

Pedro Barateiro:

*Crying in Public*

(EN) Kunsthalle

Münster

Kunsthalle Münster, Hafenweg 28, 5th floor, 48155 Münster  
Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12–6 pm (Free admission)  
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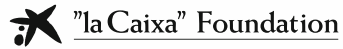
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The programme of the Kunsthalle Münster is supported by the Friends of the Kunsthalle Münster.

Opening: July 2, 2023, 12 – 6 pm, Opening speeches: 12 pm  
Maria Winkel, Major City of Münster (Greeting)  
Merle Radtke, Director Kunsthalle Münster (Introduction)

2 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Performance: Pedro Barateiro, *My body, this paper, this fire*

Accompanying programme:

→ 6/7/2023, 6 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Guided tour with Jana Peplau

→ 6/8/2023, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Guided tour with Jana Peplau

→ 14/9/2023, 6 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Guided tour with Jana Peplau

→ 1/10/2023, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Curator's tour with Merle Radtke

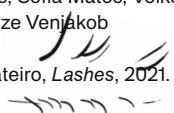
Further exhibition:

5.7. – 27.8.2023, *Off the Pedestals*: Iván Argote, Eduardo Chillida, Jenny Holzer, Zauri Matikashvili, Joiri Minaya, Leila Orth, Stadthausgalerie  
Münster

Colophon: Director Kunsthalle Münster: Merle Radtke / Curator of the exhibition: Merle Radtke / Curatorial assistant: Jana Peplau / Secretariat cultural office: Manuela Lindenbaum / Bookkeeping cultural office: Beate Spörk / Public relations: Artefakt Kulturkonzepte / Communication: Nazaret Díaz Acosta / Design: JMMP – Julian Mader, Max Prediger / Texts: Pedro Barateiro, Merle Radtke / Editing: Jana Peplau, Merle Radtke / Translation: Tim Connell (EN), Dominikus Müller (DE), Jana Peplau (DE) / Technical execution: Christian Geißler / Construction: Jinuk Choi, Jaimun Kim, Can Ünlü / Media technology: Jan Enste

Many thanks to: Katrin Banse, Jasmim Barateiro, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, CRAC Alsace, Kevin Desbouis Lais Denz, Fundação Carmona e Costa, Fundação Mário Soares, Galeria Filomena Soares, Mário Varela Gomes, Sofia Matos, Volker Renner, Dr. Herbert W. Rott, Manuel Santos, Filomena Soares, Elfi Turpin, Constanze Venjakob

Images: Pedro Barateiro, *Lashes*, 2021. Courtesy the artist





Monologue for a Monster

— uhmm, hi. My name is... Well, to tell you the truth I don't have a name. I was going to invent one, to be nice, but I don't think it's necessary. I am the unspeakable. That which is not said, but which is there, without knowing why. Some call me creature, or monster. I don't care. I'm a monster, a cute creature, who sometimes gets mad. I'm in a process of transformation, maybe monster is not a bad name for me. I'm non-binary. I believe that we are everything at the same time, in different shares. I don't believe in good nor in evil. I don't like to make pass judgments and I don't go after others to force my opinion on them. I came here to tell you what is going on with me, if you care to listen. I would rather be talking to you, but right now I can't.

I never felt very comfortable in my body, I don't know why. I always wanted to know who I was, how I got here. I'm still searching.

I have a screen that appears when I need it. It is like a sheet of paper that I can scribble and erase whenever necessary. I also have my keyboard. I use it to work, to point out my ideas, to research.

As you can see, I only have head and arms, the essentials to work. My organs are all together here inside my head. Sometimes it's a little confusing... the sounds mix. My arms also function as legs. My fingers are my sexual organs.

As I was saying, I think I am in a process of transformation. I've been spending more time away from home. On the streets one becomes more abstract and impersonal. I lose my individuality. I have been distracted by new tasks and applications, distracted from myself.

As you can see, I have no eyes, just eyelashes. They have a life of their own, and they can leave and re-enter my body. They are my special investigative agents. They are antennas, but they are also my form of abstraction. They are free to go out and explore. Each time they blink, they produce a secret code that I can interpret. They give me back a way

of seeing things that is not generated by any preconceived mechanism. The eye lashes can multiply and transform themselves into anything.

