

## *Udgang*

Inês d'Orey

Curated by: Hugo Dinis

Opening 17th June 2021 at 5PM

17.06.2021 - 04.09.2021

The artist Inês d'Orey (1977, Porto) presents her new exhibition entitled *Udgang* at Galeria Presença, from June 17th to September 4th, 2021. Through a series of photographs taken in Copenhagen, Denmark, during her artistic residency at the Embassy of Portugal in September 2020, the artist reflects on the current situation and, more precisely, on cultural spaces, in a year marked by its closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

At such a particular moment of the history lived this last year, it will be impossible to remain indifferent to the stories that touched society and its different communities. One of these consequences was due to the fact that theaters, concert halls and cinemas had their doors closed indefinitely, until physical distance was no longer the rule in the fight against the SARS CoV-2 virus. With an attentive and precise look, the artist Inês d'Orey focused on the common signage to all these spaces, after their reopening, which indicates the exit - *udgang* in Danish -, but she also looked at the stairs, lost corners, closed curtains and empty seats. However, this focus seems to take two opposite paths. On the one hand, the word *udgang* can indicate the exit from the space to confinement, or the end of a certain time period. In this way, the movement is towards the enclosure, to the interior. On the other hand, *udgang* can also indicate the closure of the cultural space. And, in this sense, the movement is towards freedom, towards the outside. Well, it is in this dichotomy, between optimism and pessimism, that the images presented in this photographic project live. By staging the exit in a dubious and cloudy way, the artist stages a probably emotional story that touches us all. Stairs are possibilities for escape as well as for encounter. Curtains can either unveil or hide. Architectural corners can either stage or hide something that could be staged.

Considering the artistic path and the formal and conceptual languages that the artist has been investigating, namely, the idea of suspension of an apparent history, the uncertain narrative of images, or the solitude of the abandoned spaces, the *Udgang* series of works is revealed in a privileged moment to put into practice a fake realistic documentary or an unreal truthfully fiction. Not only because the story of the pandemic is very present and still unwritten, as the very own photographed spaces contain in themselves the suspension of their activities, even if they are already open, namely when they were photographed. In this way, it is possible to glimpse possible events and to feel the weight of the staged reality. It is, perhaps, in this contradiction that one can read and re-read the images presented in *Udgang*. As we understand the meaning of staging as the creation of a cunning instrument to deceive, it can be said that the photographs and the objects that show them are always devices that allow the staging

of a given story. But, allying this story to a given reality, which is also very close and very moving, one can be faced with images that reveal themselves in the twilight and that appear by hiding what is most visible, according to the forest paths trodden by Heidegger. The concealment is never total, otherwise they would not be visible, but it leaves a ray of light, a possible exit, which can reveal the impossibility of a perennial story.

Some photographs shown in Udgang are displayed in old X-ray light boxes or luminous signs. These devices, which make it possible to unveil the images through the light that emanates from their interior, contain within themselves the premises of revealing and concealing visible reality. If one considers that light is necessary to see corporeality, physical or practical premise about visibility, one can also consider its opposite. In a philosophical or theoretical premise, it is in the lack of light, or in the darkness, that the truth is revealed and reaches the sensitive bodies and, at the limit, we can see feelings and empathy among others.

Curtains and doors are closed, chairs and stages empty, the spaces with dust and dirt, are some of the elements photographed in this series. Through them, the persistence of a certain solitary experience becomes common and communitarian due to the same experience lived by everyone. If the physical distance, rather than the social one, imposed by sanitary rules, if the individual liberties offended by successive declared states of emergency, have become limiting and enclosing, then the point of view of the photographs presented here provides not only a resistance of bodies against the invaders, but above all the promising resilience of a future to come.

Hugo Dinis

## Biography

Inês d'Orey(1977) lives and works in Porto.

She undertook a degree in Photography at the London College of Printing (2002) and received a scholarship from the Portuguese Center of Photography between 1999 and 2002. In 2016 she attended an Artistic Residency at Carpe Diem Arte & Pesquisa, in Lisbon.

Inês won the Fnac New Talent prize in photography in 2007 and she published two books: "Mecanismo da troca" (2010) and "Porto interior" (2011). Most recently, she won the Moscow International Foto Awards (2019), with her latest series of Tokyo photos "Do not sit down". Amongst her latest exhibitions we can highlight her presence in "Sweet Calm or Domestic Violence?" (2020) at the Sines Art Center in Portugal and "Antecâmara" during Belgrade Photo Month (2021) at Balkan Bishop, in Belgrade, Serbia.

Besides her artistic practice, she works as a freelance photographer, for private clients and public institutions. She frequently publishes and exhibits her work in Portugal and abroad and she is represented in several private collections.