

Outro

FERNÃO

CRUZ



Im/permanence

Thomas Ellmer

When Fernão Cruz describes how his work is made he refers to making poetry. This can well be understood by the title of the artist's latest presentation at Rialto6: *Outro* – which, in Portuguese, means *Other*. However, for those more familiar with its English definition – that being a short, distinct closing section at the end of something – an outro is usually after-the-fact. Therefore, the poetics of this exhibition can be seen in the conceptual framework that suggests its beginning is also its ending.

This new body of work produced for *Outro* is predominately made with either ash or bronze. Ash is the debris of life and representative of the temporary nature of things. Conversely, bronze is of the world's most robust alloys and has an infinite life expectancy. The inclusion of these two materials is symbolic of humanity's cyclical existence,

and for Cruz, his dislocated relationship with the world and environment he inhabits – he is *other*.

Cruz's artistic praxis should be marked by the fact that it is neither limited to specific genres, media or materials – the artist regularly shifts from drawing to painting to sculpture. His presentations can be vibrant, colourless or both. In this instance, *Outro* is dominated by a muted palette, a deliberate decision by the artist in order to enhance the aura of this body of work. Like many of Cruz's exhibitions, readymades and their associations are drawn upon to implicate the viewer – for example, the fire extinguisher with a kinked hose at the gallery entrance, *Vínculo (Bond)*, alters and heightens our premonitions. In *Outro*, the artist emphasises the domestic environment, one we all recognise, to differentiate between personal recollections and the narratives of everyday people to make these works not only

representations of his own psyche, but also of a culturally shared collective consciousness.

An early work encountered is *Pausa (Pause)* – an aluminium window which inverts the interior of the Rialto6 galleries, to instead feel like we are viewing this work from the building's exterior. This is emphasised further by the discoloured and decayed transformation to the gallery walls.

With this gesture, Cruz initiates the viewers' investigation, asking are we on the outside looking in or the inside looking out?

Close by are several ash-based paintings, the most peculiar of which bears an arm.

Its hand offers an envelope and its title *Notícia de Existência ou Pedido ou Recusa (Notice of Existence or Request or Refusal)* is an invitation to step further into the artist's world.

Cruz establishes a liminal territory that is maintained within this exhibition. In this space is a phantom whose actions unravel

as a psychological experience, making us all too aware of our environment. We, the viewers, are witnesses to overlapping paradigms, where the familiarity of everyday objects keep us attached to some kind of reality, yet their uncanny custom creates a sense of unease. For example, in *Lavar o Entulho (Washing Away Debris)*, a free-standing mop is stationary as it becomes tangled with a water bottle and a foot – its title is suggestive of a desire to be purified of intrusive thoughts and emotional hang-ups.

A bronze washing machine is found in the downstairs gallery, which feels like an eerie utility basement. Inside is an ash-casted head of Cruz's father, it is emblematic of their complex relationship – If the washing machine were real and active, the head would dissolve and wash away. In this case, the bronze replica protects the fragile bust from harm. *1/2* is a seemingly soaking wet shirt which has been knifed to

the wall, roughly in the location of where the wearer's heart would be. As a sculpture, it lingers much like a ghost or better still, a spirit as the former ultimately vanishes while the latter endures. On this level's exterior balcony, a crutch, *O Assistente (The Assistant)* emerges to reveal another object rendered futile and redundant.

Throughout *Outro*, Cruz appears then disappears. In the upstairs mezzanine gallery, we see his final act – an unmade bed, *Fantasma (Phantom)*, hovering off the floor. The bed as a habitat is synonymous with declining mental wellbeing and increasing dissolution with society.

Its haunting and soiled state is as if someone or something has just left it following a long duration and is another hint towards paranormal apparition. *Mesa de cabeceira (Bedside table)* is the title given to a nearby trash can – a vessel for things unwanted – however, the object now cast in bronze guarantees its contents

permanence. The other $1/2$ depicts a secondary soaking garment, this time a pair of trousers hanging from the branch of a tree and all but guaranteeing the artist's company. Layer by layer, he reveals himself to his audience. Nude and vulnerable, he continues to perform.

