Tacet, 2014
single channel HD video, colour, sound, 7’40”
variable dimensions
Untitled (LIB), 2012
inkjet print on lustre paper
set of 12, installation dimensions variable
Untitled (Cactuses), 2011
2 turntables, pre-amplified speakers, mixer, 2 dubplates containing interpretations of the song “Lilac Wine” (written by James Shelton, in 1950) by Nina Simone, in 1966, and by Jeff Buckley, in 1994
40 × 170 × 200 cm
Box sized DIE featuring [...], 2007–14
(Unfathomable Ruination, London, 2014)
Iron, acoustic isolation materials
183 × 183 × 183 cm

Performances with variable and unknown duration:
Unfathomable Ruination, London, 2014
Holocausto Canibal, Porto, 2013–14
Social Butcher, Aalst, 2012–13
No Return, Paris, 2011
Konkhra, Copenhagen, 2010
Vidres A La Sang, Barcelona, 2010
Graal, Bordeaux, 2010
Darkmoon, Basel, 2008
Sacred Sin, Lisbon 2007–08
Untitled Version (I See a Darkness) original video soundtrack, 2007
vinyl record, solid silver nail
1'340" 45 RPM
Catriona Shaw Sings “Baldessari sings LeWitt” re-edit, "Like a Virgin” extended version original video soundtrack, 2003
vinyl record, solid silver nail
13'40" 45 RPM
exhibition version, 2013
customised plinth with turntable, amplifier and headphones
80 x 46 x 46 cm

Instrumental Version Original video soundtrack, 2003
vinyl record, solid silver nail
6'36" 45 RPM
exhibition version, 2013
customised plinth with turntable, amplifier and headphones
80 x 46 x 46 cm

Untitled (n’en finit plus), 2010–11
original video soundtrack, 2010–11
vinyl record, solid silver nail
3'03" 45 RPM
exhibition version, 2013
customised plinth with turntable, amplifier and headphones
80 x 46 x 46 cm

Untitled (Original orchestrated ersatz light version)
original video soundtrack, 2010–11
vinyl record, solid silver nail
5'55" 45 RPM
exhibition version, 2013
customised plinth with turntable, amplifier and headphones
80 x 46 x 46 cm
“You can’t entirely control fire...”
João Onofre, Laurence Crane and Andrew Renton in conversation
LAURENCE CRANE Joao, your video Tacet (2014) is based on a startling performance of John Cage’s 4’33” by the pianist Joao Aboim. After my first viewing, once I had got over the shock of the extraordinary visual theatre that you create in the work, my thoughts turned to the sonic content. What first struck me was the gradual accumulation of sound created by the accelerating fire. It’s a crescendo building to a climax and, as such, it is a very un-4’33” experience! There are other sounds in the performance, of course, but as the fire accelerates then this obviously becomes the dominant sound. Another interesting thing about this is that the genesis of this dominant sound is outside the actual performance of the piece. The pianist sits down, opens the music, checks his watch and closes the piano lid; actions that traditionally indicate the start of 4’33”. But the dominant sound of the piece has already been set in motion by his striking of the match a few moments before his Cage performance starts...

JOAO ONOFRE Laurence, the pianist enters into the frame and prepares the piano with combustible liquid. Preparing the concert piano, as we normally understand it, is an action that is not revealed on stage by the performer. Cage made use of the ‘prepared piano’ technique, if you could call it so, although not with an element as unruly as fire.

In the video we hear different sounds: the pianist walking alongside the piano, the liquid being poured, the match striking; in sum, the preparation of the instrument before it is played. It is only when the performer begins the interpretation of 4’33” — by counting the time, closing the lid and assuming the pose of the classical pianist — only then does the composition actually start (very much in a Duchampian way of designating this or that as art).

The sound that you refer to as already ‘set in motion’ strikes me as similar to the sound of the concert hall or of the audience. It is sound that already precedes the score. This pre-existing sound is in some way what Cage refers to, and eloquently tries to capture, as the “non-existence of silence”. His axiom is something along the lines of: we cannot ever experience silence, because when we do, we will no longer be in the condition of experience — we will be dead.

The aural crescendo is due to the unstable and unpredictable nature of the burning flames, not only by sound, but primarily by the action of a man counting time, whilst facing a wall of fire.

