

**João Simões**

b. 1971

*Lives and works in Lisbon and New York.*

[www.00351.org](http://www.00351.org)

*Studies in Architecture and Art in Lisbon, Milano and Paris followed by a Master Degree in Art, Architecture and Urban Culture at Centre Cultura Contemporanea Barcelona. Spain.*

*In 1996, invited by David Medalla, displays his work at A.R.C., Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris at Life Live exhibition, curated by Hans-Ulrich Obrist, and continues to show in San Francisco (Pond Gallery), New York (DCA Gallery; ISCP open studios; Goliath Art Space; Emily Harvey Foundation and White Box), Miami (Edge Zones), Mexico (Centro de Artes Salamanca), Berlin (Kunstlerhaus Bethanien and Parkhaus Treptow), Malmo (Malmo Kunsthalle), Brussels (Tagawa), London (London Art Biennale 2000 and 2002), Rome (Fondazione Adriano Olivetti), Shumen (II Biennial of Contemporary Art, Bulgaria) among other venues. In 1997 works with Michelangelo Pistoletto at Progetto Arte, in Wien, presented at Documenta X.*

*Between 2004 and 2005 is invited by IVM Institute pour la Ville en Mouvement, Paris, to a series of artist in residences to develop new work in Palermo, Rome, Copenhagen, Malmo and Brussels and also invited by the École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage Versailles, Arts Department, the Accademia di Belle Arte S. Giulia, Brescia and the Facoltà di Architettura di Milano as guest art professor.*

*In 2005 moves to New York, as a grantee from Calouste Gulbenkian and Luso American Foundations to ISCP studios and later to PointB Studios. Recent artist talks include Columbia University, Cornell University and White Box.*

*As director of Test, a new art center in Lisbon, Simões is structuring exhibition and publishing programs in collaboration with Ana Cardoso, Jutta Koether, Amy Granat, Emily Sundblad, Mai Abu Eldahab, Arfus Greenwood, Mathieu Copeland, Henry Flynt, Dexter Sinister, Stefan Tcherepnin, Jeff Perkins, Richard Aldrich, among others. (Test TOP 10 Art Forum, march 2009). Upcoming exhibitions at the Emily Harvey Foundation (May and December 2009), New York and Venezia, and in February 2010, in New York, with artist Fia Backstrom*



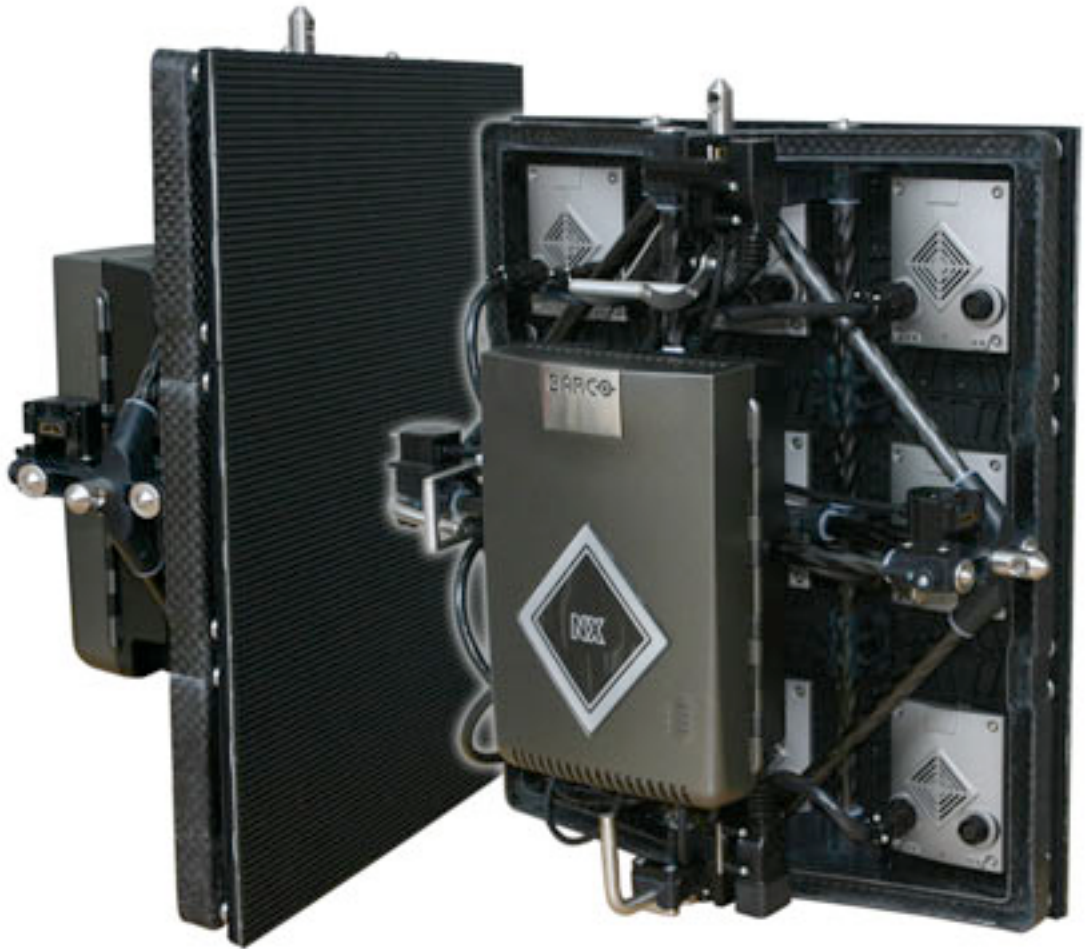
***(Blank) Black (during rewind), 2007***

