

GALERIE JOCELYN WOLFF

Francisco Tropea

AMO-TE

Fundação de Serralves

November 8th, 2024 - May 11st, 2025



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MO-TE [I love you] is the largest monographic exhibition by Francisco Tropa (Lisbon, 1968) ever staged. Known for his complex body of work that combines a broad range of mediums – sculpture, drawing, performance, etching, photography and film – and references, including figures from ancient and modern times, the arts, science and literature, the artist has, over the last thirty years, built his own world enriched by various traditions of sculpture, literature and mythology. These considerations are frequently founded on metaphysical questions, or anthropological and philosophical themes, more precisely on nature, the origin and the final purpose of art, and the creative act.

The exhibition does not claim to be a retrospective, despite being assembled from key projects completed by the artist in each decade of his career. These include the “prototypes”, produced mostly in the 1990s and early 2000s, presented on the mezzanine floor of the Serralves Library; A Assembleia de Euclides [The Assembly of Euclid], which occupied Tropa for much of the 2000s; and O Enigma de RM [The RM Enigma], his most recent work. The exhibition should be seen as a great “machine” systematically confronts visitors with some of the artist’s fundamental concerns, namely how artworks are legitimised, perceived, analysed and shared (should they be subject to a “reading”? Should we judge them on what supposedly makes them topical, the appearance of contemporaneity?). The repetition of form, the reappearance of elements, and the recurrence of specific references (to the history of art – ancient, modern and contemporary –, to antiquity, and mythology) invites us to question our own notions of originality and creativity. Tropa has embraced the recourse to repetition and the reutilisation of elements from past works, rather than seek the new. The artist is more interested in continuing to add to an object, a motif or point of reference with which he consistently works: “I only come up with something new if I can’t make use of something I’ve already worked with; repeating objects in different situations only serves to enrich them”. He also explores associations triggered by how we were exposed to these elements in the past. At the same time, the profusion of references ensures each piece is polyphonic, conveying a variety of different meanings simultaneously. Intentionally paradoxical, this multiplicity of possible interpretations – what the artist calls “controlled noise” – ultimately results in an infinite capacity for “readings” of the work, with its interpretation based on an almost endless array of explicit, erudite citations that it inventories and/or summons. The point is to make it so that all visitors can do is “simply” look.

MO-TE, besides being a machine for creating echoes, referrals, resonances and reverberations, is a spectacle that questions and explores the very format of the exhibition itself. It presents projects that become exhibitions within the exhibition, emphasising the importance of the contexts in which the objects are displayed for achieving the intended reading. Beginning with the title, it places visitors at the centre of an experience where they are the true protagonists. A fitting riposte to the grand statement that provides the exhibition’s title could well be a phrase we usually associate with amours fous, but which, in this case, is an entirely appropriate commentary on the starring role granted the visitor: “Without you, I am nothing!”

MO-TE, organised by the Serralves Museum, is curated by Ricardo Nicolau and coordinated by Giovana Gabriel. The exhibition is a collaboration with the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, which will be presenting simultaneously another side to the work of Francisco Tropa.



