

May 14 2022

- 6 pm Meeting with Carla Filipe and Marta Moreira de Almeida deputy director of the Serralves Museum in Porto (Portugal).

June 25 2022

- 4 pm - 3 am Lusosonic festival
- With Rita Maia & Vasco Viana, Pedro Rocha, Xavier Paes, Margarida Garcia & Jorge Queijo, Violeta Azevedo, João Carlos Pinto & Pedro Branco, Bernardo Devlin, 'Cahau', DJ Nigga Fox.
- A musical program conceived by Pedro Rocha, the music and performance programmer of the Serralves Museum, and Arnaud Maguet, musician and teacher at the Villa Arson.

Every day of the exhibition

- 3 pm Meeting around the exhibitions
- The students of the Villa Arson will create guided tours of the exhibitions, sometimes with performances, evoking their personal interests in relation to the artistic issues of the program. Free admission. No reservation needed.

Practical information

Exhibitions opened every day (except on Tuesdays) from 2 to 6 pm; and from 2 to 7 pm starting July 1st.

The exhibition *hóspede* [guest] and Lusosonic festival to be held on June 25, were specially conceived for Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation - Delegation in France which co-financed them within the framework of the GULBENKIAN EXHIBITIONS program to support Portuguese art within French art institutions.

Both events are being held within the framework of the 2022 France - Portugal Season and the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Villa Arson is a public institution of the Ministry of Culture and a member of UCA - Université Côte d'azur. It is supported by the Ville de Nice - Département des Alpes-Maritimes and the Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. It is also a network member of Ecofili (du Sud - BOTOXSI), Plan Sud, d.c.a., ANDEA and ELIA Art Schools.



CF Yes, the designs of the flags represented in the sticker were slightly rectified. Then I just followed the same metrics in the designs corresponding to the remaining member states after 1986. I tried to simplify the flags, using a more minimal language, reducing the composition of their basic colors and removing the coats of arms, except in the cases of Slovenia and Slovakia. However, since some flags do share very similar colors, I had to include the coats of arms to differentiate them. The same happened with the flag of Cyprus. I included the representation of its political map – a reference to the country's independence in 1960 – otherwise the figure in the flag would be white.

The choice of colors was a complex process. In Lisbon, I came across a place called Primeira Casa das Bandeiras [First Flag House] which has been making flags since 1885. The first flag of the Portuguese Republic (established in 1910) was made there.

In this group of twenty-eight flags, there are five different reds, four blues, etc. The flag shop did not offer such a wide range of colors; I had to manage them carefully so as not to end up with identical flags, like in the case of the Netherlands, Croatia and Luxembourg. The colors of their flags are the same, only in different hues. I could have chosen to print them on fabric, but in all my work with flag iconography I always opt for a manual process that involves sewing, which is an increasingly rare technique. I am very interested in the manual side of manufacturing, which I bring into my practice whenever possible.

MA Back to the composition of the flags for this installation, you have returned to a primordial aspect of your artistic trajectory, i.e., your archival interest in the graphic dimension and design of agitprop and union materials from our recent past, such as the mass distributed flag and sticker (in this specific work). Would you like to speak about your interest in this universe?

CF I was born a year before the fall of fascism in Portugal. I grew up under a slew of political images (of parties, associations, etc.) in various supports, such as stickers, posters or murals. The street was the stage for these images and slogans. A well-known example is a poster by Vieira da Silva (1908, Lisbon – 1992, Paris) saying 'A poesia está na rua' [Poetry is in the streets]. The streets were filled with political narratives of change; the street was a place of freedom. In my understanding, it was impossible for a child to remain immune to the contamination by images that peopled the public space in those days. Because I was a child, it was impossible to understand everything I saw or heard, but I certainly absorbed the whole plurality of visual information. Later on, there was an interest in decoding and understanding this fleeting post-revolutionary period, which remains silenced even today, particularly the so-called PREC¹.

