JUAN SILIÓ
GALERÍA

NUNO NUNES-FERREIRA
tan nuevo y tan cerca

January, 27 – March, 27 2024

Dr. Fourquet, 20. 28012, Madrid
Tuesday-Friday 11am-7pm. / Saturday 11am-2pm.


Portugal
tan nuevo y tan cerca

Galería Juan Silió presents the second exhibition in Madrid by Portuguese artist Nuno Nunes-Ferreira. Focused on the concept of memory, his work is based on archival documents that the artist has been collecting, in an almost impulsive way, for years. With the subsequent alteration of these documents enables him to create artworks that cross the boundaries between collective and personal memory.

On this occasion, and coinciding with its 50th anniversary, Nunes-Ferreira depicts the Revolution of April 25, 1974, focusing on the emotional aspect of that moment. Color and words exemplify that transition: a series of black or hollow geometric shapes, that replicate the erasure used by the Salazar Dictatorship, reflects the dark and sustained period of censorship; in the second part, the color red and collage give way to the subsequent feeling of enthusiasm for the acquired freedom, which is also present in the title of the exhibition, taken from the slogan chosen by the Portuguese government with the arrival of democracy to show the country's change. *tan nuevo y tan cerca* (so new and so close) is a reminder of the importance of language, freedom of expression and the emotional charge contained in words.

The exhibition, on view until March 27, is accompanied by a text by curator Hugo Dinis and is supported by the Portuguese Embassy in Spain.

Nuno Nunes- Ferreira (Lisbon, 1976), lives and Works in Santarem (Portugal) and exhibits regularly since 2000 in institutions and galleries. Recent solo exhibitions are: Monsieur Valadares, Balcony Gallery, Lisbon (2022); Café Central, Juan Silió Gallery, Madrid (2021) and A Palavra, Convento de São Francisco, Coimbra (2020);
His work is part of several public and private collections highlighting Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, IVAM, MAAT, FLAD, EGEAC, MU.SA, Norlinda and José Lima Collection, Figueiredo Ribeiro Collection, José Carlos Santana Pinto Collection, Censored Collection by Tatxo Benet, Colección Kells, Fundación Hortensia Herrero, Colección Norte de Arte Contemporáneo, Fundación Focus Abengoa, Fundació Sorigué, Colección DKV, Bienal de Cerveira Foundation, Liberty Seguros, Colección Olor Visual, Colección ACB, among others.

CulturaPortugal
Embajada de Portugal en Madrid
CAMÕES INSTITUTO DA COOPERAÇÃO E DA LINGUA PORTUGAL
MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

tan nuevo y tan cerca
Nuno Nunes-Ferreira

I shall not die without knowing
the color of freedom.

Jorge de Sena, "Who has it...", 1956

The artist Nuno Nunes-Ferreira (Lisbon, Portugal, 1976) is presenting the exhibition *tan nuevo y tan cerca*, at Galería Juan Silló, Madrid between January 27 and March 27, 2024. Focusing almost exclusively on the Revolution of April 25, 1974, which ended 48 years of fascist rule in Portugal, the exhibition reflects two points of view that go side by side. On the one hand, in 1975 the Turism Oficce was running a campaign in neighboring Spain, promoting Portugal as "so new and so close" (tan nuevo y tan cerca), revealing an optimistic foreign view of the new nation by the seashore. On the other hand, the works on display reflect the artist's intimate view of documents from his personal archive and his family's experiences that were influenced by the change from an oppressive regime to democracy. Both paths reveal the joint complexity of history, its intrinsic nuances and its diverse promises of the "color of freedom".

Another dichotomy, also present in the exhibition, can be found in the colors used in the gallery's two spaces. In the first room, the black works highlight an inhospitable and austere space that represents the censorship times of the current dictatorship. The work *48 anos de ditadura* (48 years of dictatorship) features two copies of the front page of the newspapers "28 de Maio" and "25 de Abril" which, listed in black ink, reflect a dark time. After the coup d'état in 1926, a regime of prior censorship was established, in which all newspapers had to be sent to the censorship commission and could not leave blank spaces after the cuts. In this sense, geometric shapes appeared in black that covered up the news that had been targeted by the censorship committee, which used a blue pencil to carry out its work. This historical fact is reflected in the 14 publications on display at the exhibition: Correio de Coimbra, Novidades, Jornal de Notícias, O Primeiro de Janeiro, Diário de Coimbra, República, Acção, O Exército, Diário Popular, Diário de Notícias, A Capital, O Século, Diário de Lisboa and O Algarve. These are 14 publications from the period in which only the phrase "Visado pela Comissão de Censura" is visible. The Estado Novo promoted the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar by publishing his speeches and achievements. The memory of this propaganda is brought to the present with the presentation of the complete volumes of "Discursos e Notas Políticas", published between 1945 and 1967 by Coimbra Editora. This work entitled Discursos de Salazar (Salazar's Speeches) brings together the 6 volumes pierced by a hole, as if conceptually emptying the ideas they contained. Another work in the exhibition, which also uses this circular device, is Diário da Manhã, which features a special issue of the newspaper celebrating the dictator's jubilee (April 27, 1928 - April 27, 1957) in power as Minister of Finance and President of the Council of Ministers. The transition between the gallery rooms evokes the passage of time with the poem "Esta é a madrugada que eu esperava" (This is the dawn I was waiting for, April 1974) by Sophia de Mello Breyner Anderson. The work *Primeira semana de liberdade* (First week of freedom) presents 7 original front pages from diaries published between April 25, 1974 and May 1, 1974. This promise of freedom and democracy is present in the second room, in the explosion of red works that occupy all the walls of the space: *48 artistas*; *Quinta-feira, 25 de Abril 1974*; *A arte como arma*; *48 Anos de Censura*; *Hora «H»*; *Vermelho*; *A poesia está na rua*; *Luta Popular*; *Voz do Povo*; *Declaração*; *Escrever a palavra Liberdade*; *Escrever a palavra Povo*; *Escrever a palavra Revolução*; *Escrever a palavra Democracia*; *Escrever a palavra Descolonização*; *Escrever a palavra 25 de Abril*; *Da esquerda para a direita*; e *Ontem*. Using his personal archive, the artist evokes, often literally, events that were possible to say or write for the first time, such as: Freedom, People, Decolonization or 25 April.

In all the works on display in the exhibition, it becomes clear that the research, classification and selection of the press cuttings, and the other materials presented, presupposes the retrieval and collection of an immense archive that is part of the methodology that the artist has been developing and refining. In fact, the process of searching for, acquiring, inventorying, choosing and erasing the publications undertaken by the artist up until the realization of the work itself turns out to be an almost performative act that can be traced back to the origin of the word archive. Originating from the Greek arkheion, which designated the residence of the archons, senior magistrates who guarded laws and documents, the archive was not limited to mere safekeeping and processing. By interpreting the documents, these authority figures became active actors of knowledge and power. In other words, the collection of documents became an archive through their interpretation. In this sense, artistic work, seen as transforming and revealing a given reality, which uses a dead archive as a tool, becomes a living memory of that same reality that it wants to present. Adding that the artist's archive is always a selective, privileged and hierarchical collection, because he actively seeks out documents that interest him, it can be said that there is always a fragmented and engaged point of view, rather than a totalitarian or systemic one. Works of art and artistic discourse do not fix history, but have a dynamic understanding that presents a generational memory movement in both directions: father to son and vice versa. This transmission of feeling and knowledge reveals that reality is a construction of the present and that history, through an artistic lens, is not frozen in its past, but lies in the ability to reflect publicly on its intimate and personal vision.

Lisbon, December 2023
Hugo Dinis