One of the objects that were most frequently brought by the colonizers on their predatory expeditions to the tribes was a mirror. The idea was of objectifying the other, making the other look at oneself as an object. Showing someone a mirror is a way of appropriating that person. An offer is both an altruistic as well as a selfish gesture.

I was born in a place that learned to live in silence, nobody could speak out loud. There was only a background noise that some tried to understand. Now they shout at each other as if they had just learned to speak. They were silent for a long time and now they cannot control themselves. "And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger." (...) "My silences have not protected me. Your silence will not protect you." "One needs to speak, when the right moment comes.

I am obsessed with looking for words that define what I feel. The other day I found one: Solastalgia. It means "pain of the land that one inhabits". It serves to define the set of psychological disorders that occurs in native populations due to destructive changes in their territory as a result of mining activities, desertification or climate change.

Part of my job is to manage large amounts of information. I have a lonely job, but I really like what I do. I use all images and all texts in the construction of a joint narrative, which belongs to everyone. Maybe that's why they call me a monster. Because I am a receptacle. I am a poem. I am written and drawn. An endless line. I am incomplete, incapable. I am aware of my mood swings, living in a constant state of consciousness and unconsciousness that makes me float.

I think I'm going through a moment of questioning. I feel like I'm changing. I cannot identify everything that is happening to me. I need some quiet time. Well, sometimes I get paralyzed, not knowing what to do, but... I love to dance so much that it is sometimes difficult to stay still.

I always thought it was normal to be sad. I liked to be in a contemplative mood. It was my natural state. It didn't bother me to see other people smiling, but that wasn't possible for me. I always thought that happiness was about making someone happy, but it isn't. First, we have to be happy ourselves.

The moment we start to articulate words remains the beginning of everything. Words are the only thing that remain of what we were able to do, despite all the science. And the voice, the voice. What gives body to the body. I like poems because they don't have an obvious meaning, they are the search for meaning. Words like a spell. But learning that evoking words that we don't know is dangerous. Words are more dangerous than any gesture.

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*Pedro Barateiro*

1 Audre Lorde, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*, in: Audre Lorde, *Your Silence will not protect you*, Silver Press, UK, 2017.



In his works, which include sculptures, drawings, films, texts and performances, Pedro Barateiro questions the mechanisms and structures of post-capitalist societies. In a variety of ways, the Portuguese artist addresses the inherent alienation of society under capitalism, as well as that of the individual from himself. At a time when the world seems to be increasingly out of joint, characterised by a lack of orientation and helplessness, whereby dissatisfaction and distancing are rampant, he focuses on the question of how we can change the way we relate to one another and to the world around us.

Through the personal address of the nameless character in his animation Monologue for a Monster (1), one is confronted from the outset of the exhibition with questions about one's own identity, ambiguities, disorientation and insecurities. Called a monster by some, a creature by others, the non-binary figure discusses the transformation they undergo, allowing the viewer to participate in how the information they capture and process actually transfigures them. The complexity of the sheer wealth of data affects how the monster relates to the world. They seem to have been shaped by external forces. The lack of an ethical compass makes it impossible for them to take a position. The monster exposes their eminent constructedness as a product of neoliberal capitalism, which means, among other things, an inability to feel empathy, to recognise and understand the emotions and thoughts of others.

As far as Barateiro is concerned, alienation is rooted in the beginnings of modern society and European culture. The latter is predicated, in particular, upon the agricultural mastery of nature coupled with centuries of territorial expansion. Connected to this, wind as an element—representing freedom, movement, change on the one hand, and conquest and oppression on the other—appears exemplarily in several of his works: for the ability to manipulate the winds and the tides, as well as to develop navigational instruments, led a group of *white* people to rise above others, to justify multiple genocides, to enslave entire swathes of people and to infect them with disease by merely coming into contact with them. All at

the behest of the noble goal of “civilising” them. Liberated from religion, the development of science coupled with anthropocentric myths (or multiple fictions), helped to spread the idea of private subjective capital as the ultimate form of emancipation for the human body and mind. Exploitation and oppression, and likewise its concomitant dependency, took their course, leading to yet more alienation. The endemic culture of capitalist entrepreneurship posited the notion that the individual is responsible for making its own way, fighting against and subjugating everything and everyone in its way. A system of competition has likewise been nurtured that benefits only abstract capital production but is otherwise characterised by coldness and indifference toward the Other. The baleful collision of the Self with the environment is the inevitable outcome in this scenario.