There was a lot of optimism in the air, the idea of change was acutely present... I can clearly recall the image of Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo (candidate for prime minister) printed on a poster outside my primary school building. I remember one day my mother came to fetch me from school and stood there looking at the poster with the portrait

Not All Flags Are Equal

Marta Moreira de Almeida

Hóspede now shown at the Galerie carrée space is a continuation of your work on iconographies, graphic elements and the design of political, social and economic communication materials and pamphlets. In fact, in *hóspede* your work with these materials takes the shape of twenty-eight flags (one for each of the twenty-eight EU member states up until 2019) which represent each country's economic weight. Why did you choose this moment to create this work?

Carla Filipe The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union on January 31st 2020 was an historical event that became crucial to the construction of this piece. My intention is to bring to the fore the weaknesses of an organization like the European Union. The flag of the United Kingdom belongs to the group of great powers alongside Germany and France, except that it lies on the floor...

MA Not all flags are equal?

CF No. The flags are arranged in groups of different sizes and are organized like a computer's desktop. Each country's flag is positioned like a folder and all the folders are turned towards the entrance of the gallery. I created different sized groups proportional to each country's GDP per capita, i.e., gross domestic product divided by the number of inhabitants. The larger the GDP the more developed the country. Each country is given a classification based on my research of the GDP announced in the early stages of conceiving this installation, between September and October 2021. It is an approximate classification, a round estimation... This is a site-specific installation based on the gallery's ceiling height, which I used to determine the size of the German, French and British flags. I then reduced the size of each group by thirty centimeters, which means that the lower a country's GDP is, the more the flag's size decreases... In this piece, the flag of Malta is the smallest.

MA The flags are not merely the flags of EU countries. The representation of each country's flag is framed by a stereotype of the human figure, a figure with a head, a trunk and limbs.

CF Exactly! The twenty-eight flags are represented inside a genderless human figure. I appropriated the image of a sticker from the 1980s that I found in an antique book dealer. I think it might have been made in 1986, when Portugal and Spain joined the European Community. The sticker's graphic design shows optimism, happiness and the idea that all the countries share an equal standing and hold hands.

MA The sticker that inspired you for this work shows twelve countries. You appropriated the representation of those twelve countries with minor differences; did you design the representation of the remaining sixteen countries?

shake the foundations of the so-called European construction and question the collective defence of values that have been taken for granted.

M.A.

Carla Filipe in conversation with Marta Moreira de Almeida

Within the scope of the France-Portugal Season and the partnership between Serralves and Villa Arson, Carla Filipe has conceived the installation *hóspede* [guest] for the Galerie carrée space at Villa Arson. The artist and the curator discuss this project together and evoke certain aspects of Filipe's artistic trajectory.

Text-based drawings and collages, spatial interventions, performances and publishing are some of the media and approaches deployed by Carla Filipe (1973, Vila Nova da Barquinha, Portugal) to create a singular type of social portrait and self-portrait. Carla Filipe uses methodologies that are akin to anthropology as she observes, collects, interviews and documents traces of individual and collective narratives that belong both to the visual culture of the recent past and to the present. Travels, dislocations and *in situ* work (such as building and planting vegetable gardens) are also processual elements of research and contributors to artistic creation.

