



CAAA Centro para os Assuntos da Arte e Arquitectura

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Curated by Ana Balona de Oliveira

Opening January 17th, until March 15th 2015 | tuesday to sunday, 2:30 - 7pm

Screening schedule of the documentary *Kuxa Kanema: The Birth of Cinema*, by Margarida Cardoso:  
tuesday to sunday at 3pm and 5pm, duration 52'

Photo Credits: Ângela Ferreira, *Radio Tower Mozambique* (Still from Margarida Cardoso's film *KuxaKanema*), 2003 | Françoise Foucault, Documenting the super 8 workshops conducted by Jean Rouch in Mozambique, 1976-1978

# Ângela Ferreira Monuments in Reverse<sup>1</sup>

Ana Balona de Oliveira

The solo exhibition 'Monuments in Reverse' gathers for the first time a set of works by Ângela Ferreira, made between 2008 and 2012, which emerged from the same research-based processes, giving rise, however, to disparate installations whose intimate relationships tend to remain unexplored from a curatorial perspective. With the aim of opening a space of visibility for the conceptual and formal interstices sustaining her practice in general and these works in particular, the exhibition is purposefully documentary and process-based. It intends to shed light on thinking processes more than points of arrival, through the possibility of new connections, or the visibility of previously occluded ones, the strong presence of drawing and video, and the dialogue with works by others which have constituted point of departure or inspiration

From conversations, begun at the time of the *Maison Tropicale* project (2007), with the filmmaker and scholar Manthia Diawara, director of the film *Rouch in Reverse* (1995), on view in the exhibition, emerged the idea to revisit that brief moment, in the second half of the 1970s, when Jean Rouch and Jean-Luc Godard, the former within a protocol with the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), the latter invited by the Mozambican government, participated in the process of creation of an independent cinema and television in Mozambique.<sup>2</sup> The complex homages to this and other twentieth-century revolutionary events contained in *For Mozambique (Models No. 1, 2 and 3 Celebrating a Post-independence Utopia)* (2008) appear here in the guise of a maquette, which carries with it past visions and imaginations, embryonic and unfinished, of possible futures – even more than its 'models' for it is project also for them.

*For Mozambique* is a sculptural, video, and text-based installation comprised of three variations that are meant to be exhibited separately: *Model No. 1 for Screen-Tribune-Kiosk*, *Model No. 2 for Screen-Orator-Kiosk*, and *Model No. 3 for Propaganda Stand, Screen and Loudspeaker Platform*, all of them *Celebrating a Post-independence Utopia*. As the titles indicate, these models were inspired by three agitprop structures designed by the Latvian-Russian constructivist Gustav Klucis (1895-1938) for the IV Comintern Congress and the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1922. They were multifunctional, movable kiosks to be placed in the streets and included screens for film projections, tribunes for speakers, bookstands, loudspeakers and sites for posters. Many of Klucis' structures exist only as drawing, but some and others similar to them were built and widely used by the Russian Communist Party in the 1920s in order to mobilise public opinion in favour of the Revolution. The inclination of *Models No 1* and *No 2* cite another constructivist moment: Vladimir Tatlin's *Model for Monument to the Third International* (1920), the angle of which at 23.5 from the vertical axis intended to connect the Revolution to the axis of the Earth. In Walter Benjamin's vein, the artist becomes a producer of revolution by making use of technologies of mechanical reproduction for the people and, in Tatlin's case, even for all of mankind.<sup>3</sup> Like most of Klucis' models, however, Tatlin's architectural utopia was never built. But, at the same time, it is undeniable that the very vision which made it fail as built architecture lives on and continues to produce effects in unexpected ways.

The vision that culture was an integral part of the collective political struggle for liberation and decolonisation was one of the most important contributions of thinkers and revolutionaries such as Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This text is a reduced version of an essay to be published in 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Bock (Ed.), *Ângela Ferreira: Maison Tropicale* (exh. cat.), Portuguese Pavilion 52nd Venice Biennial 2007, Instituto das Artes / Ministério da Cultura, Lisboa 2007; Jürgen Bock (Ed.), *Ângela Ferreira: Hard Rain Show* (exh. cat.), Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisboa 2008; Manthia Diawara, *Maison Tropicale*, 58 mins, Maumaus, Lisboa 2008; Manthia Diawara, "Film Production in Lusophone Africa: Toward the Kuxa Kanema in Mozambique," in *African Cinema: Politics and Culture*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1992; Manthia Diawara, "Sonimage in Mozambique," in *I said I love. That is the Promise. The Tvideo Politics of Jean-Luc Godard*, ed. Gareth James, Florian Zeyfang, b\_books, Berlin 2003; Ros Gray, *Ambitions of Cinema: Revolution, Event, Screen*, PhD Dissertation, Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2007; Ros Gray, "Cinema on the cultural front: Film-making and the Mozambican revolution," in *Journal of African Cinemas*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2011; Kodwo Eshun, Ros Gray (Eds.), *Third Text*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, January 2011; Ana Balona de Oliveira, *Fort/Da: Unhomely and Hybrid Displacements in the Work of Ângela Ferreira, c. 1980-2008*, PhD Dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2012; *Ângela Ferreira – Political Cameras – Mount Mabu* (exh. cat.), Stills, Edinburgh 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1982; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, intro. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn, Pimlico, London 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin, London 2001; Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution*, trans. Haakon Chevalier, Writers and Readers, London 1980; Amílcar Cabral, *A Arma da Teoria*, PAIGC, Bissau 1984; Julião Soares

