

EXHIBITION *opening soon***HS Projects presents: What separates us****Opening: 19 May 2016, 6:30-9.30pm****20 May 2016 - 2 Jul 2016**[Times and details](#) ▾**the embassy of brazil**[London, United Kingdom](#)[Location details](#) ▲**Address**

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HS Projects presents *What separates us*, a group exhibition by four Brazilian artists, Tonico Lemos Auad, Adriano Costa, Rodrigo Matheus and Matheus Rocha Pitta, at the Embassy of Brazil in London, from 20 May - 2 July 2016.

About

What separates us examines ideas of value systems and exchange mechanisms from cultural, social and economic perspectives. The exhibition explores ideas of international trade, travel and mobility, whilst examining the 'real value' of art and the system in which it is made and validated.

What separates us is located in the Sala Brasil, the former ticket hall for the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, the Titanic ship operator, now home to the Embassy of Brazil in London. The works enter into a dialogue with the Sala Brasil's historic ties with shipping and international trade, as well as how new emerging markets and decreasing trade restrictions have been instrumental to exchanges within the complex circuits of trade. The exhibition questions value systems, relationships with commodities, products and exchange mechanisms echoing transatlantic enterprises dating from the sixteenth century to current international interest in Brazil as a commercial partner. As part of this debate the exhibition examines the notion of art as a commodity, capable of being marketable, sellable and collectible.

Tonico Lemos Auad presents a sound installation, *Desafinado/Out of Tune*, 2003/2008, played on a three minutes and forty second loop which is being shown in the UK for the first time. Auad recorded a well-known blind Brazilian singer whistling the recognisable Brazilian ballad *Desafinado* by Joao Gilberto continuously for several hours. Auad observes the performer's inhaling becoming demonstrably more demanding, selecting a point where the tune begins to break down. The resulting sound is melodious and melancholic and immediately familiar to any Brazilian, but the pauses charge the empty spaces with a distinct longing. The artist was interested in mapping this emptiness through this work, although now the work has also become a reflective commentary on the current socio-economic situation in Brazil.

Adriano Costa is re-configuring *New Contemporaries / Novos Contemporâneos*, 2015, an installation first shown at the Modern Institute in Glasgow, in which he makes a humorous play on the commodification and distortion of indigenous cultural meaning. Ayahuasca, a hallucinogenic decoction of ritual and sacred value to various native people in the Amazon, has become popularised as a pseudo-spiritual, recreational drug. Costa's installation of white cotton t-shirts in a variety of fonts and paginations, displayed on clothing rails, echoes popular cultural merchandising and its commercial distribution. The work questions the boundaries between art and non-art and the distinction between the throwaway and the precious.

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Costa is also showing a sculpture titled after the sixth king of the First Babylonian Dynasty, *Hammurabi*, known for creating one of the earliest surviving codes of law in recorded history. Centering on the dialectics of modernity and tradition, *Hammurabi* is a marble work engraved with a joke, which is activated once the viewer stands over the piece and reads the inscription. Costa's avoidance of the pedestal and the frame highlights the vernacular aspect of the objects he uses and emphasises their deviation from art-historical tradition.

A new site-specific work commissioned for the exhibition is being shown by Rodrigo Matheus, made up of everyday objects seamlessly integrated into the track lighting system, tracing a thin border between fiction and functionality. The carefully selected and arranged objects create a multi-directional dialogue with the narrative of the ceiling's paintings that crosses history, architecture, art and design. In the displacement and re-organisation of the hanging objects, Matheus considers their inherent qualities and the social and economic circuits they are attached to.

Matheus Rocha Pitta will show his *Brazil Series* for the first time in the UK, a sequence of eight photographs of red earth scattered with raw meat taken in Brazil under the midday sun in 2013. The series is based on the story of 76 tons of boxed meat that was found unfit for human consumption and disposed of by the authorities in a ground fill site in Rio, and which was subsequently dug up and eaten by the local residents. The colour of dirt in Brasilia, Brazil's modernist planned capital, is famous for its redness and these photographs are an attempt to connect earth and flesh through colour, as well as trying to retrieve the archaic meaning of the word Brazil, which originally means 'place for embers'.

Rocha Pitta is also showing a new work commissioned for the exhibition that relates to his *Brazil Series*. *Stela*, created by pouring concrete onto found objects and newspaper cuttings laid into a shuttered mould, this hybrid of cast and collage is based on the common and inexpensive method of manufacturing grave markers for the poor. In order to prevent the poured concrete from sticking to the wooden mould, the mould is lined with newspaper to enable the slab to be easily turned out. The underside of each concrete gravestone is lined with newspaper and the joke is to give the dead something to read. Rocha Pitta inverts this joke literally and metaphorically by turning the slab over to reveal the work.

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Curators



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Exhibiting artists



Tonico Lemões
Auad
+



Adriano Costa
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Matheus Rocha
Pitta
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Rodrigo Matheus
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