

*(para)sites*

# A NATU REZA DO DES LUMBRE

PEDRO VAZ

a project curated by the students of The Lisbon  
Consortium, Emma Legaye, Dela Christin Mießen  
and Rodrigo Marcondes

## *(para)sites*

a project with Jane Jin Kaisen, Pedro Vaz, Michelle Eistrup, and Rita Senra

curated by the MA and PhD students of The Lisbon Consortium of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa under the artistic direction of Luísa Santos

*(para)sites* is the final project developed by the students of the Curatorship seminar, which is part of the International MA and PhD program in Cultural Studies, coordinated by the Lisbon Consortium and the Universidade Católica Portuguesa's Faculty of Human Sciences. Designed within the context of the *4Cs: from Conflict to Conviviality through Creativity and Culture* - a European cooperation project, co-funded by Creative Europe, Culture program of the European Union, *(para)sites* is outlined by four artistic interventions, by Jane Jin Kaisen, Pedro Vaz, Michelle Eistrup, and Rita Senra, in *Espuma Dos Dias*, a bookshop in Lisbon, in order to reflect on notions of power and hospitality.

Inspired by Michel Serres' definition of parasite (1982), the series of interventions interfere in the order of its host (the space of *Espuma dos Dias*) and generate disorder, or produce a new order. What is interesting in Serres' definition is the positive light under which he defines the parasite: a productive force from which a system is structured. The parasite — be it biological, social or informational — is what balances the systems. This idea has been adopted by various authors such as curator and researcher Janna Graham, to

whom the parasitic practices are defined as a methodology for artistic production in four dimensions: occupying; dialogic; critical/transformational; commissioned/outsourced. What these dimensions have in common is the context in which they operate: even if made for a museum or an exhibition space in order to receive financing and legitimacy as art, the consequences of their production pervade the locations of the cultural institutions into social, economic and political domains (Graham, 2012).

While the biological parasite feeds off its host organism, the series of artistic interventions appropriate its structure from its host site; while the social parasite entertains its host in exchange of food, the series offer the production of knowledge to a public accidentally drawn into an unexpected object; while the digital parasite interferes in an information network, the series interrupts the organisation of the bookshop to create a new (dis)order.

In this parasite-host relationship — which bears as much confrontation as progress, as much disruption as transformation — the *(para)sites* invite us to look at both our surroundings and our actions in their social and civic transforming potential.

# A NATUREZA DO DESLUMBRE

Pedro Vaz

Curated by Emma Legaye, Dela Christin Mießen and Rodrigo Marcondes.

It can be said that Pedro Vaz's work is about experiences and memories. A personal set of connected dots, layers of thoughts and chronological facts of his biography. Prompted by expeditions into nature, Vaz collects materials, videos and photographs that later become the base for the production of the body of his work. Back in his studio, he then accesses and dives in the collected memories picked on the way, composing visual experiments and exploring new ways of representing them, to create new methods of developing possible realities.

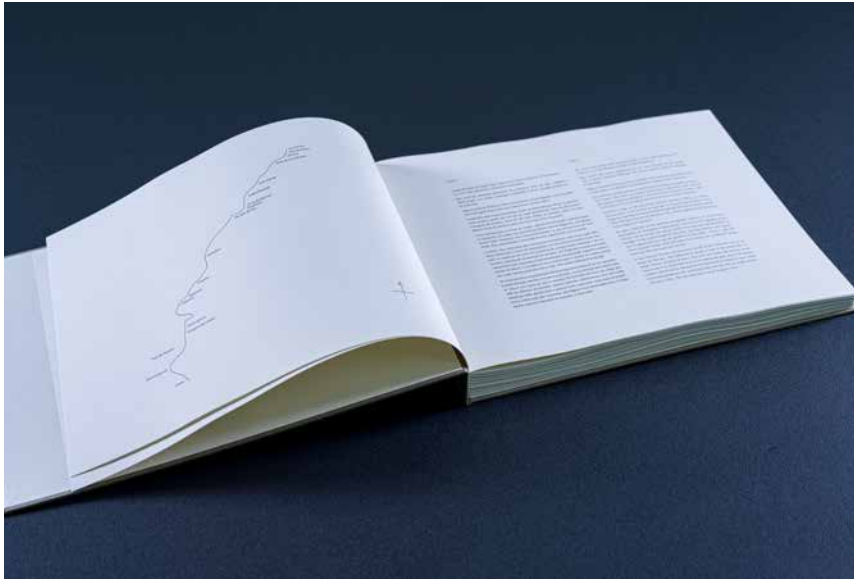
Vaz's procedure of embodying the environment and feeling it on the skin, somehow opposes policies and aesthetics that were for some time related to the expulsion of the body from the visualization processes. If the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by Modernism(s) and its questioning of what reality, perspective, space and time, and representation meant/ could mean, Vaz's work tricks our perception(s) of the world. On the one hand, the artist gives us clues about the landscape we are entering, while on the other hand he greets us with faded traces of the scene in front of us. Through this game of hide-and-seek, the viewer is led to feel a sense of familiarity with faraway places while experiencing the aesthetic dimension of the artist's work, plunging into a very contemporary way of making and understanding images. Vaz does that by using a range of media and techniques, spanning from painting, photographs, site-specific installations, film, and audio.

