

Galeria Pedro Oliveira

SOFIA AREAL

Be my guest

Opening

Saturday 9 October | 4pm

Sofia Areal is back to Porto. Back at the gallery where she made some of the best and most successful exhibitions of her already long 40-year career. Her father, António Areal, relevant artist of the Portuguese art scene of the 60s and 70s, was born in Porto in 35 and died in Lisbon in 78 at just 44 years of age, leaving behind an artistic work of painting, drawing and sculpture, as well as several important books on the theory of plastic arts. Her grandfather, Joaquim Santiago Areal, also studied architecture in Porto. Sofia Areal has, obviously, a deep affection for Porto.

In this exhibition, considering that it is a return, after several years of interregnum, Sofia Areal chose a set of works that represent her last years of work, exactly the years in which she didn't present works in Porto, in order to pay tribute to Porto's public that didn't stop following her throughout all these years and until today. This choice of hers also allows a broad view, as if it were a small anthology.

On view: October 12 to November 20 2021

Tuesday to Saturday from 3-8pm

Galeria Pedro Oliveira

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SOFIA AREAL (Lisbon, Portugal. 1960)



One of the most important painters of her generation. She was born in Lisbon in June 1960. The sensitivity for plastic arts and literature is triggered and occupies the space and time since childhood, covering painting, sculpture, drawing, poetry, criticism and literary essay, under the effect and action of her father, António Areal, painter and man of letters, her mother, Lira Keil do Amaral, with training in sculpture and drawing, and also in contact with the architecture and the way of thinking the city, instigated by her paternal grandfather, Joaquim Santiago Areal, and with the arts and culture in general, encouraged by her maternal grandparents, among which lyric music takes a special place by the hand of her maternal grandmother, Dalila dos Passos Freitas.

She grew up between Lisbon, Madeira, the Azores and Mozambique, surrounded by people of the arts and culture of the second half of the 20th century, who accentuated an artistic and intellectual dimension open to the world, building a strong thought about the world and life, markedly human and affective, permanently awake and permeable, reactively alive and restless, which she would later translate into her work, centred on drawing and painting, around which other processes of plastic expression gravitate, such as illustration, graphic design, scenography or tapestry. In her discourse, words such as family, joy, love and peace have always occupied a central place.

She began her artistic training at the Herefordshire College of Art & Design in the United Kingdom, attending courses in Textile Design between 1978 and 1979 and the Foundation Course between 1979 and 1980. Her initial interest in tapestry technique is directed towards painting and drawing, due to the time associated with the production process, where she finds speed, the instant, and in them she satisfies the freedom of the impulse, the surprise and the accident, and the exploration of a unified relationship with the supports and the materials. In Portugal, she attended the painting and engraving workshops at Ar.Co, between 1981 and 1983.

Her first works are figurative, predominantly landscapes and still lifes. In time, the object represented withdrew, and figuration gave way to abstract composition in superimpositions and juxtapositions of forms and lines, between emptiness and fullness, between positives and negatives, which came to dominate her work as a mode of analysis of the stains, the outline and the colour of the properties apprehended visually, kept emotionally, in found objects, in people of intimacy, in the trivial things of life, which intimately punctuate her biographical path. In them lives the contrast between separation and cosiness, between home and travel, between withering and blossoming, between the weak and the brave, between sea and land. Day and night, life and death, sky and abyss. In dimensions that vary between the large and small formats, with rectangular, square or round shapes, she applies, on canvas and on paper, indiscriminately disorganising the codes of drawing and painting, graffiti, dry pastels, china ink, watercolour, acrylic ink, and elements resulting from cutting and pasting. In her composition, she searches for a solar ideal, an aesthetic of beauty, of what is pleasant, of pleasure, of harmony, which she seeks in the relationships of balance, between background and composition, between line and stain, between textures and smoothness, between opacities and transparencies, between the solid colours of a palette in which reds, yellows, blues, blacks and whites predominate without renouncing the presence of unfoldings in secondary colours, and finds in the formal contrasts that emerge from the instinct of the avowedly muscular gesture, which inscribe the personal.

Collections (selection): Modern Art Centre (CAM) of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; Serralves Foundation, Porto; Caixa Nova da Galicia, Vigo; FEVAL, Cáceres; Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal (MUDAS), Funchal, Carmona e Costa Foundation, Lisbon; Casa da Cerca - Contemporary Art Centre, Almada; Millennium BCP Foundation, Lisbon; Novo Banco Collection, Lisbon; PLMJ Foundation, Lisbon; Oriente Foundation, Lisbon; Leal Rios Foundation, Lisbon; Cachola Collection, Elvas; Fernando Ribeiro Collection, Abrantes; Luís Ferreira Collection, Lisbon; Alberto Caetano Collection, Lisbon.