Exhibition view



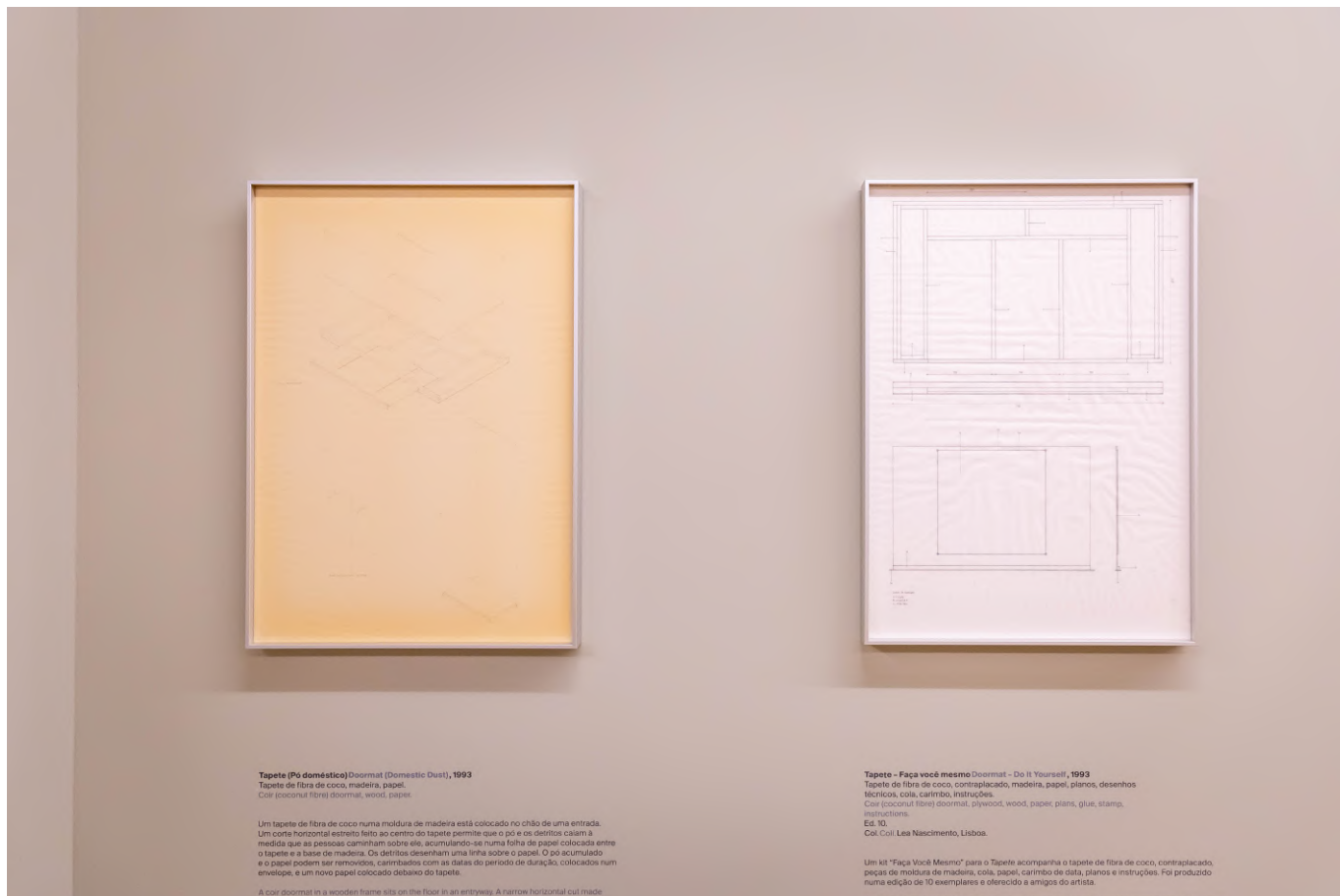
Exhibition view



Placa solar Solar Photo, 2013
4 elementos (cada um é exibido com três fotografias em Cibachrome). Placa de metal laminado, construída, montada de madeira, vidro, três fotografias em Cibachrome emolduradas.
4 elements (each is displayed with three Cibachrome photographs). Laminated metal plate, plywood, wood frame, glass, three framed Cibachrome photographs.
Cortesia Courtesy Galeria Quadrado Azul, Porto.

Uma série de quatro superfícies encurvadas emolduradas atrás de vidro, as peças são desenhadas para absorver calor. Dentro de cada construção encontra-se um material não revelado com propriedades térmicas. Os materiais incluem areia, cortiça, papel e palha.
A series of four framed backlit surfaces behind glass, the pieces are designed to absorb heat. Layered within each construction is an undisclosed material with thermal properties. The materials include sand, cork, paper and straw.