A previously given, unquestioned relationship of humankind to themselves and to their environment seems to have been disrupted, turned upside down, destroyed. Against this very background, Barateiro plays with the essential means of orientation and disorientation. His works serve as instruments of self-reassurance, allowing one to question one’s own position in the world. His art makes it possible to stay in touch with one’s own humanity; it offers space for vulnerability, imagination and dreams. To this end, he relies on emotion and intimacy to counteract an increasingly prevalent trend toward casual insensitivity. Accordingly, his recourse to the epoch of Romanticism, which emerged as a reaction to the rational philosophy of the Enlightenment and the fundamental motifs of which being emotion, passion, individuality and individual experience, seems almost like a logical consequence. After all, his art is characterised by a melancholy yearning for a perfect place where protean commonality and affection stand innocently before monolithic commodity-form. In order to decolonise our bodies and minds, Barateiro uses poetry as an instrument.

The simultaneity of orientation and disorientation is inscribed in the series of works Bussola (2–4, 9)—i.e., compasses or weathervanes. For centuries now, the compass has served as both a navigational tool and object indelibly associated with location, satisfying the human desire to be in control of one’s overall direction in life. But in recent times, this desire seems to have become an obsession, indeed, it appears to have

taken on a life of its own: in the meantime, one is confronted with a form of technology that not only divulges and transmits one’s location at all times, but also influences where one is standing, what one is looking for/at, optimal routes and so on. One’s own position at any given moment is linked to a plethora of information. On the one hand, this makes one more attentive; on the other, it leads to excessive demands, engenders anxiety and confusion, and ultimately leads to perplexity and disorientation. Thus, a lack of clarity inheres in this veritable buzz of clarifying information, whereby technical progress becomes a paradox in itself. This is a feeling that Barateiro’s sculptures home in on; enumerating the four cardinal points of the compass, namely N, S, W & E (“O” like “Ost” in German), they seem familiar enough. However, upon closer inspection, a (dis)order is revealed. The artist’s manipulation of things here breaks with these familiar parameters; it effectively demands a repositioning beyond a received order and disrupts our blind trust in navigational instruments.

The animated monster’s Lashes (booklet) similarly function as an instrument to aid their location in the world. Their eyelashes lead a life of their own, they do not just remain on the monitor in the studio but embark on a journey. As “investigative special agents,” they allow the monster to explore the world and perceive it beyond preformatted information. They function as their antennae. What is seen as a direct sensory impression bears witness to an immediate ‘being-in-the-world’, beyond the monitor or smart-phone displays.

Mário Varela Gomes photographs (5), taken on 25/26 May 1974 in Lisbon during the Carnation Revolution, capture a moment of liberation. This revolution heralded the end of the authoritarian Estado Novo dictatorship. Forty years under a fascist regime in Portugal ended abruptly in that instant. The photographs illustrate a moment of freedom: secrets are revealed, documents are tossed out of the windows of the official censor’s office, borne on the wind, information that was hitherto under lock and key only a short time before, cascades upon the people in the street.

In his drawings Screen Sunset (8), It’s the Feeling Sexy Playlist (10), Underwater Scene (11) and Storm – Supermarket (13), Barateiro engages

with landscape as a motif. Especially in the Romantic period, this genre was viscerally imbued with emotion. Classically, the images here also appear as windows—landscape as a projection surface. The artist plays with the sublime, the aesthetic category that since the eighteenth century has been associated with humankind's overwhelming feeling of being hopelessly at the mercy of natural forces.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Barateiro's landscapes are by no means picturesque but conversely seem to evoke impending doom. The encounter of shadowy figures casting long shadows, spectres whizzing through the landscape and eyes looming on the horizon, conjure up an almost surreal, dystopian impression. Repeatedly, the sunset appears as an ephemeral instant marking the transition from day to night. Sometimes there are several suns visible in the sky or transiting the horizon. And even if the landscape seems dystopian, thereby engendering a distinct sense of melancholy, it is precisely those minutes of sunset that take our minds off the crisis, minutes in which we are only too happy to be distracted.

At Barateiro's Bar (7), it's standing room only! All the chairs are occupied and yet they are deserted. Only empty shells are sitting at the bar, in the place that usually offers comfort, where you can escape from everyday life and indulge your thoughts, both an escape and a refuge. One can withdraw from the world for a moment, drown the pain.

