

# THE COLLECTION OF MR. X, THE MAN WHO LIVED 500 YEARS

28.09.2019

21.12.2019

CURATED BY	ARTISTS	OPENING	OPENING HOURS
Joana P. R. Neves	Gabriela Albergaria (PT) Kiluanji Kia Henda (AO) Nicolás Robbio (AR) João Vilhena (PT)	Saturday 28.09.2019 from 6 pm to 9 pm	Tuesday - Saturday 11 am - 7 pm



*This exhibition is based upon the premise of a parallel universe.*

The Alberta Pane gallery is pleased to present *The collection of Mr. X, the man who lived 500 years*, group show curated by Joana P. R. Neves, featuring artworks of Gabriela Albergaria, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Nicolás Robbio, and João Vilhena.

Mr. X wishes to remain anonymous. Taxes? Shady businesses? Humbleness? It will be up to the spectator to speculate. One of his most striking characteristics is his longevity: he was born in 1519 and, mystifyingly, is still alive today. If Vita Sackville-West was Virginia Woolf's inspiration to build the character of Orlando, it was Mr. X who suggested Orlando's unnatural life-span. He does not deny or corroborate this story but recalls having been invited several times to the Woolf residency in Richmond.

Mr. X has a very strong relation with Portugal. His skin is golden and his features point to South Asia which is why some people think he comes from Goa, a province of the old Portuguese empire, perhaps the son of an Indian woman and a Portuguese man. His business has always been tied to Portugal and across the ex-colonies. During one of his business trips in the eighteenth century, he started collecting curiosities and then art (mostly paintings and sculptures). He claims to have been able to witness the evolution of "this small country, in all its naïveté, its courage and its beauty" (email exchange with the curator on the 12/3/2016).

*The collection of Mr. X, the man who lived 500 years* celebrates his 500th anniversary. He wrote a letter to the 4 artists whose work he bought most recently, asking them to choose a work for the exhibition.

## GALLERIA ALBERTA PANE

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Mr. X  
address undisclosed

Artist  
address/email

Lisbon, 2 July 2019,

Dear ...,

I'll celebrate my 500th birthday on the 28 of September 2019.

Yes, I've seen many things. I've had ups and downs, even when I settled in Portugal, this little country at the edge of Europe.

Portugal is Atlantic: melancholic, suave and cruel. It welcomed me, and allowed me to accumulate spiritual and material wealth.

Do you remember how I told you that I didn't believe in wealth? And yet...! I couldn't help but accumulate it.

I've lived so long, I witnessed the death of my children and of my lovers. I witnessed the naïve arrogance of the "Conquista", of colonisation, and the relieved sigh of decolonisation. I saw the Portuguese crushed by Salazar's dictatorship. I saw their vitality wane, dissipate and flourish several times. So, I nourish my spirit with art. I find in it a maturity matching my own, which stems from the centuries that I lived through.

Wisdom isn't patiently acquired intellectual expansion. It's simply the only compensation of getting closer to death. When will she come for me?

I don't know. Please forgive my melancholia. I am Portuguese after all!

It might be a bit arrogant to title the show with a "name" I refuse to reveal but I find that my collection reflects the relation with a country whose idiosyncrasies I learned to love.

I can't say I am comfortable with its history but I profited from it, as many did. This collection might be my redemption.

Could you propose another work than the one I own for this show? I would be honoured if you did.

Yours always,

X

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