ANDREW RENTON So is this still a work by John Cage, albeit framed by the particularities of Joao’s structured ‘meta-performance’? I suspect that it is, and that Cage would not have disapproved too much! But I wonder also how such a work comes about? So many of your pieces, Joao, seem to emerge from the juxtaposition of two distinct things, often for inappropriate reasons, that are then bound together into what we might loosely call an event. But in relation to Tacet, what comes first — is it an image? A desire to ‘cover’ or reclaim 4’33” as your own?

JO I’ve followed Cage’s score with a prepared grand piano, an instrument that he often composed for, but I’ve tried to push beyond the indeterminacy that he spoke, wrote and lectured about. 4’33” has a repressed aggression at its core — a deafening silence that is amplified in Tacet.
Cage always spoke about life as sound, that by hearing 4'33" you would have an experience of becoming/of feeling very much alive. In facet, what we see and hear is an amplification of this duration, with the pianist performing in extremity—facing a wall of fire. So my interest, as in previous works, resides in how to bring about time, as the subject of the moving image, through sound. And yes, I think 4'33" is a machine that is disseminated into culture by hearsay, verbal accounts and reproductions—sometimes a text(score) can reach so far as to enter the most interesting conceptual artwork—I thought I might have something to add with my film.

Pianists wanting to perform Cage’s prepared piano music in classical concert halls have for many years come up against a bit of a problem... Many venues write into their contract with the performer that the piano must not have any foreign object placed inside it, i.e. no preparations at all. I don’t think I’ve ever heard of a contract that prohibited setting fire to the inside of the piano but whosever idea it was, I suppose the fact that the ‘piano lid gesture’ involved closing the piano lid at the start of each of the three movements and opened it at the end of each movement... I am not sure whether it was Cage’s idea or Tudor’s idea to do this but it’s certainly a very po-tent visual symbol of the fact that the sounds that were going to be heard by the audience during the performance were not going to come from the piano... or at least not from the piano in the conventional way, i.e. by contact with the keyboard. But whosever idea it was, I suppose the fact that the ‘piano lid gesture’ involved a piano lid led to a possible general misconception that the piece was for piano. As for the ‘any duration’ idea, I’m not sure about that, I think I remember the same interview as Andrew remembers and I think Cage might just have been trying to find it again for years), where he playfully suggested that it didn’t need to be for a piano and — crucially — it didn’t need to be 4'33" long! What I love about that statement, even if it was off the cuff, is that it seems to strengthen the conceptual framework of the piece — that it can still exist, even without that sole formal construction. Really a conceptual space...
Promise of a sculpture

The man in the picture is a water diviner. He locates water buried deep underground, with particular skills.

This photograph together with this text stand for the ownership of this work of art and also the ownership of a promise. A promise of a sculpture.

This photograph entitles the owner to the future construction of an authentic Artist's fountain.

The owner of this work will choose a site, and will engage a water diviner in order to locate a source of water.

The sculpture will only be complete when the appropriate drilling and plumbing have been implemented, and once water flows from the ground, through the fountain designed for this location by the Artist.

The certificate of authenticity will then be issued.

This photograph in conjunction with this statement is the current form of this piece.

May 2012,

[Signature]
Over the years I have made pieces that perhaps connect with distinct spheres, distinct domains that reveal something other: I'm recalling for instance: Instrumental version from 2001, that consists of a video that records an interpretation of Kraftwerk's 'The Robots,' by a chamber choir where the choir sing all the electronic sounds; Untitled (I see a darkness), 2007 where two young boys, 9 and 11 years old interpret Johnny Cash's homonymous track on guitar and piano (the original version of this track was by Bonnie ‘Prince’ Billy (aka Will Oldham)); or more recently, Ghost, 2009-2012 a work in which I built an artificial island with realistic dimensions and a rare tropical palm tree that I floated in Lisbon’s Tagus river, journeying into the ocean. Some of my drawings also embody that process.

LC Was there something specific that set off this line of investigation in your work?