A



C



M



L



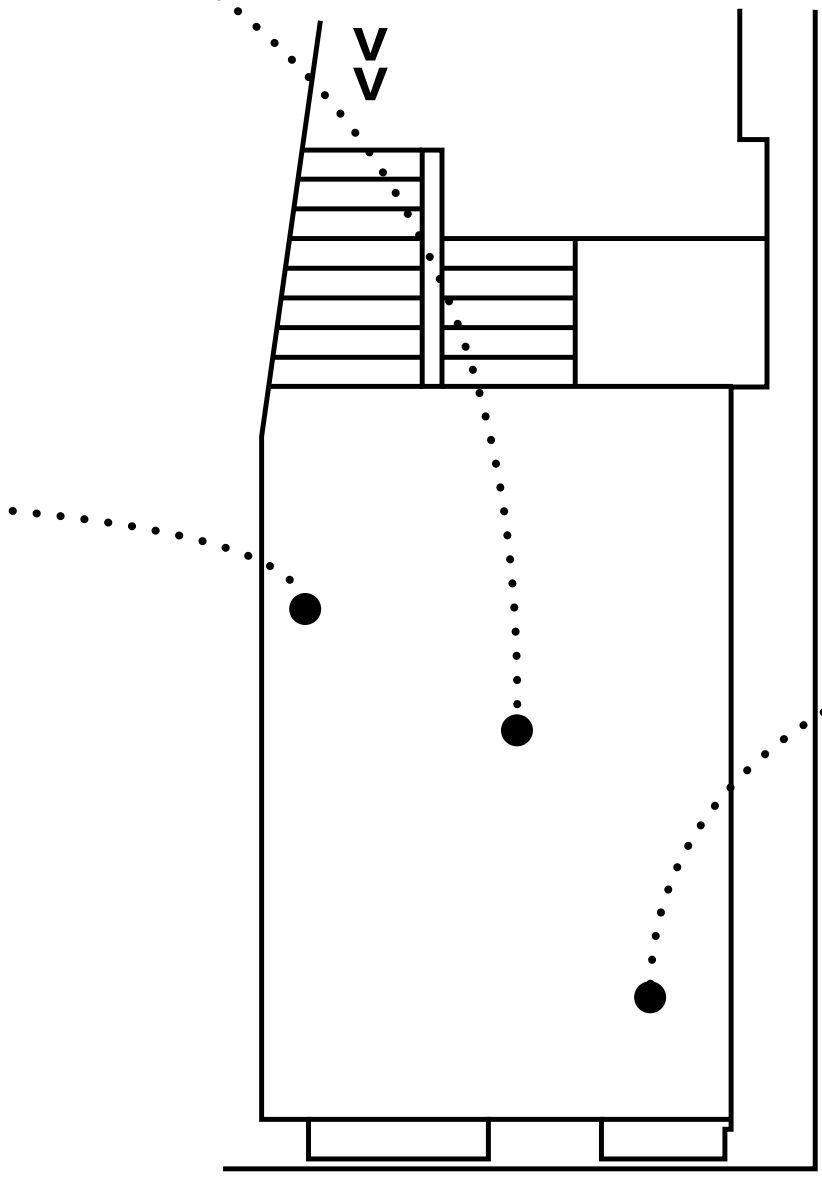
K



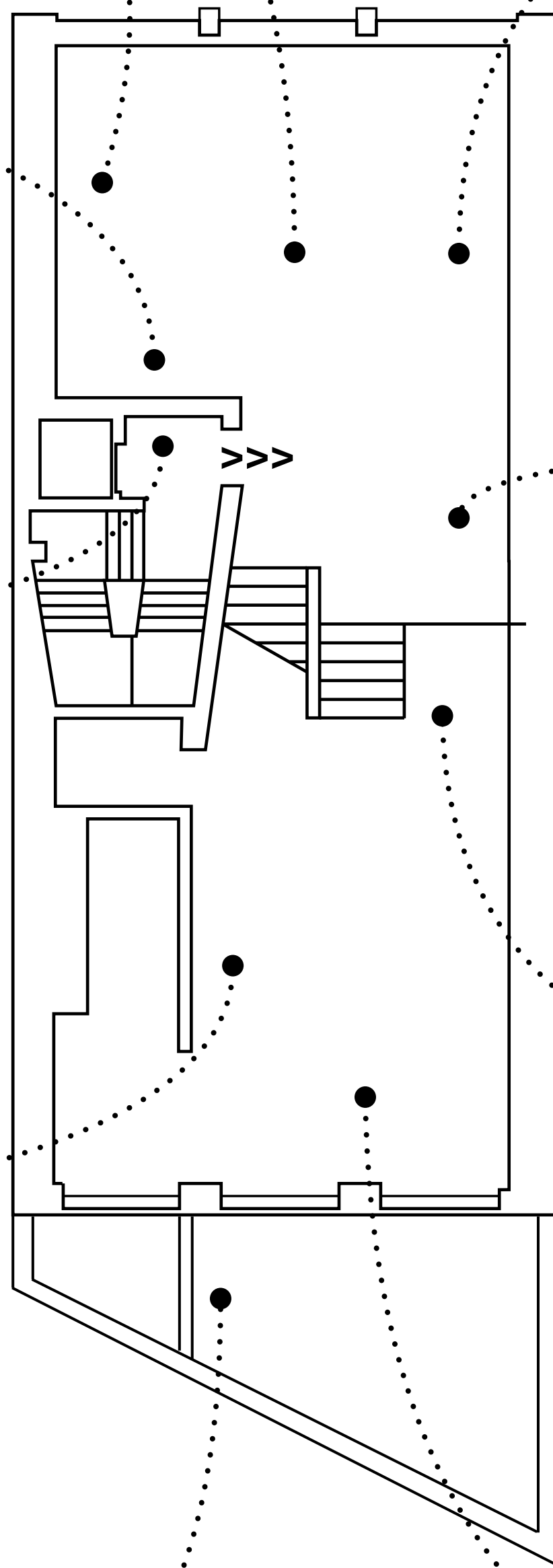
J



I



mezzanine



level 1



B



E



F



G



H

- A.
Phantom
2024
wood, bed linen soaked in epoxy resin, fiberglass, acrylic paint, paper
80 x 170 x 230 cm
- B.
Bedside table
2024
bronze
46 x 41 x 34 cm
- C.
1/2
pair of pants soaked in epoxy resin and ash, bronze
110 x 91 x 43 cm
- D.
Washing Away Debris
2024
bronze
121 x 57 x 50 cm
- E.
Veil
2024
ash, glue and oil paint on canvas
180 x 150 cm
- F.
Mirror
2024
ash and glue on canvas
200 x 160 cm
- G.
Pause
2024
aluminum window, blinds, bath towel, ash, pigments and water on wall
105 x 100 cm (window)
- H.
Time Machine
2024
bronze, resin head coated with ash
88 x 110 x 75 cm
- I.
The Assistant
2024
bronze
120 x 11 x 18 cm
- J.
1/2
2024
shirt soaked in epoxy resin, kitchen knife
75 x 67 x 25 cm

K.

Bond

2024

bronze, iron structure
coated with epoxy resin
and ash

92 x 70 x 26 cm

L.

Storm at the table

2024

ash, glue and oil paint on
canvas

200 x 160 cm

M.

*Notice of Existence or
Request or Refusal*

2024

ash and glue on cut-out
canvas, bronze, oil paint,
paper envelope

150 x 180 x 40 cm