

ATELIER-MUSEU JÚLIO POMAR

# JÚLIO POMAR 10 ANOS DE MUSEU

## Exhibition

Museum's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

6/7 2023—14/1 2024

## Curators

Sara Antónia Matos and Pedro Faro

On the 5th of April of 2013, the Atelier-Museu Júlio Pomar opened its doors for the first time, with an exhibition entitled “Em Torno do Acervo” (“Around the Collection”). At that time, the aim was to make the public aware of its mission, of the guidelines of its action and of its main nuclei of works. That was also the time to discover what possible relationships could be established with other artistic entities. The collection and the space itself were still being discovered, and the possibilities which were available then, as well as the potential and the limitations of both the space and the collection, were only starting to be acknowledged. In 2020, during the pandemic, and reflecting on the work that had been done so far, a second exhibition, “Em Torno do Acervo II” (“Around the Collection II”), was inaugurated. Celebrating now its 10th anniversary, the Atelier-Museu Júlio Pomar will once again share with the public the fundamental sessions of its collection, enriched in the meantime with new acquisitions and a significant increase in knowledge about the artist’s work.

In 2023, the Atelier-Museu Júlio Pomar celebrates 10 years of its opening and of continuous contribution to the Portuguese cultural fabric. Having created specific conditions for artistic and historical research and keeping the work of Júlio Pomar (Lisbon, 1926–2018) always close to the public, through a varied exhibitions programme – collective (with contemporary artists of different generations) or solo exhibitions – the AMJP enables and promotes the discovery, rediscovery, validation, and interpretation of the work of an artist who marked the History of Portuguese Art.

Throughout the current decade, the AMJP made several investments, namely for the collection, acquiring new works and receiving, as a donation from the Júlio Pomar Foundation and the artist's heirs, a significant number of pieces that enriched its possibilities as well as its autonomy as a cultural institution.

The exhibition “Júlio Pomar. 10 anos de Museu” allows the visitor to discover or to simply revisit some of the works and series of works by the artist, which are part of the collection, or some other pieces, in exhibition here for the first time, belonging to the Fundação Júlio Pomar; these curiosities include an unexpected *Portemanteau*, a work made in 2004 that the public can, not only discover, but even use.

In “Júlio Pomar. 10 years of the Museum”, the collection of studies and documents referring to the mural paintings that Júlio Pomar made for the Cinema Batalha, in Porto, stands out because of its topicality. Initiated in 1946, when Pomar was only 20 years old, those paintings were only completed by the end of 1947, because meanwhile the artist had been arrested by the PIDE (the International and State Defense Police, a Portuguese security agency that existed during the Estado Novo regime). Thought to have been lost forever, they were uncovered and restored in 2022, after the remotion of seven layers of paint, including the one ordered by the government censorship that, in 1948, decided to hide them forever. Surprising for its disruptive and ever hanging character are the portraits and self-portraits of Júlio Pomar, a genre that the artist never stopped practising, because of the always implied challenge of portraying a face and its gaze. Complementing this session, an unprecedented set of portraits of the artist, made by friends such as Menez, Luísa Correia Pereira, Eduardo Luís and Álvaro Siza Vieira.

There is also a bestiary, constituted of more or less strange animals, which carries in itself an ironic capacity to challenge existing conventions, specific to the artist's work.

In this new presentation of the collection, one can also see various pieces that relate to themes which were always a source of disquiet and

exploration to Júlio Pomar. In this group, there are two of the largest and most significant paintings of the collection – *Cartilha do Marialva* and *Navio Negroiro* – which are based on themes that were dear to the artist but that also, and above all, materialise the working processes and the methodologies that the artist developed when facing a canvas: a physical dynamics of coming back and forth, applying and scraping onto successive layers of paint, creating planes through the use of various instruments and thus originating screens of colours and forms. Reiterating this dimension of process and transformation, the Júlio Pomar Foundation mentions that, under the first layers of paint on these two paintings, there were figures from Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, a work widely explored by Júlio Pomar.

Extensive, diverse, and essentially prolific were also his approaches to eroticism. In the works now exhibited, one can see how the artist fuses bodies and strange objects, in an innovative manner, leaving aside genders, positions of power or the very nature of relationships: female and male, prey or predator, human body and beast, all in unison and thrown out to the same dance, at the same time.

To create knowledge, information, contents – based on extensive and in-depth research of the artist's works and the existing documents, as well as on the contextualisation of those works in the collection – has always been a fundamental feature of the AMJP. This is also why documents could never be a missing part in this exhibition.

Keeping the work of an artist, whose life spanned almost a century, close to the public, is a way of providing the community with a better understanding of his work, as well as allowing each visitor to learn from him about art, society, politics, history, resistance, struggle and love, among many other areas of life. At times when certainties are shaken, it is important – and also comforting – to listen to stories and wisdom coming from a different point of view.

#### EXIBITION

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ATELIER-MUSEU JÚLIO POMAR

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