The same goes for Samora Machel and FRELIMO who favoured cinema, radio, photography, literature, graphic design and the press, among other cultural expressions, as tools of liberation before and after independence.<sup>5</sup> Cinema in particular was to produce an image of the people by the people. Margarida Cardoso's documentary *Kuxa Kanema: O Nascimento do Cinema (The Birth of Cinema)* (2003) – on view in the exhibition alongside Ferreira's *Kaapse Sonnette/Cape Sonnets (Gum thatching lathes)* (2011), where one of its stills appears as photograph – narrates this story: the founding of the INC, Instituto Nacional de Cinema, the production and the exhibition across the country through mobile cinemas of the Kuxa Kanema newsreels, the joint efforts, not devoid of difficulties at times, of Mozambican and foreign filmmakers, the return and important role of Ruy Guerra, Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Mièville's project for the creation of a new model of television, and the beginning of the end of many of these dreams when the war with Rhodesia, first, and South Africa, afterwards, seemed to require the strengthening of official Party ideology, and when Machel was killed in a plane crash.

Ferreira's *For Mozambique* is a celebration of this fleeting moment. Godard and Mièville's project, entitled *Nord contre Sud ou Naissance (de l'image) d'une nation* (1977-1978), in a counter-gesture to the racist narrative of D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), becomes visible and readable in the Klucis-inspired screens.<sup>6</sup> But *For Mozambique* is a multifunctional and mixed-media screen where other images of revolution emerge, such as those of *Makwayela* (1977). *Makwayela* was made when Jean Rouch and a team of French filmmakers from the University of Paris X, Nanterre, including Jacques D'Arthuys and Nadine Wanono, among others, lead several projects in collaboration with several departments of the Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), which aimed at training Mozambican filmmakers, such as Arlindo Mulhovo and João Paulo Borges Coelho, mainly using Super 8.<sup>7</sup> Many experiments were undertaken in Maputo but also, importantly, in rural areas where the communities would be involved in the editing and screening, while the films would circulate between communities in an exchange of several sorts of experiences and knowledge. In the case of *For Mozambique*, as opposed to later works about the Super 8 workshops, it is an urban image of the people that we are invited to revisit: the celebratory performance of the miners' song and dance, originally from the south of Mozambique, adapted by a group of glass-factory workers who had just returned from the mines in apartheid South Africa and now including the participation of a fellow woman worker. On the other side of the screen, Bob Dylan celebrates the Mozambican revolution in the *Hard Rain* concert at Fort Collins, Colorado, in 1976, with his song *Mozambique* – another song, therefore, but now one where revolution seems to have acquired another meaning, that of the "sunny Mozambique" on whose beach couples dance "cheek to cheek." Despite the hedonism of Dylan's lyrics, they point towards revolution beyond Party politics in a way that calls to mind the celebratory beach scenes of José Celso and Celso Luccas' 25,<sup>8</sup> and the role played by music not only in this film but also, as Borges Coelho recalls, on the ground, when the Super 8 teams would call on villagers to gather around the screens by switching "the sound system on full blast with Bob Marley."<sup>9</sup> *For Mozambique* is a cartography and an archive of revolution imbued with polyphonic meanings – evident in the way the sound of the *Makwayela* at times becomes the soundtrack for Dylan's performance and vice-versa – stretching not only across space but also time, and going back to 1917. In 'Monuments in Reverse' *For Mozambique* is deconstructed in its components and scale in order to be shown 'in reverse', from the back side, in process of (re-)construction, as cartography and archive also of its own process.

