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João Penalva, Stanley, Lumiar Cité, 2018. Photo of the installation. Courtesy of the artist and Maumus / Lumiar Cité. Image: DHP

ART & CULTURE , FEATURED

(Português) João Penalva, Stanley

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João Penalva (1949) has a consistent body of work, endeavouring on memorabilia in an almost anthropological manner. There is a stubborn and thorough research methodology in João Penalva, with no stone left unturned: each show of his is a whole compendium, a unique realm between reality and fiction, empowering the visitor's curiosity. In *Stanley*, Penalva focuses on the work of another artist, Stanley Brouwn, who died in 2017. Brouwn was a Dutch conceptual artist, born in Surinam, well-known for his refusal to be seen in public and his monk-like stance (he even destroyed his initial works) and, also, for his work: he always refused to appear in his exhibitions, give interviews, be photographed or have his work reproduced. The unit of measure, the distance and the relations with the human body are his number one subject matter, having created his own units of measure.

Stanley is open to the public at Maumus' Lumiar Cité, curated by Jürgen Bock and where João Penalva creates an almost archaeological trail base on Brouwn's work, using several devices such as photographs, measuring instruments, books (much appreciated by Brouwn) and a video, inducing an immersive visual and sound environment, as usual in his exhibitions. Yet again, we do not know specifically where his speech on the work of Brouwn starts and ends, since his hoarder-like spirit and his generosity to the working materials instil doubt in the visitor's mind.

At Maumus' Lumiar Cité, we find photographs where measurement is a constant element: people measuring other people or objects, while we are offered biographical information on Stanley Brouwn. The whole space is sprinkled with pairs of insoles, simulating the distance travelled, which served as the theme for some of Brouwn's works. Everything in this exhibition is focused on measurement. Besides the images, we also have old measuring instruments, from wooden rulers and meters to pedometers and photometers. In some of them we can find the Stanley brand. The entire exhibition is followed by the sound coming from a video (16 mm) entitled *Accuracy in Measurement* (1963) of William Boundey which, among other things, tells us and shows that the unit of measurement is perennially divisible and therefore never exact.

Lumiar Cité defies contemporary conventions about what an exhibition space should look like, far from the anonymous "white cube" of most art galleries. Nevertheless, it does not fail to properly frame the work of an artist (on the work of another artist), who also has nothing conventional about. It brings to mind a work by Michelangelo Pistoletto *Metro Cubo Di Infinito* (1966) which repeats itself to infinity (without anyone having access to its interior). In *Stanley*, we see a work within the work, within the work, and the visitor cannot properly identify its beginning and end, but where the most important is to entice curiosity and artistic reflection. Once again, Penalva works an exhibition like a thematic composition, rather than a set of different works, in a spirit of compromise between the work of the artist and that of the curator.