JO I see the cultural fabric, despite its apparent stability, as being always subject to (new) decoding and recoding operations that alter its physiognomy. I understand the cultural sphere not as a one-way street but as raw material that can be shaped — as a territory predisposed for re-inscription... Such is the case with my work Untitled (n’en finit plus), 2010–11, where a teenage girl sings Petula Clark’s 'La nuit n’en finit plus' in downtempo a cappella, inside a hole on the ground of a prairie at night — but this track is not an original song from Petula altogether. It that has been covered by numerous bands like the Searchers or the Ramones. The lyrics are Petula’s own but not the melody, which belongs to the well known track ‘Needles and Pins’.

LC Is it the aim to surprise yourself when you make these amalgamations of disparate elements? I presume that you will have a general idea as to how these elements coexist but — like any performance of 4’33" — the exact outcome cannot be completely predicted when you create the work. I think that’s an exciting situation... would you agree?

JO Well I can’t say that the aim is to surprise myself but I do agree that when you can’t predict the outcome completely, within the structure that you set up, you are creating other ways of looking at those elements together.

LC I was wondering — perhaps a little mischievously — about the predicted outcome of the fire in Tacet and, more specifically, the prediction of its speed. The pianist leaves the piano when the fire is getting uncomfortably close although 4’33" is over by this point, the full duration of the pieces has elapsed. Did you have a method for working out how fast the fire would spread and whether it would allow enough time for the Cage piece to be performed?

JO Not at all — the planning for this took a long, long time. But having said that, you can’t entirely control fire, can you Laurence?
Ghost, 2009-12
single channel HD video, with sound
14'04"
João Onofre
Lives and works in Lisbon

Education

Solo Exhibitions
2013
Kunstpalast Munich, Munich
Swedish Museum of Performing Arts, Stockholm
2014
Mallorquín Contemporary, London
Solar Galeria de Arte Cinematográfica, Vila do Conde, Portugal
Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, France
Neuer Kunstverein Wien, Vienna
Teatro Thalia, Lisbon

2012
National Museum of Contemporary Art – MNAC – Museu do Chiado, Lisbon
Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon
Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Galeria Franca Noero, Turin
Fundação Joan Miró, Barcelona

2011
Roma Roma Roma Gallery, Roma
Galeria Toni Tapiès, Barcelona
Galeria Franca Noero, Turin
Galeria Toni Tapiès, Barcelona
Ileana Tounta Gallery, Athens
Galeria Toni Tapiès, Barcelona
Center, New York City

2010
Ruination, Sculpture in the City 2014, Galeria Toni Tapiés, Barcelona
2009
Postscript: Writing After Conceptual Art, The Power Plant, Toronto
More than I dare to think about – Works with paper, Marlborough Contemporary, London
Habitat(s), Galeria da Biblioteca Almeida Garrett, Porto
Sob o signo de Amadou. Um século de arte, CAM-Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Workplace, Mead Gallery - Warwick Arts Center, Coventry
Benzine. Le Energie Della Tua Mente, Palazzo Re Enzo, La Triennale di Milano, Bologna and Milan
Itinerarios 2011-12, Fundación Ovaltine, Santander
Santander DEEP FEELINGS. From antiquity to now, Krans Kunsthuizen, Krams
The Age of Divinity, Platofarma Revolver, Lisbon
Watch that Sound, Network / centre for audio and visual art, Valence, France
Invisibles, Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Santiago de Compostela
Making of, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon
1989
Nothing will go wrong, Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Santiago de Compostela
Nothing will go wrong, Museu do Chiado – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon
Kunsthalle Wien, Project Space
Kunsthalle Wien, Wien
P.S.1 – MOMA Contemporary Art, New York City

2007
 jointly with the artists Atanasio Lima, João Onofre, Carlos Z. Veiga, José Vitor de Sá

2006
Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon

2005
Palais de Tokyo, Paris
Galeria Toni Tapiès, Barcelona

2004
Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Elvas, Elvas

2003
Arte Contemporânea de Elvas, Elvas
Arrivals and Departures, Malaga

2002
Produced by Grupo Ovaltine

2001
1–20 Gallery, New York City

Selected Group Exhibitions
2013
Batin Center, Santander
PUNK, sus rastros en la creacion contemporanea, CAZM, Madrid
KM Temporaeal, Berlin

2012
Fundação Eugénio Almeida, Evora

2011
Cultural Cultural, Oi, Rio de Janeiro
Box sized DIE featuring Unfathomable Ruination, Sculpture in the City 2014, Greenpoint Plaza, Brooklyn
Resonances, Le Mallon Particulière Art Center, Brussels
Video: Action, Language, A Window in Berlin, Berlin

