



MALA DAS UTOPIAS Pedro Portugal

The first presentation within the *Departamento de Estudo das Bibliotecas* is by the artist Pedro Portugal, with the work *Mala das Utopias* (2017–2025). It is an installation composed of books selected from his personal library, stored in a business suitcase and accompanied by an index. The piece inaugurates the Departamento's new cycle and therefore takes on a distinctly personal and deliberately affective tone. The installation is presented in a deconstructed form, allowing for direct consultation of all the volumes – a format never attempted before. Since its conception, the work has been repeatedly altered through new additions, re-editions, and ongoing research, inevitably rendering it a work that is perpetually unfinished.

The *Departamento's* concept arose precisely from this curiosity: that many artists maintain libraries with singular interests, rare or eccentric collections, whose organisation and arrangement provoke curatorial fascination. *Mala das Utopias* functions as an almost literal introduction to the project, both through its obvious connection to books and the idea of the library, here approached through a thematic categorisation (utopias), and through its intimate dimension: the suitcase belongs to the artist's daughter, Francisca, to whom it was entrusted in a special context.

Upon reaching adulthood, Francisca received from Pedro Portugal a veritable survival kit: a fully equipped toolbox, an arsenal of adhesive tapes (the artist's enduring obsession), and finally, the *Mala das Utopias*. A symbolic gesture encouraging her to think freely and progressively – and, needless to say, to trust that in the last resort, tape will always suffice.

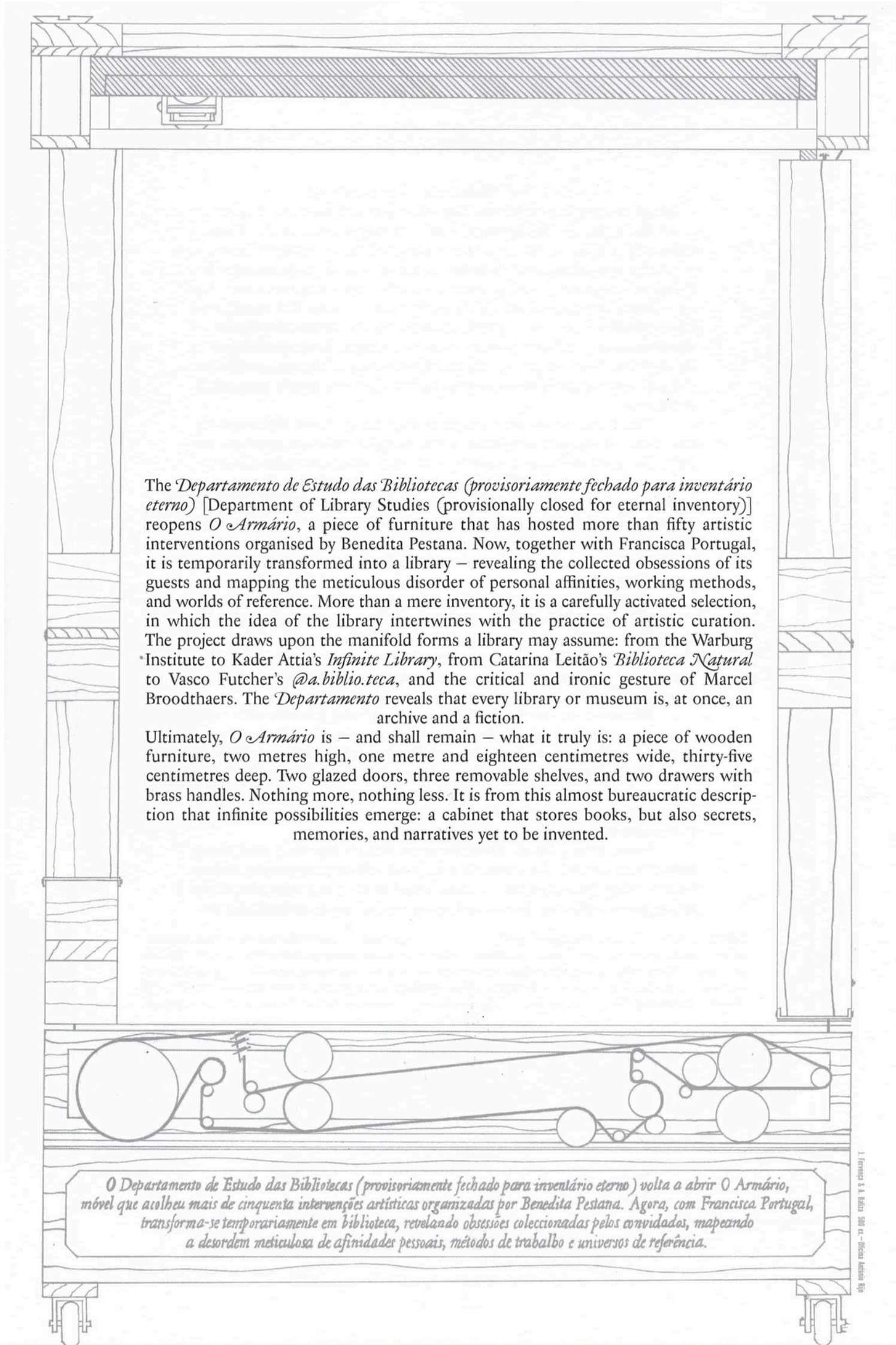
The work springs from a fantasy of imagining societies with rules, architectures and needs distinct from the present – a divergent and eccentric inclination, mirrored in his fascination with figures such as Louis XIV or Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The video *Futurpolis* (2018), also on display, is another example: “a journey through all the cities invented for science-fiction films”, in the artist's words, and a speculative illustration of some of the volumes shown.