Barateiro's film Love Song (14) treats themes, such as the representation of the intimacy between human and non-human bodies via the use of the word "love". Research for the work takes up the story from the Romantic period onward. This coincides with the moment when industrialisation established itself in the West as a transcendent economic and social model that has steadfastly perpetuated itself into the post-modern era. Love Song challenges the binary formatting of Western narratives by presenting an anti-modernist alternative of ways to represent the body and non-heteronormative intimacy. Using poetry as an instrument to deconstruct the codes of Western narratives, Barateiro speculates on the need to deprogram individual and collective imagination in order to devise a wholly new discursive circuitry.

Set in motion by a light breeze, his Espanta-espíritos (Wind Chimes) (6, 15–17) allow something quintessentially invisible to appear—or, perhaps better—resonate. Something formless and incorporeal is manifested here in its implication or effect: "Like time, the wind can be felt and represented, affecting things in so many ways, and yet it has no form. It has to do with my interest in immateriality, in speech, in things felt and not represented."<sup>2</sup> The wind is translated into movement. In a sublime and reposeful way, a kind of anaesthesia is countered, insensibility is deconstructed, and that very moment is harnessed in a palpable form.

*Merle Radtke, Translation: Tim Connell*

Pedro Barateiro (born 1979 in Almada, Portugal) has had solo exhibitions at CRAC Alsace, CIAJG in Guimarães, Kunsthalle Basel, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto, Kunsthalle Lisbon, REDCAT, L.A., Lumiar Cité, Lisbon among others. He has also participated in group exhibitions such as the 13th Sharjah Biennial, the 29th São Paulo Biennial, the 16th Biennale of Sydney and the 5th Berlin Biennale. His performances have been presented at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the IAC Lyon and the ZHdK in Zurich. Barateiro organises events and exhibitions at Spirit Shop, a space founded by him. In 2020, together with a group of artists, he initiated AAVP, the first artist's association in Portugal.

1 Cf. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. David Wormesley (London: Penguin Classics, 1998).

2 Pedro Barateiro, "Love Song", in: *Mousse Magazine*, 12 May 2022, <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/pedro-barateiro-love-song-at-crac-alsace-altkirch/>. Last accessed: 25 June 2023.

I  
There was a space at my parent's house that was my place. It was the veranda of their bedroom.  
I'd spend a lot of time there. The spaces were separated by white and pink semi-transparent beautiful curtains.  
I kept all my things there. Books, magazines, the CD's, music cassettes, later the videos. It was where I used to draw.  
I made a table and a couch from furniture my sister wasn't using. I had my found objects.

Passing through the curtains was like entering a portal to another dimension.  
I think I can still describe the texture of the fabric.

The veranda was facing the street.  
I'd spend hours looking by the window. Listening to the conversations of the people passing by.

Reading randomly the things I'd find.  
Seeing in the magazines the things I was looking for.  
My body. The other body.  
Maps. Encyclopedias. The false hierarchy of the narrative.  
I learned with ready-made sentences the layers of history, symbology, the simplification of language turning myth.  
Sentences made by all.  
Who writes what? Who says what it was?  
They are didascalies of our lives. What we learn by heart, the songs.

I've learned to question the narrative and trying to understand the silence I was listening to.

My mother and father dated almost entirely by letters.  
My mother was an immigrant in France.  
My father studied and worked in Lisbon.

After they were married, my father went for military service during the Colonial War in Guiné-Bissau.  
The correspondence continued.  
Me and my sister and I would read the letters out loud to friends and family during gatherings in the house.

My mother had a hair salon for many years. She loved doing the hairdos, make people pretty.

I think my father never wanted to have children.  
I guess he did it to please. He was playing part.  
He liked the night. He liked telling stories. He had a horse. He took care of him until he died.  
We saw my father dying the same way we saw the horse dying.  
My father didn't really like to work.

My mother escaped an abusive childhood to marry a person she only knew by letters.  
Recently, she told me that the relationship she had with her father and my father reminded her of the situation lived everywhere. A type of violence that comes from elsewhere, from someone who wants to protect you but doesn't know how. The power of a person over someone else.

I grew up feeling that my mother wanted me to be the man she never had by her side.  
There is a form of egotism in wanting a child.  
I had to deal with the feeling.  
I always wanted to be a father.  
And didn't know why.

