

May 16, 2018

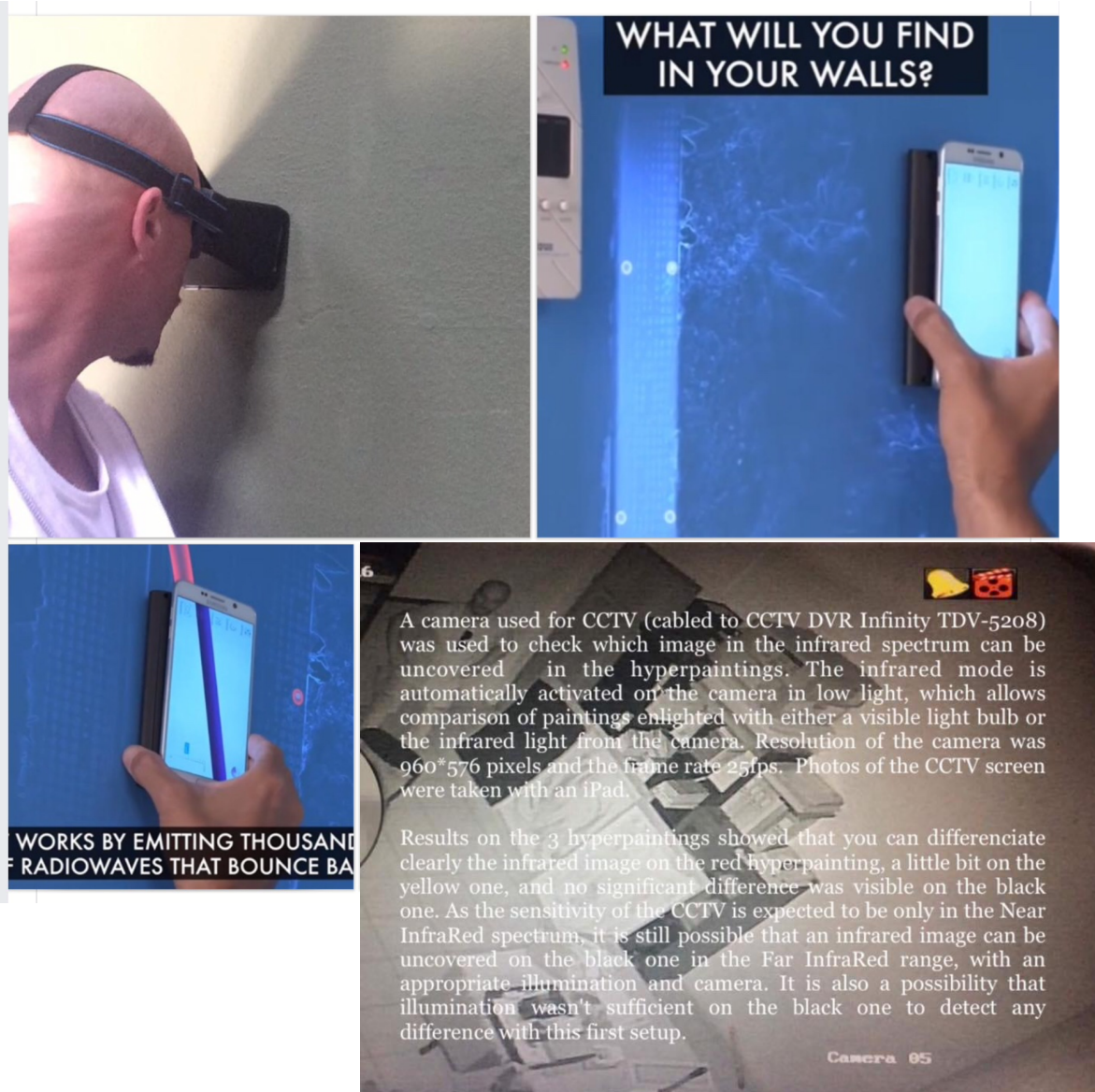


State Operation

Work by Ricardo Gritto / Text by Ana Sécio

“A work. Eight screens. A golden surface. Apparently, nothing more than that. However, far beyond that.”

State Operation follows a broader set of works inspired by the ancient technique of palimpsest, which was used repeatedly in the Middle Ages as a way of erasing old texts and producing new content on the same medium - papyrus or parchment -, and in the relationship this with another technique, often used in painting: staining. It is also born out of the fascination that Ricardo Gritto feels in the face of the iconoclastic movement, started in the Byzantine Empire in the 8th century, as well as by the investment that the artist undertakes in the exploration of the emerging transhumanist philosophy.



WHAT WILL YOU FIND
IN YOUR WALLS?