In “*A Natureza do Deslumbre*”, composed here by a series of four paintings, two handmade books and one audio-work , displacement occurs while his body endures the challenge of crossing an inhospitable landscape in Brazil. We are talking about the “Caminho do Ouro” (The Gold Path), a 700 kilometers long trail used by the Portuguese to bring the gold from the hinterlands of Brazil to the coast during the colonial period. According to Vaz’s words, “the line of this path remains at this exact moment in its real physical place, unchanged, in the geographical coordinates of Brazil. It is inscribed on the political and topographical map outline, narratable and recognizable in History. The Gold Path is a known route, and this account develops between the expedition and the memories I keep from that” (2021). As it is recurrent in his work, the artist visits notions of dis(placement), history and territory, groping in the dark, searching for the intrinsic understanding of the explored path. He eventually finds the answer: “The only path that can be known exactly is the personal one.” (Vaz, 2021)

Pedro Vaz  
*A Natureza do Deslumbre 1 & 2*  
 2021  
 Artist book



Artist book



*Journey of A Natureza do Deslumbre*

Lost in the midst of wilderness of the “Caminho do Ouro” region, heights and shapes take on architectural proportions. A Natureza do Deslumbre 1&2 (2021) are composed of black and white photographs of the exploration of the Gold Path. Travelling from a green, jungle landscape to a rocky one, scoured by deforestation and manmade exploitation of the land, the proportions lose their references to inhabited areas. Whereas A Natureza do Deslumbre 1 depicts images of the trail between Paraty and Cunha (Serra do Facão), with the idea of recollecting and preserving the last pieces of wild nature, A Natureza do Deslumbre 2 divides the rest of the journey into different places, different chapters, following the new, rocky path in chronological order.



*Sample of A Natureza do Deslumbre*

By doing as little editing as possible, the photographs work as a testimony, an accurate image of what the artist experienced in his journey. Pedro Vaz tries to account for what has happened in the past and how finally nature took back the once exploited Trilha do Facão, linking the port of Paraty and the town Ouro Preto while crossing Minas Gerais over more than 700 kilometers.



*Sample of A Natureza do Deslumbre*

Pedro Vaz  
*Trilha do Facão 1-4*  
 2017  
 Acrylic on plywood  
 64cm x 43cm

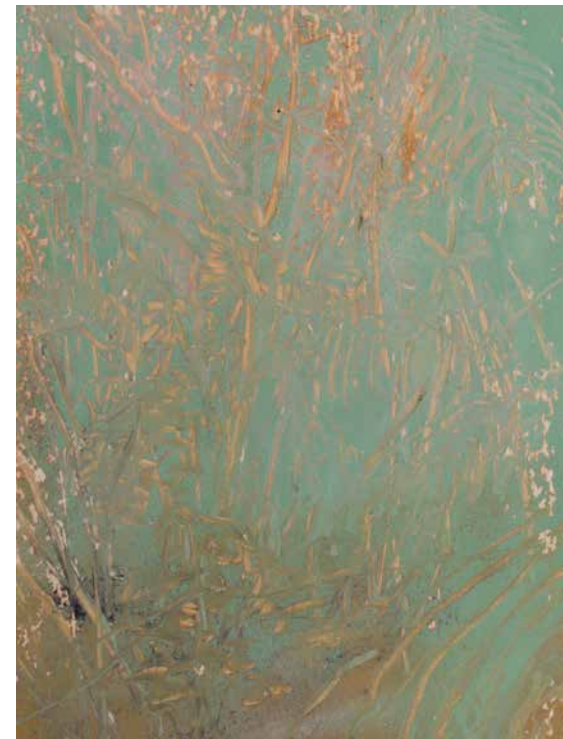


*Trilha do Facão 1*

Based on the photographs in *A Natureza do Deslumbre 1&2*, Pedro Vaz developed a series of paintings, from which four are chosen to be on display in dialogue with the books for this exhibition. Colors and materials are inspired by nature and the artist's trip to the Brazilian forests.



*Trilha do Facão 2*



*Trilha do Facão 3*



*Trilha do Facão 4*

If we want to know,  
we ask the landscape  
2016  
Voice by Pedro Vaz  
21:48 min

“If we want to know, we ask the landscape” is the artist’s thoughts about the paradox of the sound that lies in silence. Pedro Vaz’s journey operates as a combination of connected dots on the ground, layers of thought, the historical and geographical paths with the constant need of concretization. Ultimately, the trip is about the uncertainties where trial and error often are the only possible way of structure.

At this exhibition, the images captured –printed in silver or invented by pigment– give an interpretation of the colonial wound of the “Caminho do Ouro”. Photographs, usually used as a route to painting (or video) in the artist’s *oeuvre*, are here elevated to the level of testimony. Vaz chooses to show these photographs with very little editing or retouching, organizing them in two books. With this approach, the viewer is allowed to search the artist’s file with their own eyes, like being in his shoes, experiencing the author’s travel across Brazil.

This is also how the artist connects with the concept of (para)site, sucking in the space of the bookshop and relating with it in a very direct way, by producing artworks that could blend in perfectly, but still catch the visitor’s attention more than all the other pieces in the shelves. With this approach, Vaz generates a new (dis)order by interfering in the space but still entertains the audience with his production of knowledge.

All the memories faint away while the viewer observes the four paintings of the exhibition. Those are actually bleached memories of Pedro Vaz's visit to "Caminho do Ouro" –or washed memories, as it translates to Portuguese–, questioning and blurring the invisible line that is drawn between the image and the spectator, between what we see and what we perceive, a line as powerful as the one Vaz had been walking on during his trip to Brazil.

## colophon

### Artists

Jane Jin Kaisen; Pedro Vaz;  
Michelle Eistrup; Rita Senra

### Curators / MA and PhD Students in Culture Studies of The Lisbon Consortium, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas and Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Galane David; Dora Fernandes;  
Laura Ferschl; Francisco Gomes;  
Viktoria Lohner; Rodrigo Marcondes;  
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Megha Shekhawat; Teresa Pinheiro;  
Valerie Rath.

### Curatorship Seminar / Artistic Direction

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(FCH-UCP, CECC)

### Design

vivóeusébio

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