II

The country of silence, where speaking was forbidden.  
The modern financial system, following the most absurd capitalist  
model of colonialism, had opened all the wounds.  
What we call culture helped to forge an identity. It still does.

We exchanged gestures, pests, tongues.  
The body transformed itself.  
The monster grew ugly and formless, hunchbacked, tricephalic.  
Several heads that imagined an immensity from the horizon line.

The innate capacity for poetic thinking of a kind of sadness that cannot  
be explained.

The malaise in the world.

The hatred of the natural.

Progress.

And from there, negotiating bodies, metals, spices, stupid ideas.  
Strategies for territorial occupation with the most perverse voracity and  
intelligence that only a system of faith can produce.

It seems a little late to talk about these things.

It's never too late.

It's past midnight and we're sitting on our sofas, in the car, in the bar,  
on the train, at the kitchen table, on the plane, that travels at incredible  
speed.

It seems a little late, and still, even though we've noticed what's going  
on around us, that speed that has made everything so blurry doesn't let  
us stop and get out.

Will the body clash like in the movies?

Does it live or die?

I only started talking when I was two years old.

My grandfather said I was mute.

When I started speaking it was as if I had already learned all the words.  
I was waiting.

I've always been very quiet, shy, introverted, lonely, embarrassed.  
I danced alone at home without anyone seeing.

I wonder why I want my subjectivity, my subject, the open self, so that  
everyone can examine it.

Is scientific thinking the autopsy of my body?

The mirror, or smartphone glass, that reflects and blinds me,  
announces my inability to empathize.

Abstracted from the world.

I don't accept being placed in a category.

Entering an empty room and feeling at home.

Ali Baba's cave.

Nihilism and the vertigo of emptiness.

Drawing the network that sustains us.

Imagining another ending to a ridiculous story that colonizes our  
imagination.

Not following imposed models.

Creating another movement.

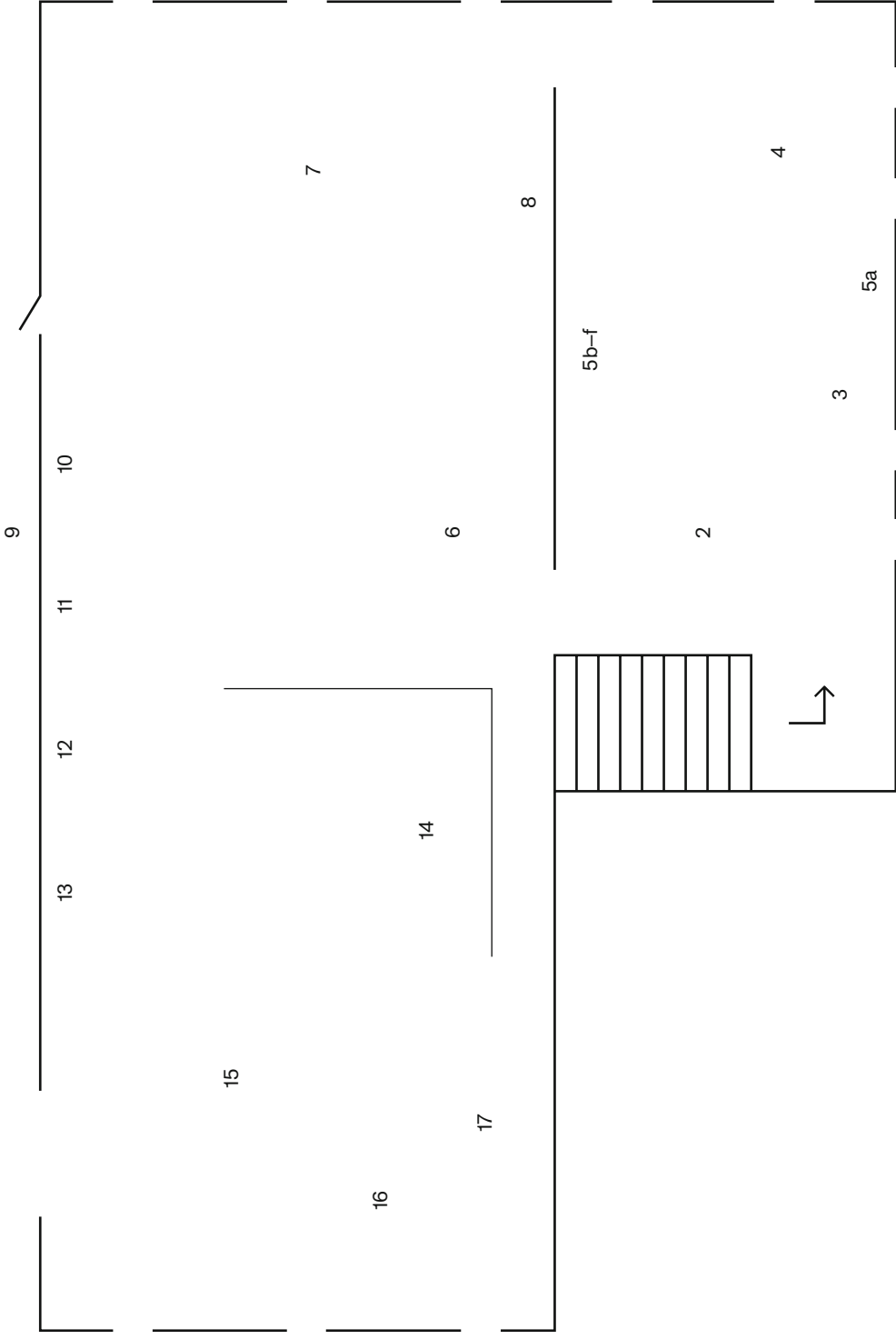
A drawing and a written word.

