

## MIGUEL PALMA

### RÉPLICA

Exhibition > April 28 to June 3 2017, from 12 p.m. – 7 p.m.; May 20, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Livraria Sá da Costa – Editora | Praça Luís de Camões, 22, 4º Floor, Lisboa

Opening > Thursday, April 27, 6:30 p.m.

Replica, an exhibition by Miguel Palma, produced by Ocupart, can be visited at Livraria Sá da Costa – Editora, from Monday to Friday from 12 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. within the parallel program of ARCO Lisboa.

In this exhibition, Miguel Palma presents 'KM Zero' (2017) and 'Labirintos' (2017), respectively, a sculpture and a set of drawings - two works that reveal the imaginary effects of an earthquake of great intensity.

'Labirintos', a group of approximately 80 drawings, composed by the juxtaposition of colourful stains of acrylic paint and collages of machines, architectures and diverse vehicles. The pictorial component refers to aerial views of an imaginary territory. Eventual racing tracks, frequencies and vibrations of possible seismic, radio and light waves. It is the track left by the brush, when subjected to a constant, almost mechanical movement, applied by the artist, through which abstract coloured effects are created: circles, ellipses, letters of the alphabet or a rainbow.

*"KM Zero (2017) by Miguel Palma (1964, Lisbon), presented at the exhibition "Réplica" together with the series of drawings Labirintos (2017), is a site-specific work, produced in the frame of the project 5/5: 5 artists, 5 project rooms, from the students of the international MA and PhD programme in Culture Studies of The Lisbon Consortium, Universidade Católica Portuguesa. The specificity of KM Zero refers to two places: Miguel Palma's atelier, where the project was developed, and Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa, where the same work was firstly presented.*

*Let's start with the atelier. Entering the atelier of Miguel Palma, in Marquês de Pombal, Lisbon, feels like entering in a wonderful world, with innumerable doors to paths parallel to those we know and understand as possible. Books that after all are sculptures (Deuxième Lecture, 2007), photographs full of inscriptions (Factory, 2007), airplanes models (360º, 2008), miniature cars (and others not so much) (Porsche entre outros, 2009 and Exposição Solar, 2009) with passengers dressed as if they were traveling to space and others who are going on a trip, prepared as if they could pass through the most unforeseen weather (Be Prepared, 2012), glass vases that shelter debris from any unrecorded event*

*(Natureza Morta, 2012), orange suits with mini-fans (Orange Skin and Cases, 2012) and so many more drawings and objects that tell a multiplicity of stories that recreate possible realities that we are not witnesses but to which, for a moment, we are invited to take part.*

*The history of the building inhabited by Carpe Diem Arte e Pesquisa – Palácio de Pombal – intersects with the location of Miguel Palma's atelier - the Marquês de Pombal area. On the facade of the Palace's sixteenth century, a sign announces the reason of its identity: "In this house was born on May 13, 1699 Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquez de Pombal, to whom the city of Lisbon owed its rebuilt after the earthquake of 1755, consecrating for this reason his memory, the City Council of 1923". The Palace where Marquês de Pombal was born was built in Bairro Alto, an area that is now considered Lisbon's historic center, but that for four centuries, was the limit of the city.*

*Km Zero results from the immersion in these two identities: the atelier in the area of Marquês de Pombal, with its centralities: the geographical, in the heart of the city, from which diverge and converge several arteries; and the conceptual, for multiple paths that offer perspectives and critical analyses of the world we know; and the Palace where Marquês de Pombal was born, in the historical centre that was once the limit of the same city. The term kilometre zero refers to this relation between different spaces of the same place: it refers to the chosen location, in a city, from which all distances are measured. In most cases, it is marked with an octagonal inscription on the floor.*

*Upon entering the room of the exhibition "Réplica", in Livraria Sá da Costa, in Chiado, we see the model of a wooden church, with a clock without pointers that cancels its time, based on a structure of steel, painted red. In the central room on the ground floor of the Palácio Pombal, where it was first exhibited, it was standing exactly in the centre of the central hall of the palace, marked on the floor by a wind rose, the drawing that suits as a tool for geographic navigation, and which determines the location of bodies or objects in relation to others. The exact location of the work in the centre of the room reflects the historical symbolism of Church in its relationship with the construction of cities. Historically, cultural institutions such as churches, universities, and hospitals have contributed to the design of cities, serving as an aggregating element that brings people together in the same place. They were often located in city centres demonstrating their social importance.*

*At first glance, KM Zero, in its structure and with the old Church, may seem like a passive record of a distant time. However, it will not take more than eight minutes for the church bell to resound on the walls of this room on the fourth floor of the Livraria Sá da Costa building, from its centre and as if to call us there. To the sound also corresponds a disturbing movement of the Church that flutters to one and to other side and that takes us back to the collective memory of the earthquake of 1755, in the devastating scenario that took over Lisbon, particularly of this region of Baixa and Chiado, and that affected forever the All Saints Day of the Portuguese, a day celebrated by many of the Christian religion churches. The model of the Church, built in wood, adds to the effect of reminiscence by sending us to the Pombaline.*

*cage (a construction device created by Marquês de Pombal), the wooden structure that forms the anti-seismic construction system used in Lisbon's Baixa Pombalina after the earthquake.*

*Marquês de Pombal is known, as the Palace's sign with his name declares, as the person responsible for the reconstruction of Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755. On the other hand, he is no less known for his despots and enlightenment practices. As Secretary of State for Home Affairs of the Kingdom, he signed several administrative, economic and social reforms that paradoxically gave him a place as controversial as central to Portuguese culture.*

*In KM Zero, Miguel Palma converges the ideas that he has developed for decades. At first reading, we can associate the work of Miguel Palma, in his various experiences and inventions, to the world of fantasy and, apparently contradictorily, to the world of science. In fact, fantasy and science, translated in the work of Miguel Palma, are much more closer due to their characteristics of experimentation, creation and internal conflicts. A careful reading will allow perceiving the multiple layers inherent to social criticism and the contradictions inherent to the human condition that Miguel Palma's work implies, sometimes with subtlety, sometimes with humour, sometimes with the strength of a weapon.*

*What KM Zero tells us, from the reference to the earthquake that gave Marquês de Pombal the place of central figure in the identity of Portugal, is one of the stories that make up History strongly linked to the contradictory notions that the pairs harmony / conflict, construction / destruction, centre / periphery, imply. Notions that, after all, are as much of the identity of the Marquis of Pombal as of the human condition."*

Luísa Santos, March 2017

Miguel Palma (Lisbon, 1964) lives and works in Lisbon. He exhibits regularly since the late 1980s. His artistic career, of sculptural background, is marked by installations produced in a non-traditional way. He collaborates frequently with teams of engineers, mechanics, carpenters and biologists, among other specialists. His work has a hybrid character, linked to the industrial production of the twentieth century.

Palma's work often addresses how technology has influenced modern man's life, its relation to the environment, the idea of human comfort or the idea of power. Simultaneously to the construction of installations, of great and average scale, he frequently uses drawing, video, performance, construction of miniatures of its projects and of books of artist.