

Lourenço Soares, Portfolio

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for the video links please write

About

born in Lisbon (1991) lives in Zurich

I am a visual artist working with ecologies of knowledge and representation. My practice examines how texts and images (discourses) interact with natural and cultural environments. I am interested in how discourses emerge from specific historical contexts and create the epistemic frameworks that define our identities and social imaginaries. Viewing this research as a political task, my work points to the material consequences of visual and verbal regimes, showing how they change social relations and ecological systems.

My research-based practice is grounded in theory and an interdisciplinary interest. This approach, sensible to the artistic production of knowledge and its articulation with other disciplines, leads me to engage with concepts from anthropology, economics, and the natural sciences. The choice of methodologies, while reacting to the content and aesthetics of each subject, is strongly influenced by visual culture, deconstruction, and a critique of ideology.

The subjects of my research extend beyond traditional disciplinary categories, organized instead through analogy. These range from free markets to grammar to the representation of dinosaurs, etc. I work with various media — such as video installations, 3D animation, and drawing — and often draw from specialized visual materials like illustrations, diagrams, and maps

In recent years, I have been working on the discourses of mainstream economics, especially on how the discipline operates between its normative and descriptive functions. By looking at economics as a mythology — one that is the foundational narrative of Homo economicus — I deconstruct the underlying ideas of human nature, political organization, and culture embedded in economic theory. This work challenges claims to scientific objectivity and critically examines how economics-as-ideology destroys the possibilities for alternatives to contemporary capitalism.

Besides my artistic practice, I co-programmed *Art & Anthropology*, a series of film screenings at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich. I was the founder and co-curator of Dietikon Projektraum, a contemporary art space addressing local and global narratives. In 2020, I co-curated *al_vista*, the exhibition space from Fine Arts at ZHdK.

I studied architecture and visual arts in Lisbon, Tampere, and Rome. In 2021, I finished my master's in Fine Arts at ZHdK in Zurich.

POTLATCH (lunch break at the british museum)

colored pencil on paper; 38x29cm; 2025

POTLATCH is based on a photograph I took on a visit to the British Museum. Initially, I was drawn to the tension between two contrasting cultures and economies: at the bottom, a commodity shelf typical of a market economy; above it, a totem pole from the Haida people, whose ceremony for the giving away of wealth — the potlatch — is a paradigm of a gift economy. While the commodity shelf refers to the impersonal exchanges of the market, carried out by people who don't necessarily know each other, the redistribution of wealth performed during the potlatch is central to establishing the status and social position of its participants.

The drawing also points to the definition of culture and the role of its caretaker: the museum. The refrigerator seems to double down on the museum's function of preserving and displaying artifacts. Placed next to the museum shop, the similarities between the consumption of goods and the presentation of culture become quite evident.



origin myths (Homo economicus)

colored pencil on paper; 2025

origin myths is an ongoing series of drawings that juxtapose illustrations on human evolution with stock images from the corporate environment of Homo economicus — a model for human nature defined by self-interest and rationality commonly used in economic theory. Each drawing tests the ideas that justify our beliefs in contemporary capitalism.



from left to right: 1) *to promote an end which was no part of his intention (writing/accounting)*; 2) *the drama of business in an economy of appearances (friction)*; 3) *business as usual (other things being equal)*; 4) *double coincidence of wants (the neolithic diet)*; 5) *the economic order (memento mori)*

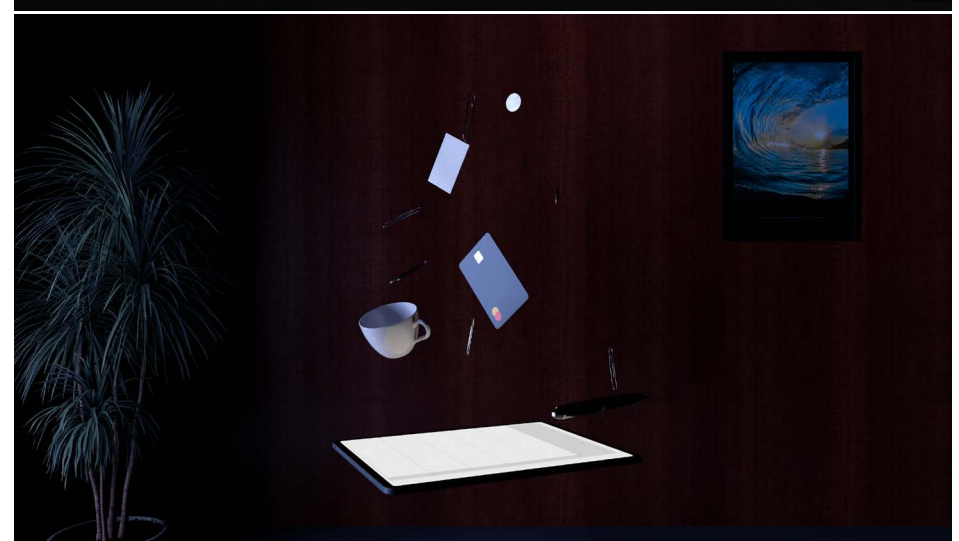
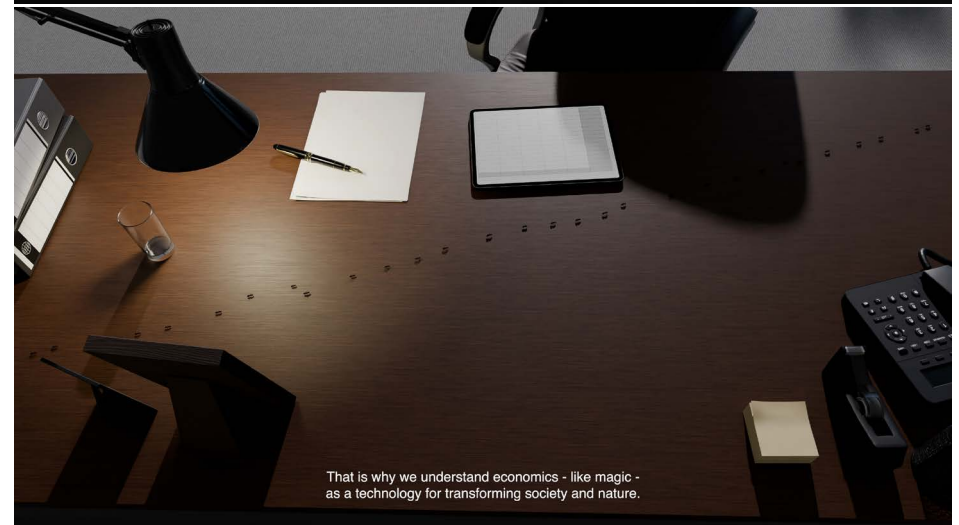
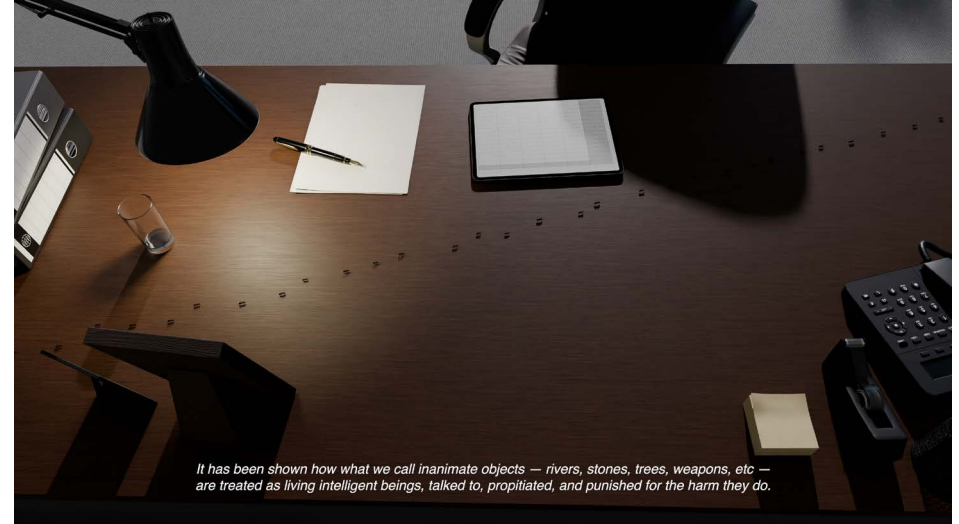


Mitológicas 24: EXCEL (free market animism)

narrator: Francisca Soares; Sound: João Carreiro

single-channel video installation, office furniture; 5min; sound; 2024

Mitológicas xxiv: EXCEL (free market animism) is a video essay that uses anthropological ideas to describe free-market mythologies. The narrator — a fictional anthropologist studying neoliberal beliefs — uses the concepts of magic and animism to understand the self-regulating powers of the market and the CEO's ability to communicate with the spirits of capital.





installation view at *City of Zurich Art Grants* in Helmhaus (photo credits : Zoe Tempest)

Vicious Cycles of Prosperity

multimedia installation: animation on digital flipchart,
drawing on whiteboard, furniture, text, sound; 2023

Vicious Cycles of Prosperity is part of a body of work that uses the imagery and vocabulary of mainstream economics to reflect on ecology, time, and capitalism. The video and drawings are based on the supply and demand graphs usually used to describe price changes in free market economies. Instead of commodities, though, these graphs are inhabited by nonhuman beings that present different logics of growth.





DEMAND/SUPPLY

multimedia installation: animation on digital flipchart, furniture; 2023

Together with *Vicious Cycles of Prosperity*, *DEMAND/SUPPLY* is part of a series of flipchart animations exploring the aesthetics of economic diagrams.



installation view Altefabrik (Sebastian Schaub/GSfk)



The Economic Problem

publication with Lemon Press Zurich, 2024

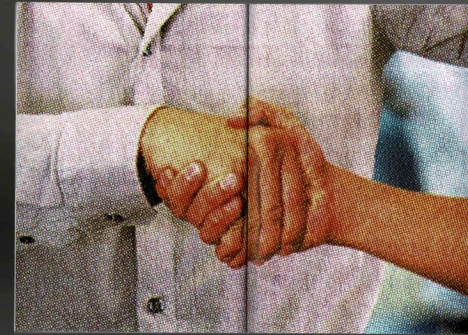
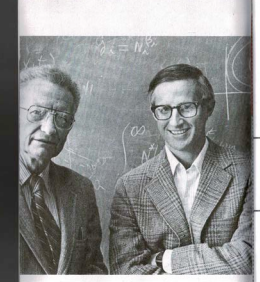
link documentation: vimeo.com/lourencosoares/economicproblem

The Economic Problem is made up of images selected from economics textbooks. Through a process of zooming into these images, Lourenço Soares exposes the hidden ideologies within the non-space of the textbooks, in effect, deconstructing their original context. Along with the textbook narrative, the publication delves into the reader's capitalist identities, offering a critical exploration of the intersection between visual representation, ideology, and personal economic perspectives.

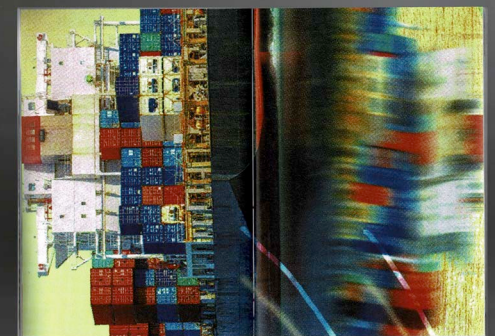
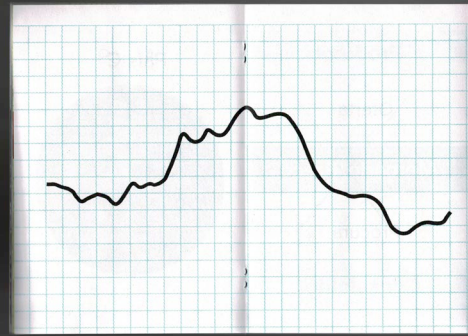
Text by Niki Yelim

10011 THE NATURE OF ECONOMICS	1	10014 MARKETS AND COMPETITION
10012 THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM	2	10015 COMPETITIVE MARKETS
10013 ECONOMICS AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE	3	10016 MONOPOLY
10014 AN OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET ECONOMY	4	10017 PATTERNS OF COMPETITION
10015 A GENERAL VIEW OF THE PRICE SYSTEM	5	10018 PUBLIC POLICY: MONOPOLY AND COMPETITION
10016 DEMAND, SUPPLY, AND PRICE	6	10019 THE MARKET FOR CORPORATE CONTROL
10017 ELASTICITY	7	10020 FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND PROFIT
10018 SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN ACTION	8	10021 THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME
10019 CONSUMPTION, PRODUCTION, AND COST	9	10022 FACTOR PRICES AND MOBILITY
10020 HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR	10	10023 THE PRICING OF CAPITAL AND RESOURCES
10021 TOPICS IN DEMAND THEORY	11	

THE AUTHORS



Invisible hand A concept introduced by Adam Smith in 1776 to describe the paradox of a laissez-faire market economy. The invisible-hand doctrine holds that, with each participant pursuing his or her own private interest, a market system nevertheless works to the benefit of all as though a benevolent invisible hand were directing the whole process.



Successories

lecture performance; 20min; 2024

link for presentation: lourencosoares.com/img/Successories_Presentation_subs.pdf

A presentation about the iconography and ideology in the motivational posters of Successories: becoming widespread as office decoration in the late 1990s, the posters were symptomatic of a new set of assumptions about politics, human behavior, (white-collar) labor, and landscape.

This lecture performance was made for “Künstler:innen on Artists”, a series of talks organized by WAVES at Kunsthalle Zurich in December 2024.



fig. Successories (sorted by Bestselling)

I will present a series of motivational posters created by Mac Anderson and his company Successories.

fig.

The relationship between text and image is not obvious. The image, although larger, is subordinate to the text, and functions as an illustration.

fig. the labor of images

But the confirmation that these images work in any objective way is beside the point. We have to abandon the paradigm of the empirical sciences and look at the corporate belief system as magic.

fig. quotes

Here again, we could compare the inspirational quote to a magic spell. For Malinowski, the formulation of the spell is not the creation of an individual sorcerer, but the accumulation of linguistic traces from different times.

fig. landscape painting

While in romantic painting this separation created a passive attitude of contemplation, the Successories' posters turn landscape into a separation to be overcome: a challenge.

fig. fables

as artificial forces that prevent the full emancipation of Homo economicus and his self-interested nature.

The Weather of Business Cycles

video installation, LED, wallpaper; 2024

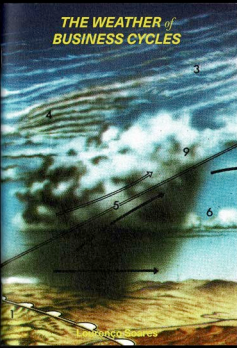
link documentation: vimeo.com/lourencosoares/weather

"No exact formula, such as might apply to the motions of the moon or of a pendulum, can be used to predict the timing of business cycles. Rather, in their irregularities, business cycles more closely resemble the fluctuations of the weather." (Economics, Paul Samuelson and William Nordhaus)

Following the proposition from an economics textbook, *The Weather of Business Cycles* looks into the iconographies of economics and meteorology. The sliding text on the LED sign marks the economic stages (recession, expansion, etc.) that represent the experience of time and crisis in capitalism. But what does the comparison between the human economy and atmospheric phenomena, suggested by the text, really imply?

The work was presented in a window shop visible 24/7. Differences in light, temperature, and humidity changed its reception.





Business cycles Fluctuations in overall economic activity, characterized by the simultaneous expansion or contraction of output in most sectors. In modern parlance, business cycles are said to occur when actual GNP rises relative to potential GNP (an expansion) or falls relative to potential GNP (a contraction or recession).

$C + I, C + I + G, \text{ or } C + I + G + X$

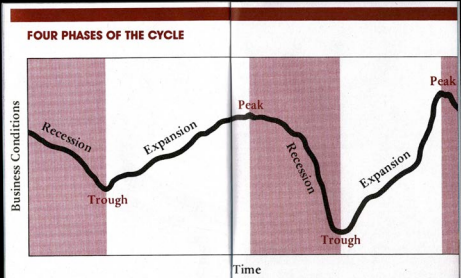
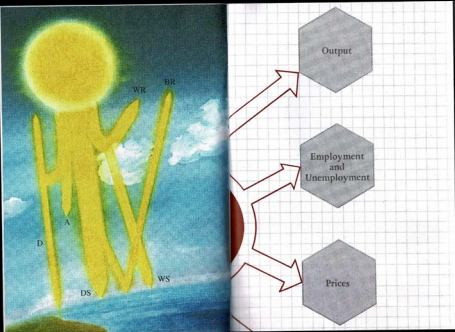
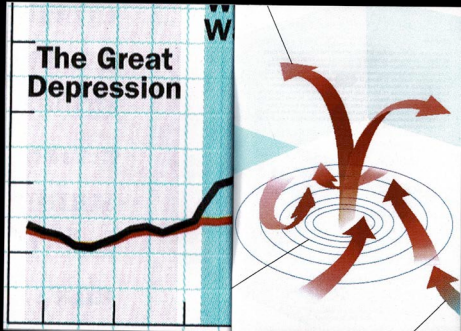
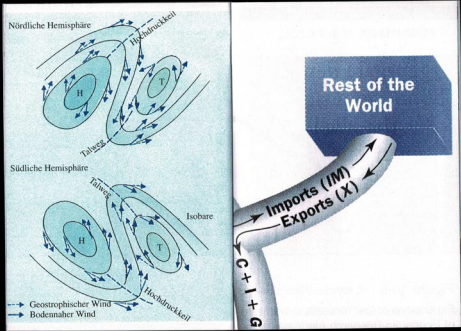
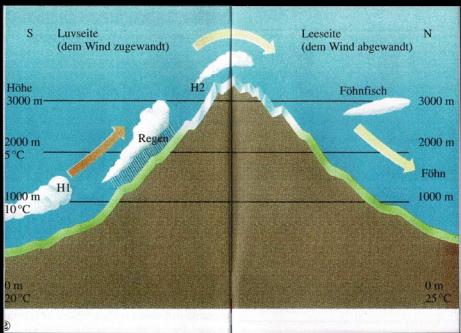


Figure 10-8 A cycle, like the year, has its seasons
Expansions follow recessions with turning points in between. The National Bureau of Economic Research has dated these phases for the history of the United

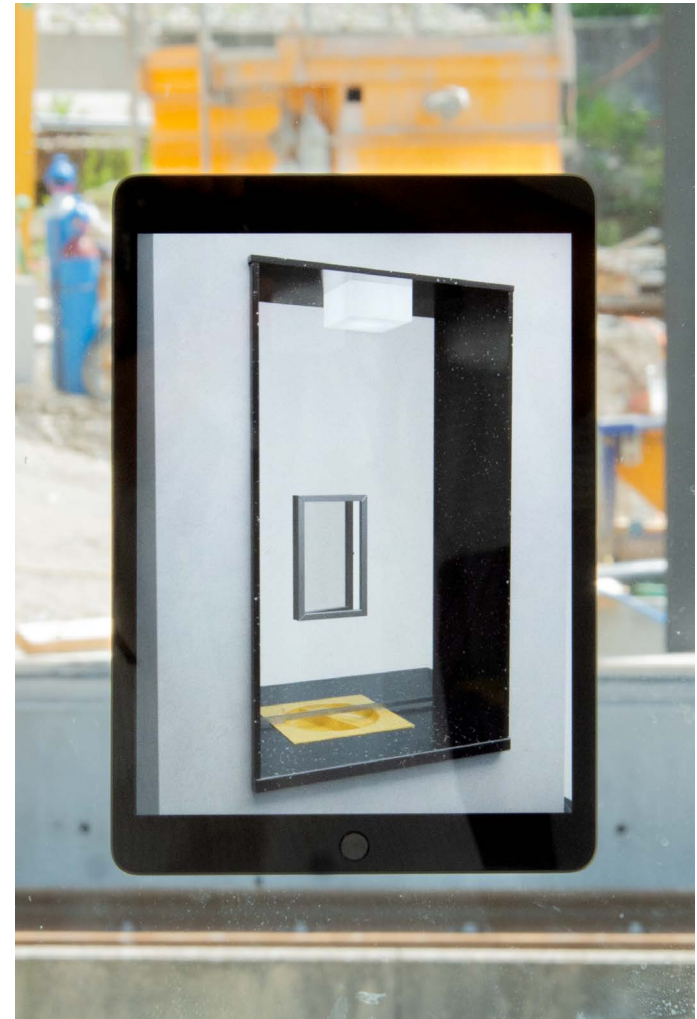


***Gifts Make Friends* with Jonas Etter**

multimedia installation: video animation, sound, plasticine stones, text; 2024

Gifts Make Friends was a collaboration with Jonas Etter around the idea of reciprocity. Departing from the history of the exhibition space as an old ticket office, we were interested in the degrees of reciprocity that shape the economic and social relationships between two people: from the impersonal transaction between customer and employee at a ticket counter to the creative exchange between friends who conceive an exhibition together.





installation view at Wartsaal Wipkingen

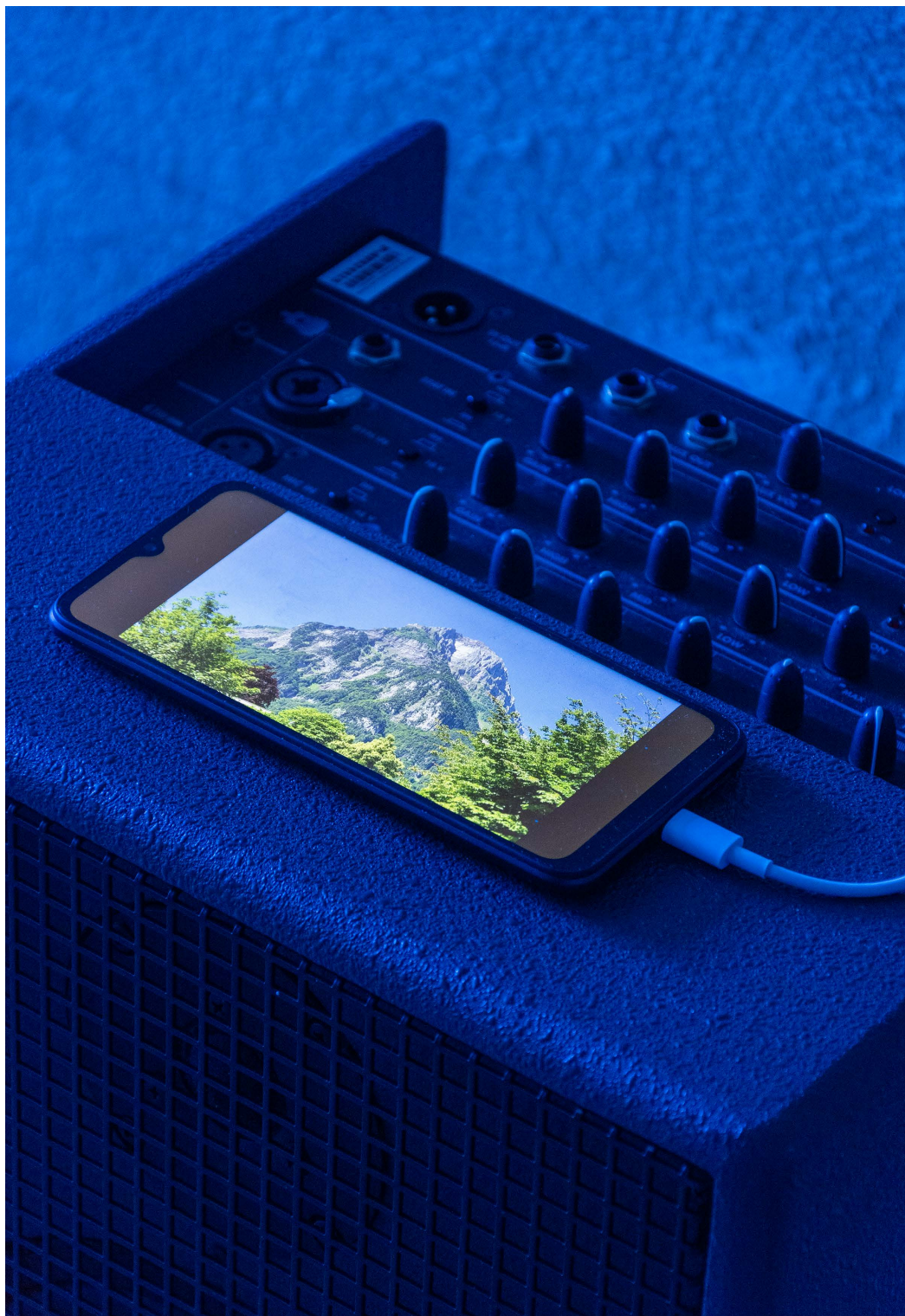
lalala expedition (100 million years of progress)
with Jonathan Ospina, multimedia installation: video, sound; 2023

The exhibition at Gepäckausgabe developed from an artist residency in Glarus with filmmaker Jonathan Ospina. *lalala expedition* follows the narratives of the earth around Glarus to reflect on how geological events relate to political imaginaries. Constructed as a liminal space where the historical and sensorial articulate different visions about landscape, mining, and time, this multimedia installation was made up of material collected in field recordings, photo archives, and theoretical texts.



installation view at Gepäckausgabe





fossil_images (table i, ii, & iii)

single-channel video installation, 9:40 min, sound; 2022

narrator: Jerry The Cat; sound: Leonor Arnaut, João Carreiro

fossil_images (table i: primitive accumulation; table ii: man-the-hunter, table iii: industrial capitalism) is a video essay presented at the Sauriermuseum in Aathal. The work takes a look at the relationships between the history of dinosaur representation and the various stages of capitalism. Against a gridded backdrop, reminiscent of sketches from paleontological sites, a series of texts describing different phases of capitalism are brought together with illustrations of specific models of dinosaur imagery. Here the dinosaur is thought of as a speculative figure that often follows the development of political ideologies, particularly those associated with narratives of power, gender, the free market, obsolescence, and extinction. An overlap emerges between nature-cultural imaginaries — stories from the past that are also science fiction.

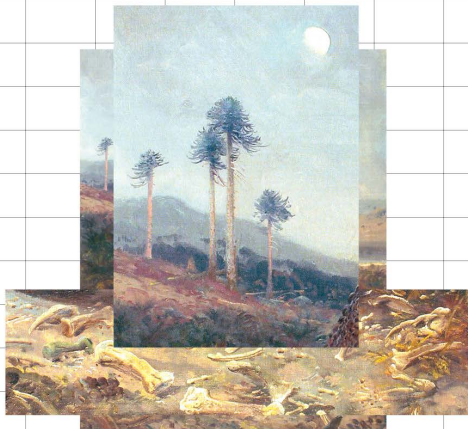
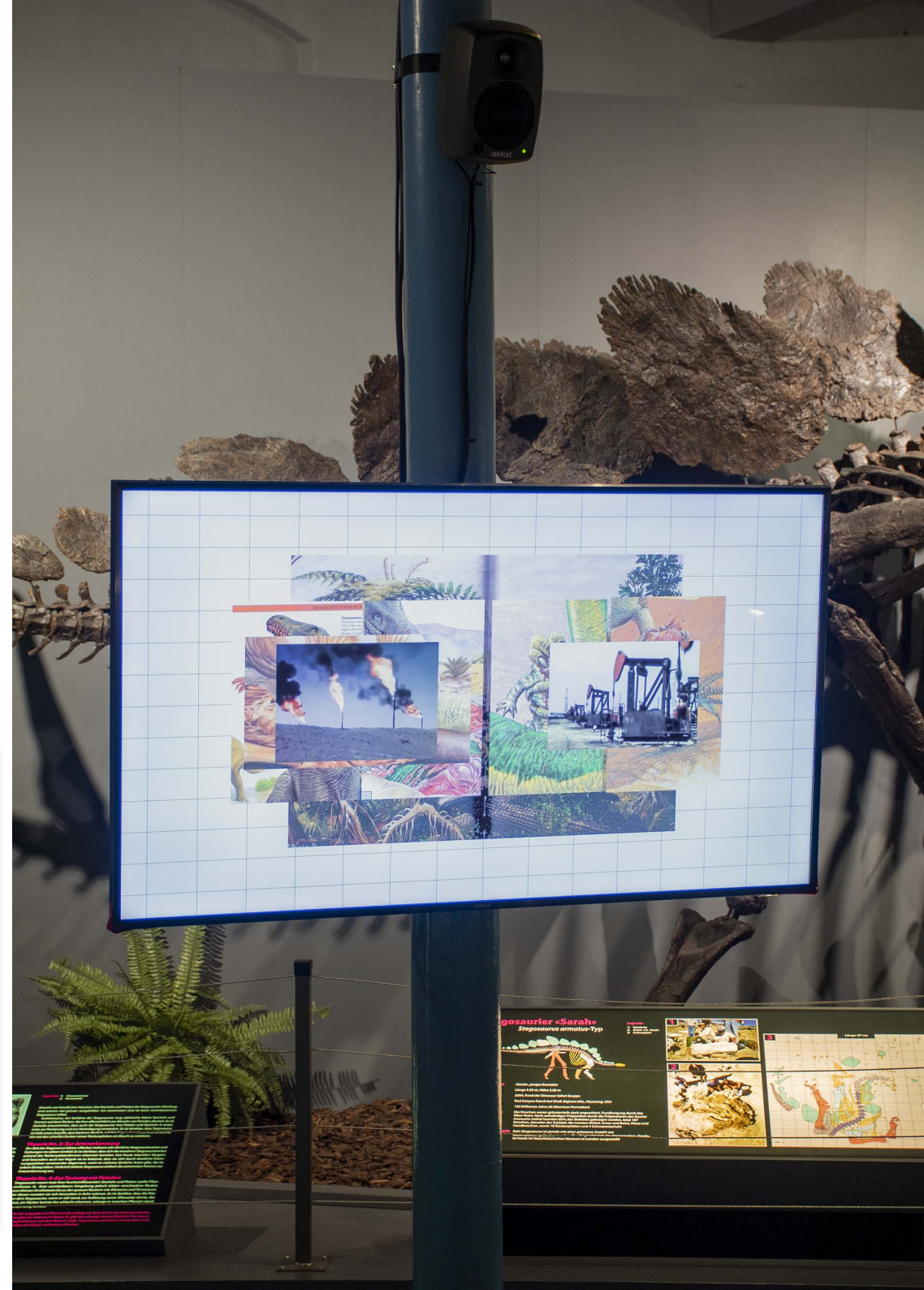
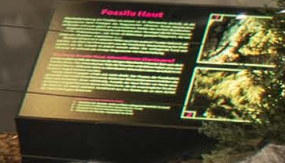


fig. a dream of the image that resurrects the past

installation view at Sauriermuseum in Aathal





uma biblioteca feita de estrume e cascas de fruta (compost library)

Color pencil on paper, text on wall; 2023

The exhibition is made up of a drawing series and wall text elements that create a fictional library for existent and speculative knowledges about naturecultures, politics, and history. The drawings refer to book covers, and while some use elements from published books, others combine text, typography, and images from different sources in collages that question epistemic categories and ideologies. The text above each door refers to the sections of a library: mixing the elements necessary for successful garden composting with the traditional human sciences.



Pré-história das
IMAGENS



Verbo

**CAPITALISM
AND
FREEDOM**



Fossils: a critique of political imaginaries (fig. books)
colored pencil on paper, selection of books from the Volumes Archive; 2022

Fossils: a critique of political imaginaries (fig. books) is divided into two parts. The first, on a table, is a selection of publications from the Volumes archive with books from my library and creates a dialogue between my research on prehistoric representation and the works of the different artists included in Volumes. The second part, on the wall, is made up of the drawing series *Books*.

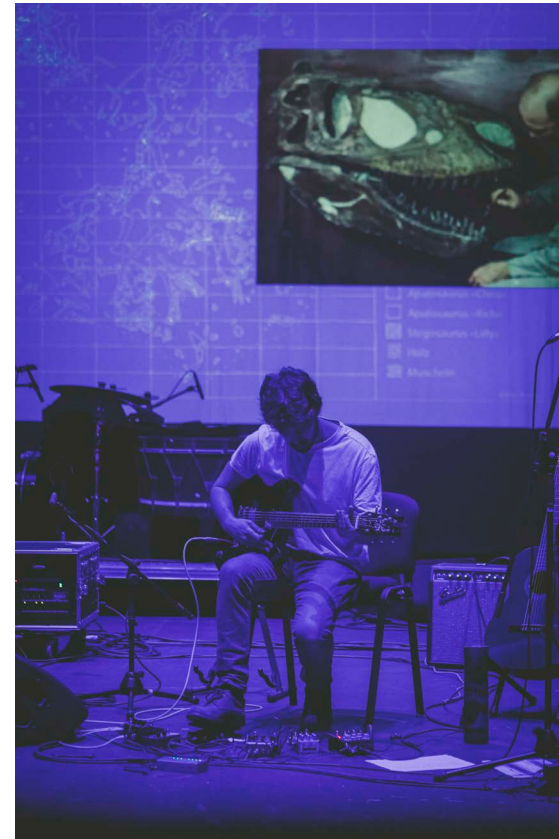




Leonor Arnaut (voice), João Carreiro (guitar), João Pereira (drums), Jerry the Cat (percussion);
live performance, two-channel video installation; 2022
link video documentation: vimeo.com/717833158/287df22c11

After an invitation by Living with a Couple, and during an artistic residency in Portugal, we developed a narrative framed by sonic chapters and speculative geologies that looked at the relationship between dinosaur representation and politics. The work reflects on how political ideologies have influenced the history of paleoart especially in legitimizing neoliberal imaginaries in narratives of power, the free market, obsolescence, and extinction.

The work was first presented at Teatro do Bairro Alto in Lisbon.



flipcharts (cars, dinosaurs, free markets)

four drawings on flipcharts, wall drawing; 2022

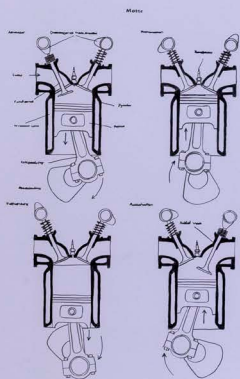
(...) The practice of Lourenço Soares is a practice of research by the means of art. A research on the syntax, forms and ecologies of knowledge. It is a work of de/demonstration and his projects often borrow from the so-called hard sciences a methodology of models analysis. For *Plattform22*, Lourenço Soares presents an installation composed of a mural and four iconological panels, composed of hand-drawn images taken from scientific or educational publications. It is an exercise in montage and analogy, whose methodology is similar to that developed by Aby Warburg with the *Atlas Mnemosyne*, an attempt to read the present by freeing itself from the categories and grids of reading imposed by traditional historiography. The panels oppose, on the one hand, the visual paradigm of the representation of a history that has become canonical through the image itself, and on the other hand, the epistemological paradigm of knowledge, in other words, a form of knowledge that tends towards immutable ideas and concepts. Clearly in line with critical theories, the work participates in subverting the integrity of images that persist as dominant and defining principles of an era. By reconstructing history through analogy, Soares proposes a new way of reading the world in the present. (...)

text by Julie Marmet



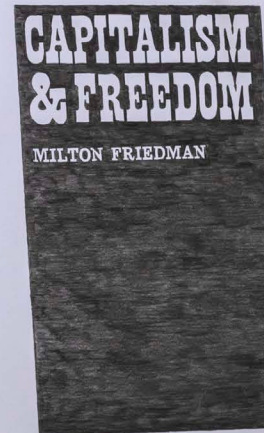
ÖKONOMIE

Feuer



TIPOS DE SISTEMAS ECONÓMICOS

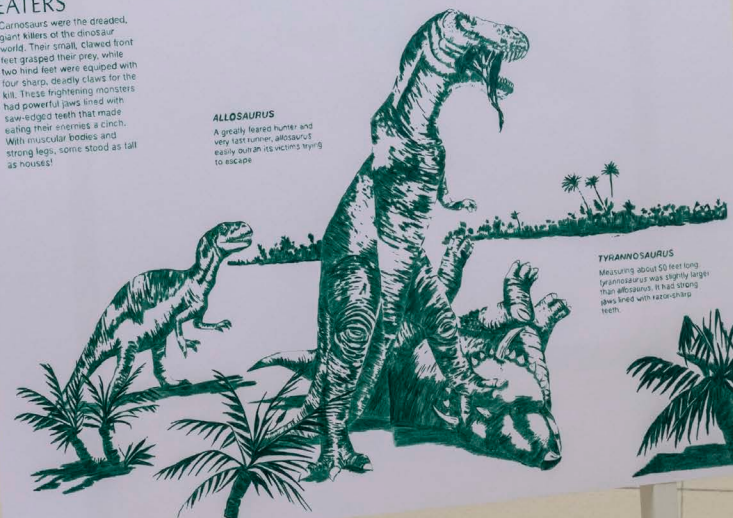
☞ **Economía de mercado libre** Controlo gubernamental mínimo. As leis da oferta e da procura determinam de que forma os recursos do país são distribuídos e a quem. Este sistema é também chamado «capitalismo», porque o capital pode ser possuído e controlado por qualquer indivíduo.



THE FLESH-EATERS

Carnosaurs were the dreaded, giant killers of the dinosaur world. Their small, clawed front feet grasped their prey, while two hind feet were equipped with four sharp, deadly claws for the kill. These frightening monsters had powerful jaws lined with saw-edged teeth that made eating their enemies a cinch. With muscular bodies and strong legs, some stood as tall as houses!

ALLOSAURUS
A greatly feared hunter and very fast runner, allosaurus easily out ran its victims trying to escape.



TYRANNOSAURUS
Measuring about 50 feet long, tyrannosaurus was slightly larger than allosaurus. It had strong jaws lined with razor-sharp teeth.

piece of dry wood
to make fire.

firstpersonsingular@hyper-separation.episteme

video installation (11min, sound), plants and rocks; sound by Leonor Arnaut and João Carreiro, 2021-23;

firstpersonsingular@hyper-separation.episteme uses pronoun categories to look at how language represents nonhuman agents and ideas of human exceptionalism and individuality. 3D models are overlapped by diagrams, drawings, and texts taken from encyclopedias, grammars, and theoretical texts. The sound was performed by two musicians who interpret a score made up of word classes, pronoun declensions, and verb conjugations from Portuguese grammar.



installation view at Lièvre



IYOUSHEHEITWETHEY (pronoun ecologies)
master's thesis, 2021

Lourenço Soares' *IYOUSHEHEITWETHEY* can be described as a speculative essay that clearly and rigorously reflects western hegemonial and normative (power) structures on the basis of the analysis of the function and use of pronouns in grammar. Thanks to the analysis of the individual pronouns, Soares is able to describe the complex relationship between people and nature or — following newer philosophies such as New Materialism — to reflect the overcoming of the central position of the human subject, i.e. of hegemonial anthropocentrism in philosophy. During this reflection, Soares seems to be strongly influenced by deconstruction — which is understood as critical scrutiny and resolution. Soares methodically explores every pronoun in the series, analyses them systematically and questions them as well as the ontological status of the topic itself in *IYOUSHEHEITWETHEY*. By means of this deconstruction, Lourenço Soares manages to outline complex questions and discourses on both the Anthropocene, the relationship between humans and animals as well as humans and multispecies (or non-humans) in a remarkable manner in order to contribute to the analysis of “human, animal nature and cultures”.

text by Marie-France Rafael



The Naturalist's Doubt (knowledge & furniture)

video installation (4 min, loop, no sound), iPhone, stone; 2021

The Naturalist's Doubt (Knowledge & Furniture) is a work of speculative fiction that questions the foundations of the natural sciences. A naturalist — a figure inspired by Carl Akeley and Carl Linnaeus — writes a text message expressing his anxieties about the history of collecting and displaying in the natural history museum. 3d models from museum furniture are fossilized in rocks. They point to the role of display technology in reifying the conceptual structures of western thought.

In the context of the exhibition, a public talk between Lourenço Soares and Filipa Ramos was held at the Naturmuseum Luzern.



installation view at Keiraum



Books

hand-painted acrylic on 40 kg cement bags, 2020

Books connects the production of knowledge about nature to the construction practices in urban development by painting covers of fictional encyclopedias and scientific treatises into cement and gypsum bags. The bags represent, on the one side, the necessary technical and bodily labor during construction projects which subjugate nature for the sake of urban growth and, on the other side, they can vaguely serve as a reminder for a wide range of extractivist practices executed by multinational companies. In both dimensions, there would not be the possibility to profit from nature without the knowledge about it. The installation shows clearly one of the relations in which capitalism appropriates nature and highlights how the economy and environment are not separated in the ventures of urban development.

text by Jose Cáceres Mardones



installation view at *Oops a daisy!*



Sara's Dream Linnaeus' Nightmare

installation, sound: drawings, cell phone and megaphone; 2019

The first step in wisdom is to know the things themselves; this notion consists in having a true idea of the objects; objects are distinguished and known by classifying them methodically and giving them appropriate names. Therefore, classification and name-giving will be the foundation of our science. (Linnaeus: Systema Naturae)

We hear a fictional voice message from Sara (Linnaeus' wife) to Linnaeus (Sara's husband). She describes her day. Or a dream she had. On the wall, the drawings show Linnaeus' hallucination: empty taxonomic systems or diagrams exploding within their own logic.



Of Gardens

text on paper; wallpaper; 2019

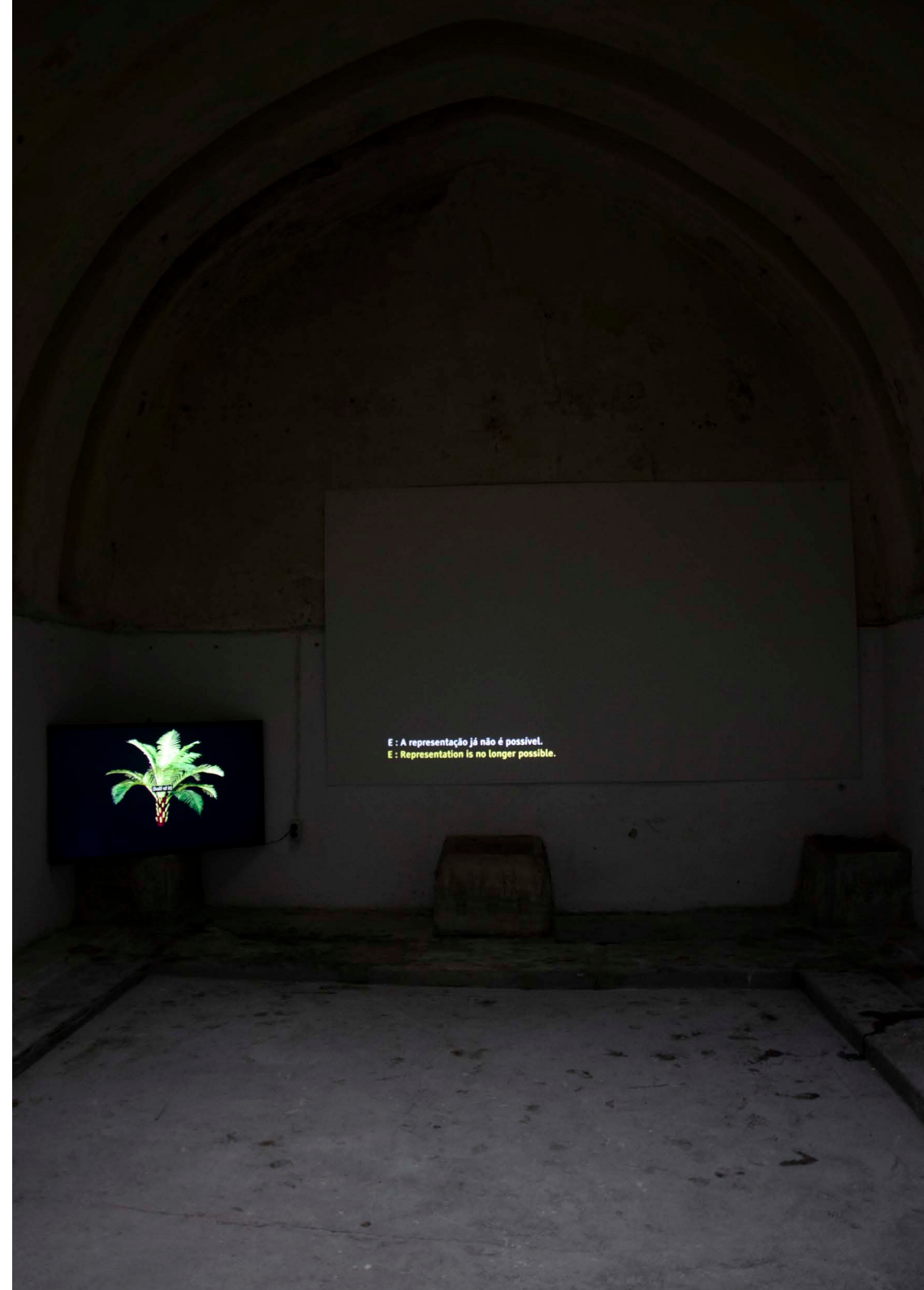
The text *Of Gardens* is organized around the ideas of garden and extinction: how to build a garden and how to imagine the possibility of our own (and others') collective death. The garden is an image-diagnosis for western's relationship with the earth. Since the Renaissance, the garden is a form to illustrate human control over its environment. This tradition understood the natural world as an economic resource or source of pleasure reserved for human necessities. The current climate crisis can be seen as a symptom of this epistemic construction.



Landscape Paradise: a dialogue

single-channel video, no sound; (7:34min); 2018

Landscape Paradise sets a posthuman future that explores the contradictions in the nature/culture separation introduced by the paradise narrative. Is paradise a productive figure to imagine new forms of living? What images can we use to represent our dreams and fears in the context of a climate crisis? A and E arrive to paradise; or to an image of paradise: a photographic album or virtual reality, past or future.



installation view at Digital Ecologies: Natural Death (left); Landscape Paradise - A Dialogue (right)

Natural Death

single-channel video, no sound; (8:40min); 2018

In questioning the fundamental concept of nature and breaking the binaries of classical western philosophy — such as nature/culture and natural/artificial — *Natural Death* tries to dissolve these distinctions into more troubled entanglements.



(the smell of it)