Incomprehensible.

Taking as much time as necessary with those who also speak their  
own voice.

*Pedro Barateiro*





#### Atelier 4.1.

- 1 *Monologue for a Monster*, 2021/2023, Video, Farbe, Ton / video, colour, sound, 7 Min., Courtesy the artist and Fundação Carmona e Costa, Lissabon / Lisbon.
- Raum 1 / Room 1
- 2 *Bússola*, 2022, verchromtes Gusseisen / chromed cast iron, 150 x 45 x 45 cm.
  - 3 *Bússola*, 2022, verchromtes Gusseisen / chromed cast iron, 150 x 50 x 50 cm.
  - 4 *Bússola*, 2022, verchromtes Gusseisen / chromed cast iron, 150 x 47 x 47 cm.
- Produziert von / produced by CRAC Alsace
- 5 *Attack on the Censorship Offices*. Fotografien von / photographs by Mário Varela Gomes, 1974, Tintenstrahldruck / inkjet print, je / each 60,5 x 40,5 cm. Courtesy Mário Varela Gomes, Fundação Mário Soares und / and Maria Barroso, Lissabon / Lisbon
- Raum 2 / Room 2
- 6 *Espanta-espiritos 6*, 2023, bemaltes Metall / painted metal, 230 x 110 cm
  - 7 *Bar*, 2023, Holz, Holzkisten, Farbe, Barhocker, Gouache / wood, wood boxes, paint, bar stools, gouache, Maße variabel / dimensions variable
- Kunsthalle Münster
- 8 *Screen Sunset*, 2023, Grafit und Gouache auf Papier / graphite and gouache on paper, 150 x 120 cm
  - 9 *Bússola*, 2022, verchromtes Gusseisen / chromed cast iron, 150 x 45 x 45 cm. Produziert von / produced by CRAC Alsace
  - 10 *It's the Feeling Sexy Playlist*, 2023, Graphit und Gouache auf Papier / graphite and gouache on paper, 150 x 120 cm
  - 11 *Underwater Scene*, 2023, Graphit und Gouache auf Papier / graphite and gouache on paper, 150 x 120 cm
  - 12 *Heat*, 2023, Graphit und Gouache auf Papier / graphite and gouache on paper, 150 x 120 cm
  - 13 *Storm – Supermarket*, 2023, Graphit und Gouache auf Papier / graphite and gouache on paper, 150 x 120 cm
  - 14 *Love Song*, 2023 Video, Farbe, Ton / video, colour, sound, 40 Min.
  - 15 *Espanta-espiritos 7*, 2023, bemaltes Metall / painted metal, 110 x 150 cm
  - 16 *Espanta-espiritos 3*, 2022, bemaltes Metall / painted metal, 200 x 120 cm
  - 17 *Espanta-espiritos 8*, 2023, bemaltes Metall / painted metal, 195 x 110 cm
- Alle anderen Werke / All the other works:  
 Courtesy the artist und / and Galeria Filomena Soares, Lissabon / Lisbon