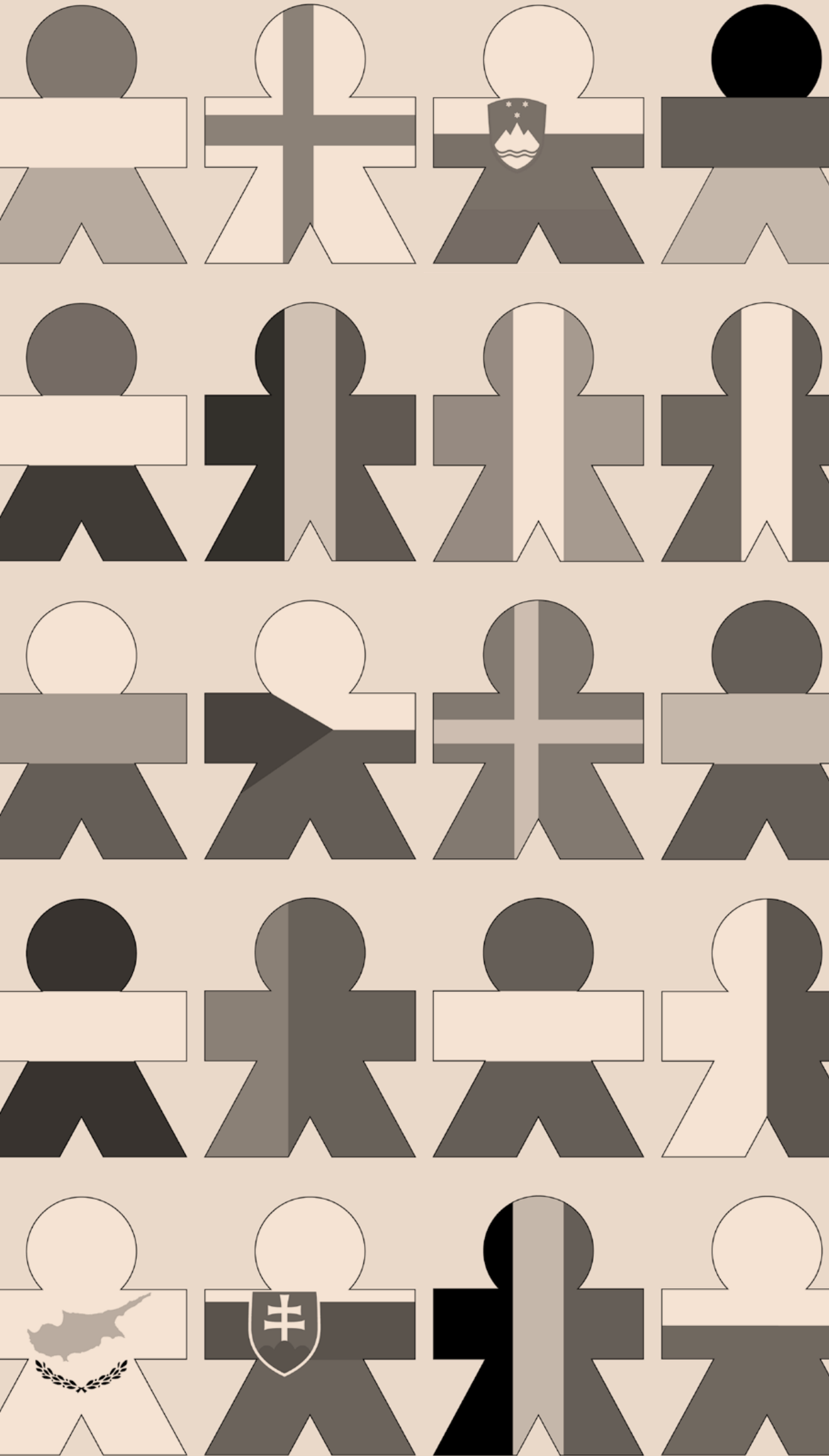
Inspired by autobiographical events and personal experience growing up in Portugal in a community of railway workers Carla Filipe's highly subjective process of 'field work' serves as a lens through which to consider ways of life marginalized by history and the social and political systems that drive it. Filipe's use of found objects, visual appropriation, the use of language as physical object, and her low-fi, punk-like aesthetic associated with street signage, graffiti and political advertising of a pre-digital age, constitute a rich subjective archive. Her work draws from critical memory to value narratives that have been forgotten or omitted by conventional discursivity; it follows a process that highlights the political, economic and social transformations that shape the present in its different geographies and contexts for direct intervention.

With the exhibition *hóspede* [guest], Carla Filipe continues to pursue a creative process that engages the current social, political and historical context. Here, the artist returns to her work on the iconographies from posters linked to political, unionist or cooperative causes to reshape their graphism and design in 28 flags – one for each of the EU's member states until the year 2019. The flags represent the weight of economic factors in their relation to that entity, as well as historical references from each country, to illustrate how they come together under this common identity according to what Jacques Derrida called a 'double memory'.

