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ART & CULTURE

Antarctica – Out of Balance: Edward Longmire at Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência

👤 Margarida Alves

“Antarctica is the aridest and isolated continent in the world. Climate change is shrinking this fragile ecosystem – ever more rapidly. Unique photographs from the top of the world... on the world’s most important subject.” ¹

At the edges of the Earth, Edward Longmire witnesses the duality between the beauty of the place and a foretold future.

The photographer’s gaze starts in Antarctica and expands around the world, warning us of the immensity of a space whose fragility is reflected globally. After all, the Anthropocene manifests itself in ecosystems that reverberate biophysical changes on a planetary scale.² It is the disintegration process of a continent expressed in the visibility of the thaw.

The light falls on a white mantle, but its tessitura is broken. The image, therefore, shows floating fragments or ochre volumes of earth among the softness of blue.

On the other side of the hemisphere, in a mild, Atlantic climate, Antarctica is a distant continent with an inhospitable landscape. This physical distance separates us emotionally. Faced with the evidence of fragility, we are not moved. However, when we dive with our bodies into the place, the sense and the feeling become evident.

It is in the planet’s southernmost part that Longmire shows the borders of the largest water desert in the world. They call it the *land of ice*, but the artist records its vanishing. The photograph becomes the testimony of a nature that is doubly beautiful and tragic.

This dichotomy draws us in before the aesthetic dazzle of the images.

In *Antarctica – Out of Balance*, the exhibition is divided into six categories: *landscapes, manmade materials in landscapes, icebergs, sea ice, wildlife and the future*³. The photographs are followed by a combination of scientific facts and fragments of the artist’s travel journal. It is between the present time and what might be that Longmire shows us the urgency of global environmental awareness. However, instead of a paralysing and irreversible future, the artist gives us hope for humanity and offers us a wildlife that shines through the white and blue hues.

Edward Longmire’s Antarctica – Out of Balance is on show at Museu Nacional de História Natural e da Ciência until February 27.

References:

- 1 – Excerpt taken from: *EXPOSIÇÃO FOTOGRÁFICA DE EDWARD LONGMIRE*, available [here](#).
- 2 – Reference to the article *Antropoceno: os desafios essenciais de um debate científico*, available [here](#).
- 3 – Excerpt from an interview conducted with artist Edward Longmire on December 3, 2021.

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MARGARIDA ALVES

Margarida Alves (Lisbon, 1983). Artist, PhD student in Fine Arts (FBAUL). Researcher by the University of Lisbon. Degree in Sculpture (FBAUL, 2012), Master in Art and Glass Science (FCTUNL & FBAUL, 2015), Degree in Civil Engineering (FCTUNL, 2005). She is a resident artist in the collective Atelier Concorde. Collaborates with national and foreign artists. Her work has an interdisciplinary character and focuses on themes associated with origin, otherness, and historical, scientific and philosophical constructions of reality.



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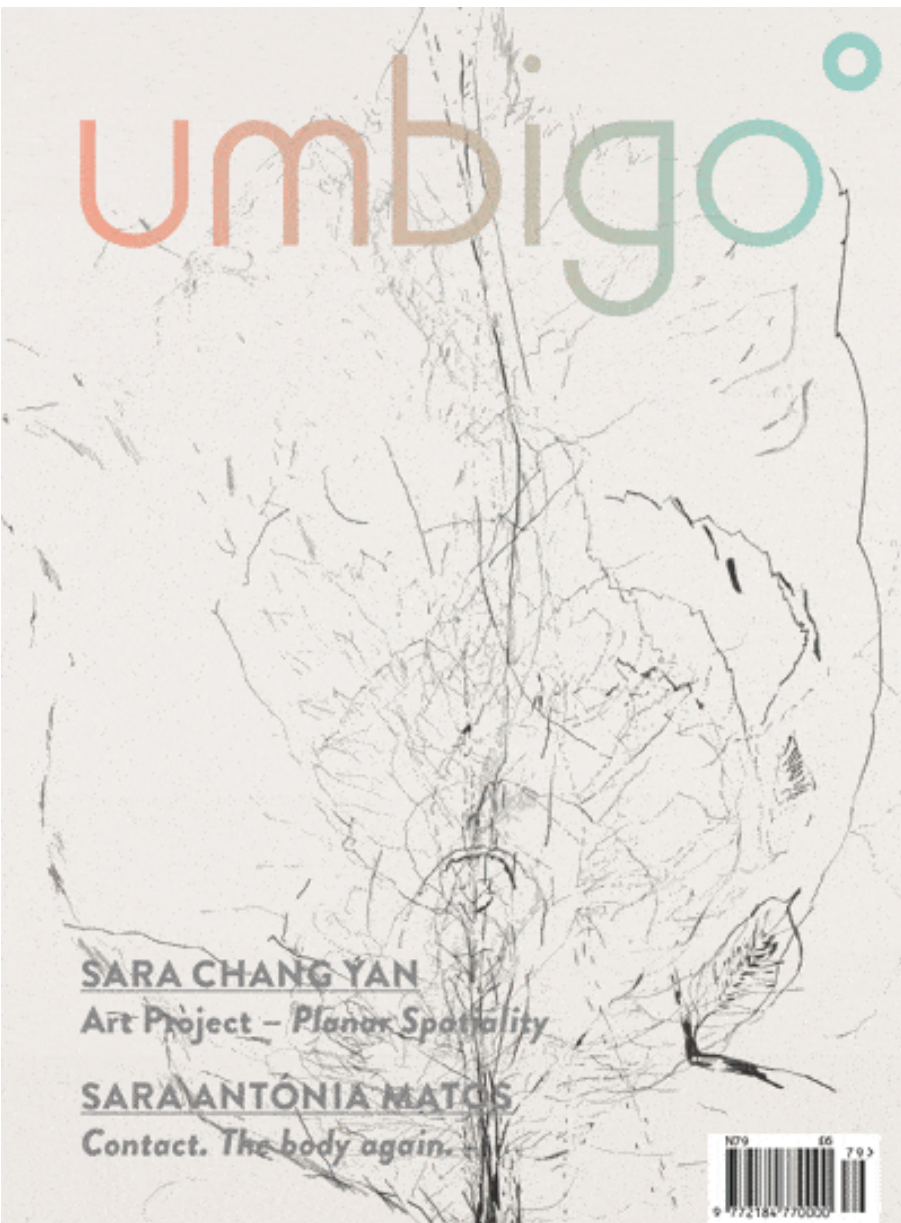
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