Models, maquettes or studies for possible monuments to the memory of these moments, sculptural archives where the past insists on summoning the present to the unfulfillment of its futures also appear in *Studies for Monument to Jean Rouch's Super 8 Film Workshop in Mozambique* (2012). Sculpture becomes screen for the collective films of the workshops, initially led by Rouch's team but, subsequently, operating beyond it. The *Studies for Monuments* to the film workshops were inspired by the idea of political camera found as title of an article written by D'Arthuys for

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Sousa, *Amílcar Cabral: Vida e Morte de um Revolucionário Africano*, Nova Vega, Lisboa 2012; António Tomás, *O Fazedor de Utopias: Uma Biografia de Amílcar Cabral*, Tinta da China, Lisboa 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Samora Machel, *Selected Speeches and Writings*, Zed Press, London 1985; Eduardo Mondlane, *Lutar por Moçambique*, Centro de Estudos Africanos, Maputo 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, "Le dernier rêve d'un producteur" and "Nord contre Sud ou Naissance (de l'image) d'une nation," in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, no. 300, May 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Jacques d'Arthuys, "Une Expérience de Super 8 au Mozambique," in *Cahiers Du Cinéma*, no. 296, January 1979.

<sup>8</sup> José Celso Martinez Corrêa and Celso Luccas, 25, 1975, 1976/77. Celso and Luccas were members of the São Paulo-based Teatro Oficina. Exiled, they travelled to Portugal only a few months after the Carnation Revolution, where they made *O Parto* (Comunidade Oficina Samba, 1975), and subsequently to Mozambique where they made 25. The title celebrates, besides 25 June 1975, date of independence, 25 June 1962, date of the founding of FRELIMO, 25 September 1964, date of the beginning of the armed struggle, and 25 April 1974, date of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal (José Celso Martinez Corrêa, Celso Luccas, Álvaro Nascimento, Noilton Nunes, *Cinemação*, 5º Tempo/ Cine Olho Revista de Cinema/ Te-Ato Oficina, São Paulo 1980).

<sup>9</sup> Gray, *Ambitions of Cinema*, pp. 120-121, p. 260; Ferreira, "Research Notes for *Political Cameras (For Mozambique Series)*", in Ferreira, cit., p. 21.



*Le Monde Diplomatique* in August 1980: “*Caméras Politiques, Les indépendants du cinéma direct*.”<sup>10</sup> D’Arthuys describes the project of direct cinema in Mozambique and other locations as an attempt to break with exoticism, reportage, militancy and ethnocentric fiction, responding to critiques which considered the project neo-colonial, not artistic enough, or too demagogic and unprofessional.<sup>11</sup> The collective films made by the political cameras of the Mozambican trainees were “strange objects”, unclassifiable because, despite foreign collaboration, their images came neither simply from outside nor above.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, then, the objects paying tribute to these films are also strange and unclassifiable in their own way: they fictively screen the process of the workshops by illuminating its photographic documentation with flickering flashes of light – that is to say, in them, the past literally flashes up.<sup>13</sup> We can see the collaborative filming, screening and watching, and even the image of yet another blackboard where, as opposed to the one appearing in Celso and Luccas’ 25, the meaning of “revolution” is being taught without the spelling of the word.

Alongside the political camera and projector, Ferreira’s non-monumental monuments continue to embody the ideas of political radio tower and screen which were already present in the not-so-vertical *For Mozambique*. But now, instead of the non-monumental inclination citing and interrupting the monumentality of Tatlin’s angle, there is less height, simpler if no less complex means, and no clear indication, by inclination, of imminent fall. Sculpture and photograph are entwined not only by the fictive action of screening they jointly perform, sculpture acting as projector, photograph as screen, but also by the sculpture’s formal quoting of photographic details. In *Study No. 1*, the sculptural projector fictively screens the image of its original, including the cylinder where it rests. In *Study No. 3*, the entwinement of projector and screen is enacted in miniature within its curved wall, which evokes not only the cinema cavern where Robert Smithson located his projection booth and his screen carved out of rock, but also the very circularity of the audience who are watching the fictively projected shooting and recording.<sup>14</sup> In *Study No. 2*, the pedestal for the sculpture projectors – for here one turns into two, a little like the double-sided screen of *For Mozambique* becomes two in *Model No. 2* – is a school table, similar to the one visible in the fictively screened classroom. The double projection of this *Study* makes evident another important entanglement, already visible, as discussed earlier, in 25’s blackboard: how the creation of a new alphabet for and by a truly liberated nation necessitates the ability to create and disseminate its own images. In the *Studies*, towers remain but smaller, closer to the ground, and more than screen, they are projector.