'Hóspede' [guest] is a word whose etymology also points to someone who occupies a certain place or space by somehow paying for it. Within the debate about hospitality that has taken place in the universe of philosophy and contemporary artistic practices, Carla Filipe's proposal compares each member state to an entity whose permanence is fragile (as recently demonstrated by Brexit) and whose relationship with the union is equivocal given the delicate balance between common goals and nationalistic interests that are subject to constant, circumstantial political mutations.

The deviant iconographies in Carla Filipe's works do not offer solutions. Instead, they question the present with its tensions and contradictions. The departure from basic values associated with international solidarity, which can be observed in contemporary societies (including European society), is the background for this proposal, which covers the arc that goes from hostility to hospitality.

Unfortunately, the frailty of the idea of Europe has been exposed by current events. These are moments in which territorial and ideological conflicts



15.05 – 28.08.22

Marta Moreira de Almeida is deputy director of the Serralves Museum in Porto, Portugal, since 2018. She holds a degree in Art History from the University of Porto and has worked in the Fine Arts Department of the Serralves Museum since 1991 as a curator. She played a key role in organizing the inaugural exhibition at the Serralves Museum, *Circa 1968*, in 1999. She was responsible for several curatorial projects throughout her career and worked with artists such as: Maria Nordman, Grupo Homeostética, Antoni Muntadas, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Cildo Meireles, Helena Almeida, Paula Rego, Tacita Dean, João Maria Gusmão e Pedro Paiva. Marta Moreira is currently working on a new curatorial project with the artist Carla Filipe that will be exhibited at the Serralves Museum in 2023.

Carla Filipe

hóspede [guest]

Curator Marta Moreira de Almeida

Carla Filipe was born in 1973, Vila Nova da Barquinha, Portugal. She now lives and works in Porto, Portugal.

Filipe is the co-founder of Salão Olímpico (2003-2005) and O Projecto Apêndice (2006), two independent spaces dedicated to a program of contemporary art exhibitions, both located in Porto. In 2009, she received a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for a residency at Acme Studios in London. She also held residencies at AIR Antwerpen (Antwerp, 2014), Robert Rauschenberg Foundation (Captive, Florida, 2015) and Krinzinger Projekte (Vienna, 2017).

The list of individual exhibitions includes, among the most recent, *RESSACA/ HANGOVER* (text by Carolina Grau), Galeria Francisco Fino, Lisbon, Portugal, 2020; *Amanhã Não Há Arte* (curated by Luís Silva and João Mourão), MAAT, Lisbon, Portugal, 2019; *da cauda à cabeça* (curated by Pedro Lapa), Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal, 2014; *Arquivo Surdo-Mudo* (curated by Zbyněk Baladrán), tranzitdisplay, Praga, Czech Republic, 2011; *É um espaço estranho e maravilhoso, o ar é seco, quente e insípido / Precarious, escape, fascination* (curated by João Mourão and Luís Silva), Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon, Portugal, 2010.

Among the many collective exhibitions, we note her participation in *Manifesta 8* (curated by tranzit.org), Murcia and Cartagena in 2010; 5th Bienal de Jafre (curated by Carolina Grau and Mario Flecha) in 2011; 13th Istanbul Biennial (curated by Fulya Erdemci) in 2013; 32nd Biennale de São Paulo (curated by Jochen Volz) in 2016; and in 4th Biennial of Contemporary Art of the Urals Industriais (curated by João Ribas) in 2017.

the political and social situation of the time. Art must not be at the service of any political doctrine, nor should it be consensual, but it does not have to be understood by everyone, it may even be repulsive. And that is political.

MA How do you like to be defined, as a Portuguese artist, a European artist or simply as an artist?

CF In a past edition of Documenta Kassel, the organizers decided to remove information regarding nationality from the artworks’ identification, which usually also includes the identification of the artist. This might have been an attempt to combat stereotypes. I confess that I was a bit at a loss, nationality allows me to carry out a contextual exercise on the work, which offers greater clarity. Through nationality, I also establish socio-political and artistic relationships. A short biographical note often supports my reading of an artist on show.