Exhibition view



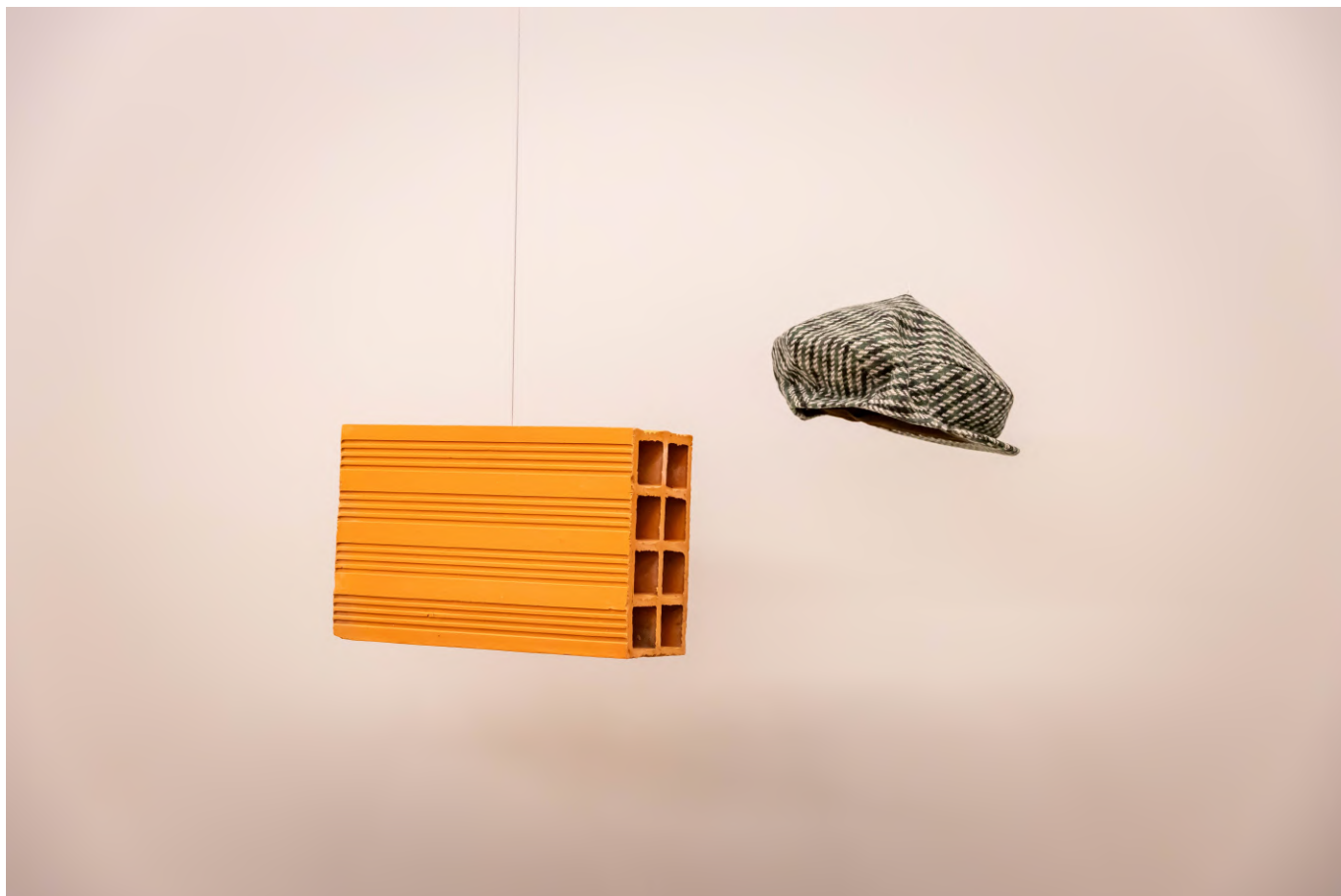
Exhibition view



