

Press Release

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99CANAL

ZDB AND 99 CANAL PRESENT **Animal farm**,
AN EXHIBITION BY JOÃO MARIA GUSMÃO
OPENING AT 99 CANAL ON 2 FEBRUARY.



Esteemed Comrades, ZDB (Lisbon) and 99 Canal (NY) proudly present *Animal Farm* by João Maria Gusmão, his first solo exhibition in New York following nearly two decades of collaborative endeavours with Pedro Paiva. The exhibition will first be shown at the non-profit artist-run space 99 Canal – on view from 2 February to 3 March 2024, Tuesday to Sunday, 4 pm to 10 pm – followed by a second iteration at the end of May at ZDB Lisbon. *Animal Farm* is curated by Marco Bene.

Animal Farm entices the observer on a visual odyssey exalted by pastoral solace, animist minstrelsy and metaphysical riddles – ghosts, ghouls and goblins – offering fleeting glimpses of an alterity existing between *techne* and *poiesis*, the human and the non-human, the nocturnal and the diurnal. Through over a dozen new 16 mm film projections we are invited to explore the latest toils in a long-lasting inquiry into analogue means and analogue concepts. A journey towards an eco-friendly estrangement from the extractivist rural landscape.

For this venture, the Portuguese artist suggests a distinctive approach to engaging with his craft, moulding the instances of aesthetic contemplation and anchoring them to the circadian cadence of the metropolis. It is solely under the fading rays of the city that never sleeps that the 16 mm projections come alive, revealing the radiant entities that inhabit them. It is, if you will, an exhibition for night owls, creatures of the dark and vespertine folk.

While one might liken *Animal Farm* to Orwell's fairy tale, Gusmão concurrently unfurls a structuralist conundrum: the spectral nature of the cinematographic medium, pointing us towards a "weirding" phenomenology; a *hauntology* of sorts – the study of the nature of what lies between being and non-being among domesticated and wild ranch critters – a vicarious ontology!

Within *Animal Farm*, Gusmão submerges us into his idiosyncratic world of para-historical, para-scientific and para-philosophical exploits and opinions, intricately interwoven within each celluloid strip.

In the rooms lit by the nocturnal skyline of the financial district, one might notice (or not) the mute crowing of a *Rooster at dawn* that signals the beginning of yet another day; a *Ghost tape* that echoes the sounds of its own demise; a squadron of ducks waltzing through a still life titled *Landscape with Boat and River*; *Half a horse*; a humble estate devoted to the exploitation of the sun, that is, a *Solar farm*; *Fermented Foam*, an enigmatic goo reminiscent of a dairy product, flanked by *Flat cows make nice Yogurt*, a vivid account of genetically modified bovines with spongiform encephalopathy – feral!; a collection of purgatory *Bedrooms*; yours truly gazing with nostalgia at *My Uncle's Castle*, once my grandfather's and now my cousin's cottage, immersed in a *mise en abyme* of resentful inheritance and birthright; *Day for night*, a motion picture salute to Magritte's *The Empire of Light*; a tarragon *Mustard piece* imbued with scatological overtones; a *Sunflower at dusk* swept away by a nuclear storm; *The wondrous pumpkin farm*; *Mozart's piss stone*, the menhir once marked by Amadeus himself with the gasoline of a stone-age spacecraft; science is fiction!

And, so, the term coined by Derrida whilst delivering a lecture entitled "The Animal that Therefore I Am" reverberates once more: zooepoetics!

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Forward, comrades! Long live the windmill!
Long live *Animal Farm*! **George Orwell**

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New York.*



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INFORMATION

Title: ***Animal Farm***

Artist: **João Maria Gusmão**

Curator/projectionist: **Marco Bene**

Venue: **99 Canal**
99 Canal Street, 6th Floor,
New York, NY 10002, USA

Dates: **2 February–3 March 2024**
Tuesday to Sunday | 4:00–10:00 pm

Or by appointment:
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Opening:
2 February 2024 • 4:00 pm–12:00
neither *ante* nor *post meridiem*

Press visit:
1 February 2024 • 4:00–10:00 pm

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Galeria Zé dos Bois (ZDB), Lisbon

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99 Canal, New York.