I am an artist, ergo, I make art. My life experience is obviously tied to my geography. Only then comes the awareness that I am an artist. In any case, I do not mind at all being called a Portuguese artist. But I do mind being called a ‘female artist’. I find it redundant. My name is a female name. A man is seldom called a ‘male artist’.

To answer your question more precisely, before all else I define myself as a person... When traveling in Portugal I do not think I am Portuguese – I am just a person who speaks Portuguese; when traveling within the EU I notice many differences and realize that I am Portuguese; when traveling outside the EU, I realize that I am European. This is mainly about the notion of safety and how safe I feel being European. And then I think about the great privilege of belonging to this geography.

^[1] ‘Processo Revolucionário em Curso’ [Ongoing Revolutionary Process], a designation for the period of social and political changes that unfolded in Portugal in 1974/1975.

MA This is not the first time you work on the issue of hospitality. Your project for the 2010 *Manifesta 8* Contemporary Art Biennial examined the ever more pressing issue of migratory flows from North Africa. Could you tell us more about that project?

CF The site-specific installation *Desterrado* [Exile] was the outcome of an arts residency in Murcia, Spain: the piece consisted of a cement floor made with seawater into which I placed items of clothing collected around the city. During my stay in Murcia, I noticed that there were always many items of clothing abandoned on the streets. In parallel, I presented an audio piece listing all the administrative steps required for a migrant to obtain European citizenship. The text was read by a member of a migrant assistance association. The piece also included posters, shown in the exhibition space and scattered around the city, containing sentences taken from the audio piece that I considered especially relevant. One of them was: ‘There are no illegal persons; only irregular persons’. This was aimed at underlining the fact that administrative rules cannot eliminate human dignity.

During the arts residency, I was confronted with another reality: slavery among Europeans. I read a newspaper report about the dismantling of a network of Portuguese ‘slaves’ in that area of Spain. These enslaved laborers worked in agricultural companies without contracts or labor rights. Their identity documents had been taken from them and they had no permission to leave the place where they worked and lived.

In the work presented in Murcia, I exposed these two bipolar realities: on one hand, the reality of those who want to obtain European identity (the constant exodus from North Africa to Europe); on the other, the reality of those whose European identity is stolen (the case of modern Corvée Labor).

MA Following Jean-Luc Godard’s idea, is it correct to say that more than making political art, you prefer to make art politically?

CF Those are timeless references, like Joseph Beuys’ famous dictum ‘Everyone can be an artist’. Both are deeply linked to the notion of action and experimentation, and their avant-gardist power is unequivocal in its contribution to artistic thinking ever since. Godard was not subjugated by a doctrine; he wanted to break away from a certain way of creating cinema to value experimentalism across every stage of filmmaking, from shooting to production. It was about freeing cinema from authorial marks; a sort of ‘anti-cinema’; a manifesto of ideas in which the camera was a weapon. In the 1960s, artists were engaged with the political ideals of the time. Nowadays, the notion of political discourse is mistaken for political commentary. Something similar is occurring with current artistic discourse. Do we still know how to speak about art? Sometimes even I question myself on this. It is important to understand the political and social history of each era in order to understand the present. More important still is to understand the artistic movements across the various stages of history. Most of the more significant artistic manifestations in our history were directly linked to

MA This hospitality is proving absolutely central in these gloomy days that saw the Russian aggression on Ukraine. As we speak, there are over three and a half million refugees. The EU’s unconditional welcoming of all these people demonstrates a unique determination in the reflection and practices of hosting which reality sometimes imposes in a state of social emergency. This highlights the fact that while philosophers and intellectuals mostly thought the notion of hospitality from the perspective of migrations from non-European countries, the urgency and instrumentality of the concept are constantly challenged by unimaginable circumstances.

Did the fact that the exhibition occurred in the context of the France-Portugal Season, a series of events that aim at deepening the connection between the two countries, lead you to reflect on the EU and Europe?