From Henry Ford's *Fordlândia* to Plato's *Republic* and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, more than fifty titles line these portable shelves. Together they form a utopian archive which is at once a reflection of the artist's personal library and a meditation on the very nature of utopias.

PEDRO PORTUGAL (1963, Castelo Branco)

A specialist in visual information, painter, sculptor, watercolourist, performer, writer, politician, thinker, farmer, consultant, professor, researcher, designer, lecturer and curator. Co-founder of the artistic movements Homeostética, Ases da Paleta, Etno-Estética, Explicadismo, Pandemos, Zuturismo, Arthomem and KWZero. He completed a doctorate on his own artistic work: *The Art That Is – The Cause of Things That Are Art*. He lives in the mountains of the Serra da Estrela with his wife and son.

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDO DAS BIBLIOTECAS  
PROVISORIAMENTE FECHADO PARA INVENTARIO INTERNO



The *Departamento de Estudo das Bibliotecas* (*provisoriamente fechado para inventário eterno*) [Department of Library Studies (*provisionally closed for eternal inventory*)] reopens *O Armário*, a piece of furniture that has hosted more than fifty artistic interventions organised by Benedita Pestana. Now, together with Francisca Portugal, it is temporarily transformed into a library – revealing the collected obsessions of its guests and mapping the meticulous disorder of personal affinities, working methods, and worlds of reference. More than a mere inventory, it is a carefully activated selection, in which the idea of the library intertwines with the practice of artistic curation. The project draws upon the manifold forms a library may assume: from the Warburg Institute to Kader Attia's *Infinite Library*, from Catarina Leitão's *Biblioteca Natural* to Vasco Futchter's *@a.biblio.teca*, and the critical and ironic gesture of Marcel Broodthaers. The *Departamento* reveals that every library or museum is, at once, an archive and a fiction.

Ultimately, *O Armário* is – and shall remain – what it truly is: a piece of wooden furniture, two metres high, one metre and eighteen centimetres wide, thirty-five centimetres deep. Two glazed doors, three removable shelves, and two drawers with brass handles. Nothing more, nothing less. It is from this almost bureaucratic description that infinite possibilities emerge: a cabinet that stores books, but also secrets, memories, and narratives yet to be invented.

*O Departamento de Estudo das Bibliotecas (provisoriamente fechado para inventário eterno) volta a abrir O Armário, móvel que acolheu mais de cinquenta intervenções artísticas organizadas por Benedita Pestana. Agora, com Francisca Portugal, transforma-se temporariamente em biblioteca, revelando obsessões colecionadas pelos convidados, mapeando a desordem meticulosa de afinidades pessoais, métodos de trabalho e universos de referência.*