2010
The Embodied Vision, Performance for the Camera, MNAC - Museu do Chiado, Lisbon
On Drawing II, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon
Works from the António Cachola Collection, MACE - Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Elvas, Elvas
Workplace, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
Chantiers d’Europe Lisbonne Paris, Théâtre de la Ville, Paris
Sincronia: Artistas portugueses na coleção de António Cachola, MEIAM, Badajoz
Postscript: Writing After Conceptual Art, The Power Plant, Toronto
More than I dare to think about – Works with paper, Marlborough Contemporary, London
Habitat(s), Galeria da Biblioteca Almeida Garrett, Porto
Sob o signo de Amadou. Um século de arte, CAM-Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Workplace, Mead Gallery - Warwick Arts Center, Coventry
Benzine. Le Energie Della Tua Mente, Palazzo Re Enzo, La Triennale di Milano, Bologna and Milan
Itinerarios 2011-12, Fundación Ovaltine, Santander
Santander DEEP FEELINGS. From antiquity to now, Krans Kunsthuizen, Krams
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Nothing will go wrong, Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Santiago de Compostela
Nothing will go wrong, Museu do Chiado – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon
Kunsthalle Wien, Project Space
Kunsthalle Wien, Wien
P.S.1 – MOMA Contemporary Art, New York City

2009
La Loma, Lima
Arrivals and Departures, Malaga
Mas de la Mora, Barcelona
Studio Museum, Harlem, New York
Vive la mort: Marc & Josep Gassolens, Fundación Sutilo, Barcelona

2008
Exposição #4, Espaço BE, Lisbon
Presque Rien III, Laure Genillard

2007
Youth of Today, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt

2006
Come come come into my world, Espace EDF Electra, Paris

2005
All to wall, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon

2004
Nothing will go wrong, Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Santiago de Compostela
Nothing will go wrong, Museu do Chiado – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon
Kunsthalle Wien, Project Space
Kunsthalle Wien, Wien
P.S.1 – MOMA Contemporary Art, Center, New York City

2003
jointly with the artists Atanasio Lima, João Onofre, Carlos Z. Veiga, José Vitor de Sá

2002
Produced by Grupo Ovaltine

2001
1–20 Gallery, New York City

The Half-Shut Door: Artist’s Soundtracks, SEB, London
The Last First Decade, Ellipse Foundation, Estoril
Stereo, Centro de Memória, Vila do Conde
All to wall, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art, Lisbon
Festival SOS 4.2, City Center, Murcia
Roads to whatever, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Super 8, Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica
Portuguese Representation at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia
Nothing will go wrong, Centro Galego Arte Contemporânea, Santiago de Compostela

2000
João Onofre, Galeria Toni Tapiès, Barcelona

1999
Visuais, Coimbra
2004
Rouge Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris
Video: An Art, a History 1965–2005
New Media Collection, Centre Pompidou, Taipai Fine Art Museum, Taipai
Retros and Figures na Paixagem da Coleção do Museu do Chiado, MNAC – MC, Lisbon
Territorio Oeste, Arte Português Contemporâneo, MACU – Museu de Arte Contemporâneo Uniao Fenosa, A Coruña
Open House, Ellipse Foundation Art Centre, Estoril
Stopover, Fri-Art Centre d’Art Contemporain, Fribourg
neo-con. Contemporary Returns to Conceptual Art, Apex Art and British School at Rome, Rome
... Dirty Words, Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon
2005
Tiempo de Vídeo 1965–2005: The New Media Collection of the Centre Pompidou, CaixaForum, Barcelona
Portugal Novo – Artists de hoje e amanha, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo
Héroes a todos, CentrePasqArt – Center for Contemporary Art of Biel, Biel
Del Zero al 2005, Fundacion Marcelino Botin, Santander
On leaving and arriving, G39 Center, Cardiff
Disséminations, Culturgest, Lisbon
Opponents, Paraplufabriek, Nijmegen
2004
Animas-Of Animals and Humans, Seedamm Kulturzentrum, Seedamm
Draw by Reality – Encapsulated in life, Wood Street Galleries/SPACE, Pittsburgh
Situation Comedy, Independent Curators International, New York
Ne me touche pas, Villa Vauban, Luxembourg
2003
Plunder – Culture as Material, DCA, Dundee
Images for society, Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun
La Caja Negra, Centro Atlântico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
Just Stand There, MIT List Visual Art Center, Cambridge MA