CF I expanded the range of institutional and artistic diplomacy, transgressing bilateral diplomacy and pointing to issues that are also vital to these two countries. I wanted to distance myself from the notion of interexchange, so I diplomatically opened the field to all EU member states. If Portugal and France were not part of the EU, the intentions of the program would follow different guidelines.

We tend to mistake the EU with the countries that make up Europe. These are two different things, but they can be mistaken. Europe is not represented in my work, but when working on the countries that make up the EU we are indirectly speaking of Europe. Our understanding of it might be somewhat fuzzy, but the definitions are very clear in territorial terms.

In this bilateral relationship, and for historical reasons, Portugal and France maintain a reciprocal knowledge that is nevertheless quite broad. The Portuguese migratory flow of the 1960s consolidated an exchange of experiences, as is doing the growing presence of a French community in our country today, though this flow is certainly smaller. France was a radiating center of modernity, and Portugal suffered under the isolationist policy of the fascist regime, so the hiatus in the cultural visibility of the two countries is still substantial.

MA Was this final composition of *guest* the only version that you considered, or did you think of other possibilities?

CF Yes, I thought of other possibilities. I thought about introducing the flags of countries whose candidacy process is still ongoing, such as Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro... I thought about piling them up at a corner of the gallery, but this was too reminiscent of dirty sheets taken from the beds of some hotel, ready to be laundered... I eventually abandoned the idea due to the deviant interpretation that this plastic representation could entail.

I could have also chosen to base my research on the VAT percentage excised in the various European countries, or on their freedom of speech; on gender identity indexes or even on the weight of the support to culture implemented by the different European governments.

of Maria Lourdes Pintassilgo. The moment has crystallized in my memory, it carries the wonderful flavor of a change in women’s role in Portuguese society. Pintassilgo was the first and only female prime minister of Portugal (from August 1st 1979 to January 3rd 1980). We had come out of a regime in which, among many other restrictions, women did not have the right to vote.

My work is very much about this subject matter, about rethinking a past of change that for many is buried in collective memory but is nevertheless quite alive in the individual memory of those who experienced it. There remains a very peculiar feeling ranging from disillusionment or aversion to complete ignorance. Therefore, I bring these graphic elements into the artistic field, re-working those meanings and symbology, which are convoked into the exhibition space to invite viewers to reflect.

MA Why did you choose the title *hóspede* [guest] for this installation?

CF ‘Hóspede’ was a diplomatic word that I came up with to point out the differences between the countries that make up the EU. In this work, the countries are compared to ‘guests’, although EU countries are not only guests, but also hosts.

The United Kingdom was the first ‘guest’ to leave, as expressed by its population in a referendum. I want to transmit the idea of process and transformation that is happening within this European organization and how it is changing. While previously the Union could only be conceived of as a growing entity, Brexit radically changed that perception. Meanwhile, and to stress the turbulence of this process, we mentioned the current candidacy of Ukraine in a context of extreme *gravity*.

Hóspede [guest] is an apparently very simple installation, but at the same time it is complex... and we hope it may stimulate reflection.

MA I would even dare say that all European citizens are guests of this entity called the European Union and that viewers of this exhibition are also the guests of your work. And we could also think of you as an institutional guest of Villa Arson.

CF The concept of hospitality in Jaques Derrida was also crucial for me while producing this work. The origin of the term ‘hospitality’ derives from the Latin words *hospes* and *hostis*, which broadly mean guest but also enemy/stranger/foreigner.

When hosting, the hosts become the hostages of the guest and their property is somehow expropriated. In this relationship there are boundaries, criteria, laws and values that must be abided by and valued by both the guest, who should avoid becoming an intruder, and the host.

The diplomacy among EU member states must never be questioned because of the asymmetries between all the ‘guests’ (countries). During the 2008-2009 financial crisis, the term PIGS was used to designate the European countries which were more economically vulnerable – Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain (and later on, Ireland) –, a terminology that provoked countless undesirable political, economic and social tensions by creating socio-cultural stereotypes.