

## FOGGY DAYS IN OLD MANHATTAN?

This exhibition uses as its starting point the idea that the act of imagining can be treated as real experience.

Here Manhattan functions as an abstract place, mainly because I've never been to Manhattan. But like all of us, I have a vague idea of what Manhattan is like. And here old Manhattan is in the guise of Old New York. The idea of an old new world stirs my fancy, mainly because it's nonsensical.

The mere idea of the contemporary doesn't seem particularly relevant to me, partly because when we refer to the idea of contemporary, it has already ceased to be so. It is not the idea of a work of art as a product or image of its time that is interesting or essential to what an artwork is.

That is why in the video of the song that you see here, the façade of the Church of Santa Cruz in Coimbra is seen instead of Manhattan; and that is why in several canvasses the patina of certain objects distances them from the fleeting nature of time which is ephemeral. As complementary attitude, I paint flowers, and the fact they are pictures and not real flowers, strives to make them last, when in reality they would soon be fated to wither (yet, as species, they may still endure for thousands of years).

The way a work of art is spawned may be one of its ingredients, but its true significance does not lie in the context of the time in which it was created. Instead we can view a work of art as a reflection on what the aesthetic experience could be; a manifestation or the synonym of what it means to be an individual, reaching beyond the fragmented images of utilitarian rationality.

This exposition, which views art as a form of knowledge, may suggest, in its title, with the fog, how impossible it is to attain crystal clarity (or that it is not in pure visibility that clarity can be found).

The last sentence in the song: *and it is very sad when you're left alone with your head* is more than just a yearning to confess, or an expression of sadness (because *sad* may just be a somewhat skewed slant rhyme for the word *head*); it suggests the idea that the head can be isolated from the rest of the world. But since it is impossible to convey the world and everything in it, the best idea is may be just to depict the head.

I'm not suggesting ways of interpreting my work, I am just putting down a few of the ingredients that went into the genesis of this exhibition.

Art may be viewed as a manifestation of the realm of possibilities generated by complex thought (which may be another way of saying *plasticity*). But as an artist, I created this exhibition as the composer of an opera would, when operas were at their height as sources of recreation.

When I go over the lyrics of the songs I wrote with João Taborda, I find that they are the most interesting vehicle I have encountered to convey the theory of art. I am using the best technique to reflect on the nature of art, that is by seeming not to give it too much importance.

It works better if art springs on the scene free from the aura that usually provokes more cloudiness than clarity in the viewer's mind. And even if one doesn't seem to be taking things that seriously, the work ends of being more effective in its potential as a means of communication.

I am not particularly interested in the things that set me apart (not that I know myself very well to begin with). What I am interested in is being an accomplice to what everybody knows, and with thoughts so swift that reason calls on intuition so that it won't have to face where its boundaries are.