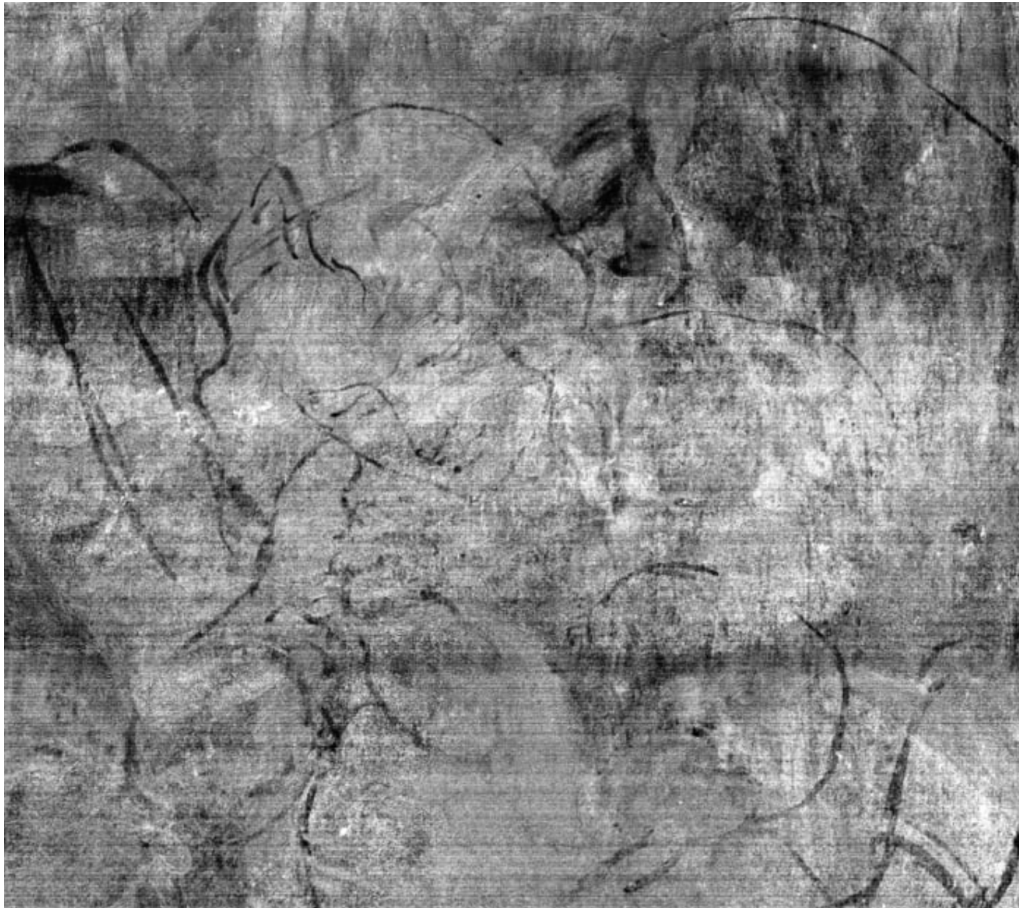
WORKS BY EMITTING THOUSANDS
OF RADIOWAVES THAT BOUNCE BACK

A camera used for CCTV (cabled to CCTV DVR Infinity TDV-5208) was used to check which image in the infrared spectrum can be uncovered in the hyperpaintings. The infrared mode is automatically activated on the camera in low light, which allows comparison of paintings enlightened with either a visible light bulb or the infrared light from the camera. Resolution of the camera was 960*576 pixels and the frame rate 25fps. Photos of the CCTV screen were taken with an iPad.

Results on the 3 hyperpaintings showed that you can differentiate clearly the infrared image on the red hyperpainting, a little bit on the yellow one, and no significant difference was visible on the black one. As the sensitivity of the CCTV is expected to be only in the Near InfraRed spectrum, it is still possible that an infrared image can be uncovered on the black one in the Far InfraRed range, with an appropriate illumination and camera. It is also a possibility that illumination wasn't sufficient on the black one to detect any difference with this first setup.

Camera 05

Each of the eight canvases that make up the work is entirely painted in gold. A feature that recalls the famous Black Square on a white background (1918), by Kasimir Malevich, in an operation that requires reflection on the mimicry that seems to be at the basis of Gritto's artistic creation. A mimesis close to the vision of Aristotle, who analyzed the concept in the face of the tragic, based on verisimilitude criteria, covered with eminently performance characteristics.



Each canvas contains two main layers: a dimension of the visible, which ends in the golden surface; and a hidden dimension, composed of texts inscribed in a first phase of the artistic production process.

The inscriptions, hidden by the ink that prevents them from being read at first sight, with the naked eye, tell stories of winners and losers, stories of Classical Antiquity, Imperial Rome and Lusitanian resistance to this strong power structure, as well as of a Lisbon of today and days gone by, when it was not yet.

These episodes contain elements capable of building bridges between different eras and motivating critical reflections on contemporary society. Aníbal, for example, was one of the names that was at the base of the research of the selected texts and transcribed for the screen. Name that, on the one hand, belonged to the main Carthaginian commander during the First Punic War, constitutes, on the other hand, the first name of the current President of the Portuguese Republic.

The elephant contains another of Gritto's references. An animal that was frequently used in warmongering contexts, as were the cases of the aforementioned Punic Wars, and which also served as inspiration for one of the greatest names in contemporary Portuguese literature, José Saramago, in the work *A Viagem do Elefante*. These are connections, from the past to the present, that the artist explores. It hides them, however, through a layer of golden paint (a color associated with the sun, abundance, wealth and power).

A gold that, observed by a more attentive retina, is, after all, a saffron shade commonly used in the painting of the traditional bars of Portuguese houses in some regions of the country. It is this technique of "erasing" or, rather, of covering up a first message, which can only be revealed using the extension of human senses through the use of high technology, which covers the work of an enigmatic nature. State operation, explored layer after layer - similar to the way it was built (following the basic principles of staining) -, constitutes, in itself, a meta-image, whose visible surface subliminally indicates the existence of a framework of richer and more significant elements in an incessant search for the spiritual dimension.

Text by Ana Sécio.

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