edition](#)

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