Awards
2011 Recipient of a Marcelino Botin Foundation grant, Fundación Marcelino Botin, Santander, Spain.
2011 Recipient of a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation grant, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal.
2001 Recipient of the União Latina Contemporary Art Award, União Latina, Lisbon, Portugal.
2000 Recipient of a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation grant, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal.
Recipient of a Instituto de Arte Contemporânea grant, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal.

Collections
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.
Centre Georges Pompidou-MNAM/CCI, Paris.
Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo.
Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Ministere de Culture, Paris.
Musac, León.
La Caixa, Barcelona.
MACS – Museu de Serralves, Porto.
Fundação Luso-Americana, Lisbon.
Eileen & Peter Norton Collection, Los Angeles.
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, CAM, Lisbon.
Museo Exteempoito e Iberamericano de Arte Contemporânea, Badajoz.
MACE – Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Elvas, Elvas.
GAM – Galeria D’Arte moderna e contemporanea, Turin.
Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea – Museu do Chiado, Lisbon.
Ministério da Cultura Portuguesa, Lisbon.
Fonds Regional d’art Contemporain, Corse.
Ellipse Foundation, Estoril.
The Weltkunst Foundation, Zurich.
Fundación/Colección Jumex, Mexico D.F.
Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin.

Anemic cinema, Sketch Gallery, London
Art Unlimited, Art Basel 33, Basel
Paris is burning, Entwistle Gallery, London
Interval, Vistamare Art Center, Pescara
Come Rally, Marco, Vigo & Artium, Victoria-Gasteiz
Strange Days, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
Fair Play – De Nouvelles Règles du Jeu, Fondation d’Art Contemporain Guelain, Les Mesnuls
Human Interest, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
Technology + Human Response, Sun Valley Centre for the Arts, Sun Valley
Slow Motion, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon
Video Art Programme, Sydney Biennial, Sydney
Art Statements, Art Basel 32, Basel
Video Zone, 1st International Video Art Biennial, Tel Aviv
Espelhos Negativos, Teatro do Campo Alegre, Porto
Waitage and Friendship, Mullerdechiara Gallery
Situation 0: Recent Portuguese Art, Yerba Buena Centre for the Arts, San Francisco
Antartica, Entwistle Gallery, London
La Biennale di Venezia, 49th International Exhibition of Art – Plateau of Humankind, Venice
Bierstein, César, Otmar, Sarmento, Sendas, Toscana, Cristina Guerra
Contemporary Art, Lisbon
Bida, Valencia Bienal, Valencia
União Latina Prize, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon
My Generation, Atlantis Gallery, London
New Releases, Gallery 4A – Asia – Australia Arts Center, Sidney
Opponents, Paraplufabriek, Nijmegen
Disseminations, Culturgest, Lisbon
Performing Bodies, Tate Modern, London
The Mnemosyne Project, CAPC, Poitier
Plano XX – Portuguese Contemporary Art, Intermedia Gallery
XXVI Bienal de Pontevedra, Pontevedra
Arritma, Mercado Ferreira Borges
1 Hate New York, Rove – Shoreditch
High St, London
Sweet & Low, Rove – Lispenard St., New York

2002
Video Art Programme, Sydney Biennial, Sydney
Art Statements, Art Basel 32, Basel
Video Zone, 1st International Video Art Biennial, Tel Aviv

2001
Recipient of the União Latina Contemporary Art Award, União Latina, Lisbon, Portugal.

2000
Recipient of a Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation grant, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal.
Recipient of an Instituto de Arte Contemporânea grant, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal.

2000
Recipiente do Fonds Régional d’art Contemporain, France.
Recipiente de un Instituto de Arte Contemporânea grant, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal.
Recipient of a Luso American Foundation grant, Fundação Luso-Americana, Lisbon.
Recipient of an Instituto de Arte Contemporânea grant, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal.
Recipient of an Instituto de Arte Contemporânea grant, Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, Lisbon, Portugal.