Smithson’s idea of underground cinema and radical projection onto cavern walls – which becomes explicit in the title of *Study for Hendrix/Cullinan Shaft and Underground Cinema (After R. Smithson)* (2012), one of Ferreira’s mine-shaft projectors as critical reminders of an unaccomplished South African revolution – fuels these monuments. In her mine-shaft projectors, Smithson’s land art interventions for radical cinema caverns and underground projection rooms – meant for “natural cave or abandoned mine, truly ‘underground,’”<sup>15</sup> as the Chislehurst Caves in the 1960s where Jimi Hendrix played *Stone Free*, yet another hedonistic hymn signalling the multiple and even contradictory meanings of revolution, liberation and freedom – are meant to critically unearth the “underground” connections between the diamond extraction industry in South Africa and the British Crown Jewels and, more broadly, South Africa’s enduring economic-racial inequalities and the British historical role in the process.<sup>16</sup> In the *Studies for Monuments*, the idea of underground cinema serves different purposes. Besides highlighting the conditions of the rural screenings, taking place in precarious, improvised, open-air and mobile “cinemas”, it brings to light the communal filming and screening in the context of the social changes they introduced, particularly in rural areas, on the margins of Party and State control, that is, somewhat “underground”, on the ground, at a grassroots rather than official Party level. Similarly to Godard’s proposal, the Super 8 project

<sup>10</sup> Jacques d’Arthuys, “Caméras Politiques, Les indépendants du cinéma direct,” in Ferreira, cit., pp. 13-14 ; Jacques d’Arthuys, “Caméras Politiques, Les indépendants du cinéma direct,” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August 1980, p. 23, <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/1980/08/ARTHUYS/35690>, accessed 19 September 2014.

<sup>11</sup> D’Arthuys, “Caméras Politiques, Les indépendants du cinéma direct,” in Ferreira, cit., pp. 13-14.

<sup>12</sup> D’Arthuys wrote: “Ces films sont d’étranges objets, dont les circuits de distribution ne savent que faire, faute de pouvoir les classer [...] Ainsi, ce pays, qui avait alors trois ans d’indépendance, entendait se créer de lui-même une image qui ne viendrait ni d’ailleurs ni d’en haut” (*idem*, p. 13). According to Ferreira’s notes of conversations with Borges Coelho, “The Mozambican trainees were young but they were not blank pages. Jean Rouch had his own political ambitions for the workshops but the Mozambican trainees also had their agendas” (*idem*, p. 17).

<sup>13</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, intro. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn, Pimlico, London 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Smithson, *Towards the Development of a “Cinema Cavern” and Underground Projection Room*, 1971, drawings; Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, University of California Press, Berkeley and London 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Smithson, *Towards the Development of a “Cinema Cavern”*, 1971.

<sup>16</sup> These ideas were developed in the exhibition *Stone Free*, where the other of Ferreira’s mine-shaft projectors, *Hendrix Shaft* (2012), was exhibited (Marlborough Contemporary, London, October-November 2012).

was brought to a closure by the Party in 1982 for being considered too expensive and counterproductive, but it seems that what prompted the decision was the successful heterodoxy of its grassroots developments.<sup>17</sup>

In the monument contained in *Kaapse Sonnette/Cape Sonnets (Gum thatching lathes)* (2011), to which Ferreira arrives from the archival images of FRELIMO's radio towers pertaining to Cardoso's *Kuxa Kanema*, the radio tower emits from South Africa, as sound homage to the anti-apartheid Cape-Afrikaans poetry of Peter Blum (1925-1990). With the monuments reversed, displaced, deconstructed, it becomes clear that what tilted and pre-empted the fall of *For Mozambique* was not only the famous inclination of Tatlin's *Model for Monument*, but also the resilience of *Radio Tower Mozambique* (2011).

Just as some of Klucis' drawings for agit-prop kiosks and Tatlin's *Model* were never built but continue to produce effects in the present, so Ferreira's studies, in the form of drawing, for sculptures that have not been built, some of them on view, remain unfinished sites for possible monuments to unfulfilled futurities. Whether unfinished or finished, however, the monuments are always studies, and their existence as/in models reiterates this quality of incompleteness, openness, mobility and desire. These archives and cartographies of revolution are monuments in (incomplete) revolution. The Mozambican post-independence utopia, its internationalist and grassroots communal efforts of decolonizing image production and distribution, and the impact of its (radio) waves on the anti-apartheid struggle return from their past-futures to pose questions about (and to) the present.

Through the specificity of Ferreira's practice, 'Monuments in Reverse' also constitutes itself as laboratory for thinking about the various ways which the practices for researching history can assume – historiographical, theoretical, literary, curatorial, visual, auditory, performative, etc. – from the perspective of an epistemic and ethico-political intersection and decolonization of the knowledges produced by making and thinking.

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<sup>17</sup> Rouch and Godard left Mozambique around 1979 but the Super 8 project continued until 1982.

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