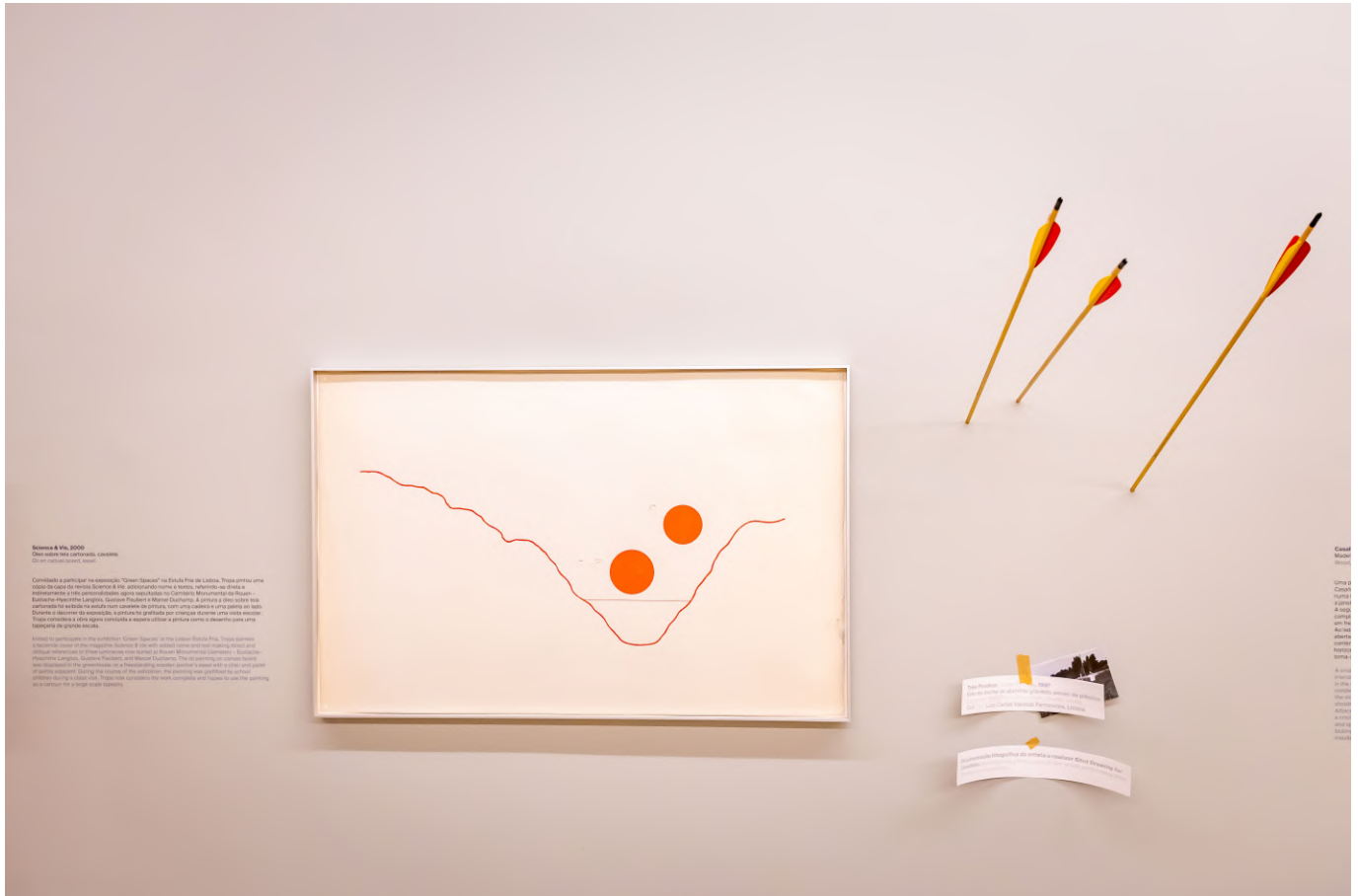
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