



FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN

CENTRO DE ARTE MODERNA JOSÉ DE AZEREDO PERDIGÃO

RUI SANCHES (1954)

Rui Sanches was born in 1954, in Lisbon, where he currently lives and works. He developed his artistic education during the 70s with a course at Ar.Co, a BA at Goldsmith's College and an MFA from Yale University. The time spent in London and New York allowed the artist to follow up close the most contemporary artistic production of that period and created a favourable context for experimentation in his work and his abandonment of earlier attempts at painting.

In 1984 he held his first individual exhibition at the Galeria Diferença. *Et in Arcadia Ego*, on show there, was a paradigm in terms of his pieces from decade, which based his vocabulary on the deconstruction of neo-classical paintings. The same analytical and reconstructive procedure of a rhetorical structure would be used in pieces with mythological and hagiographic referents.

The 1992 exhibition *Body Building* at the Loja da Atalaia, revealed a set of changes in his practice: the abandonment of referents from Art History and the subsequent liberation of the form's realm of decision; the coexistence and progressive substitution of geometric wood modules (boxes and strips) in a process of stacking thin layers of plywood that defined flexible, organic, anthropomorphic contours.

The previous use of materials like sheets, lamps, metallic pipes and pieces of painted bronze became less frequent halfway through the decade, the only exception being the use of sheets of glass whose smooth and transparent surface sometimes sectioned, as a contrast, the apparently solid and cohesive internal space.

Two recent exhibitions, one at the Galeria Quadrado Azul in 1999 and the other at the Museu da Cidade in 2000, displayed a significant set of works that expressed that formal tendency. They were defined within decisions of scale that managed, without distancing themselves too much from a human referent or point of view, to oscillate between the dimension of an object and the suggestion of monumentality.

Rui Sanches has simultaneously developed, from the beginning, drawings as a means to resolve – in a two dimensional medium and within a different time set – issues that are closely related to those he explores in his sculpture.

Mainly interested in the work shop characteristic of sculpture and in the sensual experience implicit in the handling of the materials or in the surprising

contours that the hands can define, Rui Sanches hasn't, however, refrained from occasionally intervening in public spaces where he has necessarily had to distance himself from the intimate values of making: the decoration of Frágil (1998), a bar; the open air sculpture in St. Tirso (1993), the steel sculpture for the Olaias subway station (1998) or the piece for the Arte Urbana da Expo in 1998 (urban art commissioned for Expo 98).

In a diverse and abundantly productive career, that has seen a variety of exhibitions in places of such international import as Rome, Paris, São Paulo, Ghent and Tokyo, the retrospective exhibition held at the Modern Art Centre in 2001 was a response to the need for an understanding of his work in its entirety.

LEONOR NAZARÉ

Bibliography

Rui Sanches: body building, Lisboa, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1992. (Catalogue)

Rui Sanches. Desenhos, Lisboa, Centro de Arte Moderna - Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1991. (Catalogue)

Rui Sanches, Paris, Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian, 2004. (Catalogue)

Rui Sanches, Retrospectiva, Lisboa, CAMJAP – Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2001. (Catalogue)

Works in the CAMJAP collection

5 sculptures, 2 drawings