



BIENAL DE FOTOGRAFIA
LAMEGO E VALE DO VAROSA

LANDSCAPE | TERRITORY | WORK

Artist residency
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‘The Speech of Goats and Shepherds’ | Lamego and Varosa Valley

Throughout his artistic career, Alexandre Delmar has developed a body of work that seeks to investigate different ways of living and ways of existing linked to ancestral practices, oral traditions, resilient cultures, rituality, the tension between places and the rural landscape.

During this brief artistic residency in Lamego and the Varosa Valley, the artist continued his observation and research into pastoral dynamics and the tools and strategies of the primordial that persist in surviving the passage of time, namely through the continuation of the project ‘A Fala das Cabras e dos Pastores’ (The Speech of Goats and Shepherds).

‘The Speech of Goats and Shepherds’ is an ongoing, itinerant investigation that began in 2015 in Trás-os-Montes, reflecting on the millennia-old tradition of shepherds communicating with their pastoral animals. In ‘The Speech of Goats and Shepherds’, Delmar has been building a visual and sound archive based on the interspecies language created by shepherds to communicate with their sheep and goats, as well as mapping it in the various districts of Portugal. Here, calls and vocalisations are identified and fictionalised in an attempt to understand this coded speech.

In the video installation ‘A Fala das Cabras e Pastores’ (The Speech of Goats and Shepherds) from Lamego and Vale do Varosa, which is now on show at Torre de Ucanha, the mechanism of producing and interpreting sounds is understood as a common lexicon and the place of connection that brings man and animal closer together.

The projection also emphasises the pastoral culture of this region and the communication strategies involved in guiding the flock in an increasingly urbanised landscape. During this artistic residency, Delmar travelled around the parishes and outskirts of Lamego and noted the small number of shepherds, the absence of large

flocks and the short distance shepherds walk to graze their animals, often using private land for this purpose. Factors such as the number of animals, accessibility to the site, terrain and distance travelled are therefore determining factors in the complexity and variety of the lexicon and language produced.

As the project 'The Speech of Goats and Shepherds' develops and expands to other regions (it currently has records of 31 shepherds mapped in 16 different locations across the continent), Delmar is observing and speculating on the different nuances of this apparent proto-language: sound as an imposition, sound as an incitement to stop or head in the right direction, sound as an insult when the animal doesn't obey, sound as a warning in the presence of danger or predators. In the process, he discovers a lexicon capable of communicating with birds.

In collaboration with the shepherds

Arlete Duarte (Várzea da Serra) / Joaquim Capela (Magueija) / Manuel Agostinho (Leomil) / Manuel Carvalho (Várzea da Serra) / Maria Helena Pereira (Alvelos) / Otília Alves (Meijinhos) / Pedro Capela (Magueija)

Acknowledgements

Alexandra Falcão / Amândio da Fonseca / Paula Chaves / Câmara Municipal de Lamego

Exhibition from 20th July to 21st October

Alexandre Delmar (Porto, 1982; lives and works in Esposende) is a visual artist and founder of the artistic and pedagogical practice A Recoletora. In 2005 he completed a Bachelor's degree in Photography at the Escola Superior Artística do Porto and in 2007 he graduated in Audiovisual Communication Technologies from the Escola Superior de Música e Artes do Espetáculo of the Instituto Politécnico do Porto.

He was an artist in residence at the '(Re)Cri'arte' programmes promoted by the Municipality of Fundão (2023); 'Vivificar' programmed by CI.CLO Plataforma, in São Mamede de Ribatua (2022), and XVI Encontros da Primavera organised by Frauga, in

Picote (2021). He has been awarded scholarships by the Porto Design Biennale (2021), Criatório do Porto (2020) and Fundação Oriente in Kolkata, India (2010).

He was one of the artists honoured at the XXI Cerveira International Art Biennial with ‘Speech of Goats and Shepherds’ (2020). In 2021, he co-authored the book ‘Anotações sobre o Abaixo de Cão’ with Spector Books, winner of the Juanzong Archive Awards for Best Publication in Sustainability (2022).

Recent exhibitions include ‘Corno-traqueia’ at the A Moagem - Cidade do engenho e das Artes gallery in Fundão (2023); ‘Oltre Terra’ by Formafantasma at the National Museum, Oslo (2023); ‘Vivificar’ at Surnadal Billag, Norway (2023); ‘Pela Terra - Encontro de arte e ecologia’ in Idanha-a-velha; ‘Bienal de Fotografia do Porto’, at the Porto Museum (2023); “Jardins Efémeros”, Viseu (2022); “Imago Lisboa Photo Festival”, at the Sociedade de Belas Artes de Lisboa Gallery; “Bienal de Fotografia de Vila Franca de Xira” (2021); ‘Como Construir uma Ilha: Úterus Azorica’ at Arquipélago - Centro de Artes Contemporâneas, in the Azores (2019); “Dead Palms”, at Galeria Spazio Milano, Italy (2018).

From the artistic work signed as A Recoletora, we highlight the exhibition ‘Enlaçar a boca às coisas’ at MIRA FORUM, Porto (2024); the project ‘A emergência da raiz’, which was part of the group exhibition ‘Un rastro de furia e algas’ at the Salón Artesoado do Colexio de Fonseca, in Santiago de Compostela (2023-24); the video ‘O lodo ensina a dançar’, at the invitation of MAM - Mês da Arquitetura da Maia, at the Fórum da Maia (2023); the project ‘Mesa Comum’, which took place in the village of Fão, in Esposende, and involved the refugee community (2023); the project ‘Meter o chão à boca’, as part of the ‘Pastos e Pastos’ programme, at the invitation of the Galeria Municipal do Porto (2022).

www.alexandredelmar.com

[@alexandre_delmar/](https://www.instagram.com/alexandre_delmar/)

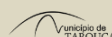
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