



MAUMAUS

Press Release | 16.09.2016

Christodoulos Panayiotou
Pragmática contra o Luxo
24.09. - 06.11.2016

24.09 | 17h00 Opening

A chair tells us to sit on it, a painting to look at, a ladder to climb up. Objects determine our behaviour. We often desire to own them beyond our basic needs. Some objects symbolize power and other might be read as a symbol for powerlessness.

Christodoulos Panayiotou's objects are double-sided. For his first exhibition in Portugal the artist developed a carefully choreographed installation for the Lumiar Cité space in Alta de Lisboa, extending the exhibition to the balcony windows on the 6th floor of block of flats opposite the gallery, as well as to the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum. At the museum, there will be occasional performances, with no date and time announced, for an accidental audience, the 'usual' Gulbenkian visitors, who may not identify the performance as such when visiting the Mediaeval Art Gallery, since it discreetly 'activates' a fragment of liturgical manuscript from the 14th century, presented in one of the collection's display cases.

The 18th century Portuguese law 'Pragmática contra o Luxo' is the title of Panayiotou's exhibition. This law is often interpreted as a puritan reaction against the voluptuous decadence resulting from wealth fuelled by exploitation of colonised overseas territories. But it was a law that also aimed to secure the privileges of one class, limiting the right to use luxury objects to a certain nobility, preventing such items from becoming commonplace and charging them with a symbolism that announces the power of those with exclusive rights to use them.

Power structures behind given idealized and fetishized objects (the latter a term of Portuguese origin), including art works themselves (aura), are the topics of Panayiotou's apparently minimalist exhibition in Lisbon. The objects presented at Lumiar Cité in a rather accentuated way include a classic marble console with its vague function and its reference to bourgeois decoration, a 'delicate' photograph of a bouquet of flowers in a Japanese style, a piece of jewellery kept in a Samsonite briefcase with instructions given by the artist to the gallery assistant on how to handle its visibility for the visitor, a sculpture evoking an archaeological find, its smaller format perfect to decorate a private collector's home (as an archaeological piece as well as an contemporary art work), a real quince tree and curtains sewn using fabric left over from an order by the Archbishop's Palace in Nicosia, Cyprus – all combined to subtly reveal a double-sidedness that undermines our common perceptions.

One of the predominant links between the works is how the artist activates each of the objects based on his sensitive attention to non-visible histories of their production, their materiality and materialistic projections regarding the desire to own them. By undermining notions of purity as a sine qua non for such projection, Panayiotou highlights certain phenomena of creation of meaning. All of this is developed understatedly in Lumiar Cité and the exhibition's

'annex' opposite, as well as in the performance at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, which, distanced from exhibition visitors, may lead them to wonder whether the artist is revealing or keeping a secret.

Christodoulos Panayiotou (b. 1978, Limassol, Cyprus) lives and works in Limassol and Paris. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held (amongst others) at the 56th Venice Biennial, The Cyprus Pavilion; Point Center of Contemporary Art, Nicosia; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Casino Luxembourg; CCA Kitakyushu; Centre d'Art Contemporain de Brétigny; Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Louis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig; Kunsthalle Zürich and Cubitt, London. His work was also shown in a number of group exhibitions including: dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel; 8th Berlin Biennale; 7th Liverpool Biennial; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museion, Bolzano; Migros Museum, Zürich; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; Joan Miro Foundation, Barcelona; Witte de With, Rotterdam; Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Ashkal Alwan Center for Contemporary Arts, Beirut; Artist Space, New York; MoCA Miami.

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Wednesday to Sunday, 15h00 to 19h00 and by appointment

Lumiar Cité is the exhibition space of Maumaus.

Bus: 798 stop Rua Helena Vaz da Silva, 717 stop Av. Carlos Paredes
Metro: Lumiar (exit Estrada da Torre)

'Fragment of a liturgical manuscript (Antiphonary, Gradual?), Cologne, c.1300-10' will be performed on occasion in the Mediaeval Art Gallery of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum during the period of Panayiotou's exhibition at Lumiar Cité.

Funded by:

