

The work of Joao Felino inscribes itself in a hybrid area, in a contaminated zone inhabited by different demands. The raw material, the support, the process and its results differ in each investigation and reveal the disquietude of the search. Along this path's stopping points we find different "products": common-object, photography-object, sculpture-object, painting-object, installation-object, object-installation, indifferent to the sterile problematic of their classification.

## Symbol-Object

This work's point of departure is a Symbol-Object inscribed in a widespread collective imagination and a-regional. The Flag in its common usage conveys an inalienable semantic load and, simultaneously, an object of some neutrality. That is, if on one hand each flag carries endless resonances, attracting different reactions, on the other hand this object repeats itself, universal, trivializing itself as a set of colors and compositions neutralized by daily usage. An object that suffers from what, in a different context, Didi-Huberman considered as a form of "inattention" associated with a "hypertrophy" of the Image.

In different historical and geographical moments, a flag is an object with which allegiance, indifference, rejection or distance is evident immediately to each viewer. The choice of this Symbol-Object, common and recognizable, is at once an affirmation that the viewer will be called upon to make a stand to restore a meaning, from a shared cultural vocabulary.

## Visible-Object, Seen-Object

The choice of the Flag is therefore the choice of a Symbol-Object we already know. The reference to Jasper Johns and his reasoning is inevitable in the way he presents these objects as "things the mind already knows". A "thing" which reiteratively invades us as non-problematic image and solved meaning. A composition already defined, a set of colors already consolidated in which we recognize the immediate link to a nation.

In this context and in an exemplary manner, the surplus carried in each moment by our attention reveals itself. The act of Seeing reveals itself as an act of understanding and not a pure physiological process. Each Flag's identification takes place despite the indigence before our eyes. The drawing, the geometric and chromatic pattern, claims a nationality and our understanding reacts instantly,

recognizing it. The Seen - the Flag of a certain nation - does not match the Visible - a set of white cloths, arranged in a particular way.

## Trace-Object

Identifying the "Act of Seeing" issue as a problem, the chosen Symbol-Object isn't offered in its entirety but rather presented as if it were something else. The Flag is missing the element that allows its immediate recognition: the neutralized composition and set of colors that sets it apart.

It is then necessary to convene what we already know and restore the identity of what we see from the Trace shown.

We operate as if in an archeology of memory but we dispense the lengthy procedure, we see the color in the white, we see lines in the stitching, we see the chromatic plans in the overlapping fabric.

## Common-Object

For this work Joao Felino initially sought to "discolor" existing and printed common Flags, operating by subtraction and neutralizing them through bleaching. The fabric resisted this accelerated erosion and forced the simulation of that same discoloration in another way: rebuilding the object. Ironically, to achieve a reduction - of a common object that had its chromatic properties removed - it was necessary to add, reversing the direction of the initial thought. Simulate the loss of the whole by adding parts. This new process made it necessary to focus on the requirements of the material: how the fabric reacts to the cutting, the way the seam line overlaps the cloth. This reversal led to a reconnection, a time-consuming reconstruction of the object that initially was sought to maim.

## Installation-Object

Its production rescues the object from the sphere of the Common-Object and makes it an Artifact. This operation is followed by another level of intervention: the remaking of the process in a wider range and finally its Installation in a specific space. The construction process is repeated over and over again, one and another country are elected, looking for a relational principle where objects are deciphered as a whole.

To install this set for the first time the MUDE - Museum of Design and Fashion was chosen, making increasingly overt the contamination between the universe of Art and Design that the intervention claimed from the outset. To amplify the ambivalence of meaning a non-neutral space within the museum was chosen, a room currently closed and tangential to the exhibition route. A space characterized by a certain formality that immediately intensifies the common and official definition of Object-Flag. A formal room with an inalienable decorative load, contradicting the White Cube where we are used to recognize a work of art, where one can easily imagine placing a Flag in its usual form.

This condition broadens the intervention's ambiguity: if on the one hand a Common- Object is mentioned - the Flag - and claimed as an Artistic-Object, on the other hand the reverse movement is followed: positioning the whole set in a space in which these enigmatic white pieces are brought closer to their official meaning and distancing them of their possibility as works of art.

The installation of the Flags side by side in this space revisits the hybrid area occupied by Joao Felino's work.

The uninhabited room occupied by the resonances of these silent and eloquent Objects, ordinary and enigmatic, looking at us blankly as white cloths, split, restored, or expressive and striking as Flags.

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Text from May 2014, refers to the Flags of the World installation, Sala Pereira Coutinho Room, MUDE - Design and Fashion Museum, 24 Augusta St, Lisbon, May 22 - Aug 31, 2014