

Fernando Marques Penteadó  
*Meet me at the finger buffet*  
03/09 – 03/10 2020

Mendes Wood DM is proud to present the first solo exhibition in Belgium of Brazilian-born, Brussels-based artist Fernando Marques Penteadó. *Meet me at the finger buffet* draws its name from a narrative device, imagined by the artist, that underpins the entire exhibition and weaves a rich web of interconnections and relationships between the various fictional characters that appear in the show. Theatrical in its conception, the exhibition unfolds like a novella or a play in which the narrative arc, and the characters contained in it, invite the viewer to enter into the artist's world and interact with it in the form of a game, which can be played at the gallery, during the exhibition visit.

The fictional story that underpins the show is as follows: a Belgian producer, Xavier, generously decides to invite his old friends for a Erasmus reunion in Brussels, where he lives. They all met in London almost two decades ago and formed intermittent relationships that Xavier wishes to reignite. Unable to plan the party on his own, Xavier invites a friend, Jean Claude, who works in PR and events and is himself part of the London Erasmus group, to make a pitch for this reunion. Jean Claude's proposition includes everything from seating arrangements to the menu.

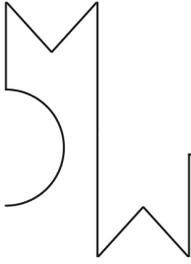
In an artfully crafted meta-narrative moment, it becomes apparent that we, the audience, and Xavier, the fictional Belgian producer and protagonist of the exhibition, are both witnessing Jean Claude's pitch for the first time, together. Marques Penteadó's artworks form the basis of Jean Claude's event proposal, and are widely articulated as different kinds of embroideries and found objects – the artist's preferred medium –, from portraits and character studies of the various guests who have already sent in their RSVPs to depictions of the various snacks and finger foods that will be served at the party.

This playful concept is used as a vehicle for Marques Penteadó to address more profound ideas of identity construction and the passage of time – an analysis of how we craft our own personalities and histories, and how these change as we grow older. As the artist defines it, this exhibition is about the *archeology of memory*. The storyboards, which will be on display in the gallery and which act as character profiles for each of the confirmed guests so far, are perhaps the best expression of this concept. Each storyboard is composed of the kind of carefully curated paraphernalia, painstakingly gathered by the artist himself in market stalls around the world, that each one of us collects, carries and privately displays throughout life – little written notes, theater tickets, old photographs, bus passes, a handkerchief, a poem, a vinyl cover or a postcard, for example. To a psychologist, the type of effort required in piecing together these fragments, to form a clear vision of a person, is akin to what an archeologist would do to paint a picture of an entire civilization.

Another key concern for the artist, manifest in this show, is the idea of biographic timelines. Who exactly was Xavier when he was on his Erasmus trip in London almost twenty years ago? Who is he now and how has he changed? How will his relationships and affections for each of the guests evolve when he sees them all together again at his party? And how, in turn, will each of his guests feel? How will their various achievements compare to one another? How close are the life experiences of, say, a ski instructor, a magician, a geologist and a sushi chef? The reunion is a chance to evoke ghosts and highlight the dreams and utopias that we all share as we make our way through life.

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Even if the exhibition has a well-rounded, specific narrative, it is not to be understood as a strictly circumscribed project by the artist, but rather as the development of ideas that Marques Penteado has been working on for several years, including some character in this story that have made previous appearances in other shows (such as in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, at Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles, in 2017). Further, the concept of the storyboard first appeared in the artist's *Three Novels* solo exhibition at Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, in 2014.

The interactive part of this exhibition is voluntary, and any visitor who wants to play the game can do so while they walk through the show. The game involves six of the characters that have already confirmed their presence at Xavier's party. Armed with a description of each character – their profession, their romantic life, their hopes and dreams – the viewer will have to match each character to their storyboard on display in the gallery. Those with the most points will win a hand-crafted prize.

The practice of Fernando Marques Penteado is supported by a very well defined method that involves long processes and specific techniques that are tenaciously operated. The artist has a work trajectory specially marked by embroidery, which ends up linking clothing accessories, books and found objects. And for an aesthetic choice, it combines autobiographical and historical matter in the link of inventive literary creations.

Starting with in-depth research on the contribution of the textile universe to visual culture and the diffusion of knowledge, the artist elaborates narratives permeated by his own personal vocabulary, whose profoundness is articulated by playful undertones that constantly negotiate the meaning of things. In representations sewn by Fernando Marques Penteado, we are faced with common human relations and historical and semantic displacements. It is within these that topics such as sexuality, homoeroticism, gender and violence are considered from a perspective that articulates, in a very particular way, social critiques from domestic environments.

**Fernando Marques Penteado** (1955, São Paulo) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

Selected solo exhibitions include *rivieras\_\_bags\_\_scarves\_\_alps*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2018); *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles (2017); *Unknown Subjects Among Solitaires*, Galeria Múrias Centeno, Lisbon (2016); *Sentido Figurado*, A CASA, Museu do Objeto Brasileiro, São Paulo (2014).

Selected group exhibitions include Pavilhão Branco, Lisbon (2021, upcoming); *Five in Fives #1*, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg (2019); *SCHMALTZ*, Vienna (2018); *Dislexia*, El Gran Vidrio, Córdoba (2018); *Namedropping*, JAN KAPS, Cologne (2017); *Lyric on Battlefield*, Gladstone Gallery, New York (2017); *Odd Objects: an on proto-sculpture*, Centro Internacional das Artes José de Guimarães, Guimarães, (2016); *Unorthodox*, Jewish Museum, New York (2015); 30a. Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo (2012).

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