***(Compressed) Full Black (during playback), 2006***

*(mpeg4 single-pass encoded, least quality compression mode of full black source)*

***(work been developed with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation art research grant)***

*Two works displayed in a non-synch relation in the same monitor and dvcam player. During the dvcam digital player playback mode (aprox 60 minutes) the monitor reveals the work on video 'Compressed Black' that explores the culture of compressing images and sound (data) and the natural but not effective consequence of losing data during the compression process. During the dvcam rewind mode (aprox. 3 minutes) the monitor reveals 'Black Back' that explores the moment when the digital reading process of data is not being operated and the monitor is full black (by the absence of info).*



***Full black (LED / LCD / DLP) 2006-2007***

*NX-4 Barco LED displays, HDV, no sound.*

***(work been developed with Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation art research grant)***

*LED displays LCD featuring DLP announcing the future.*

*The work explores the different technologies of image displaying by presenting in a LED technology surface (image presented) a video that presents a LCD technology featuring a DLP technology projector announcing the future.*

*On NX-4 Barco LED displays:*

*By far, the key factor that sets the NX-4 apart from all other LED display is immediately evident - even when the LED's are turned off. With the NX-4 Barco has developed a true black - full black - LED. in barco.com*



***Misplaced, 2005***

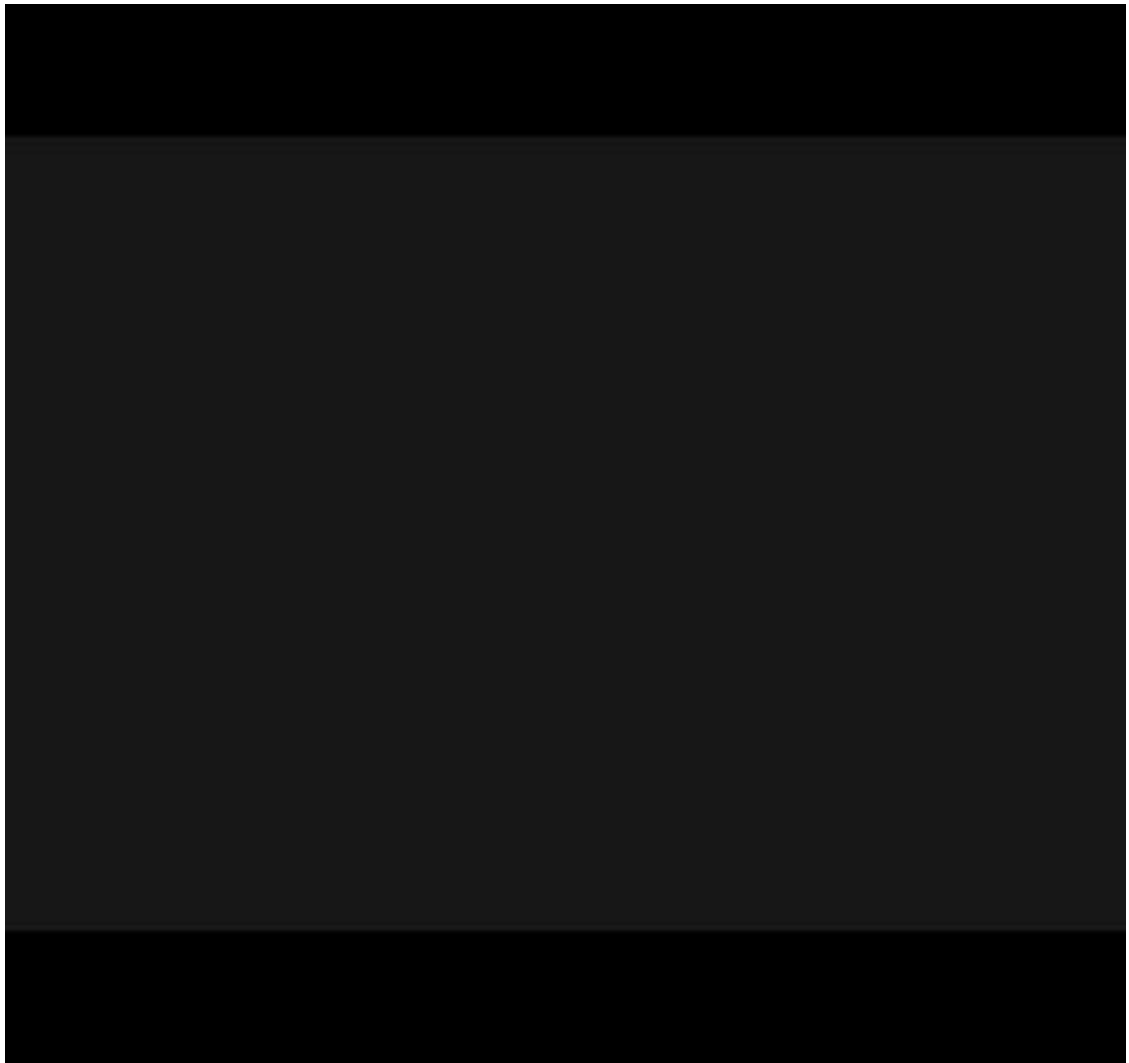
*A new work on display by misplacing the video work Blank Black.*

*By not displaying the video work Blank Black in ideal conditions the work Misplaced is created. In the case of the DCA gallery, in New York, the work is totally misplaced.*

*DCA gallery*

*525 west 22nd street, New York.*

*Milk, with Joao Simoes, Jasper Sebastian Sturup, Morten Schelde and Yoshiaki Kaihatsu. April 30th - June 4th 2005*



***Blank Black, 2005***

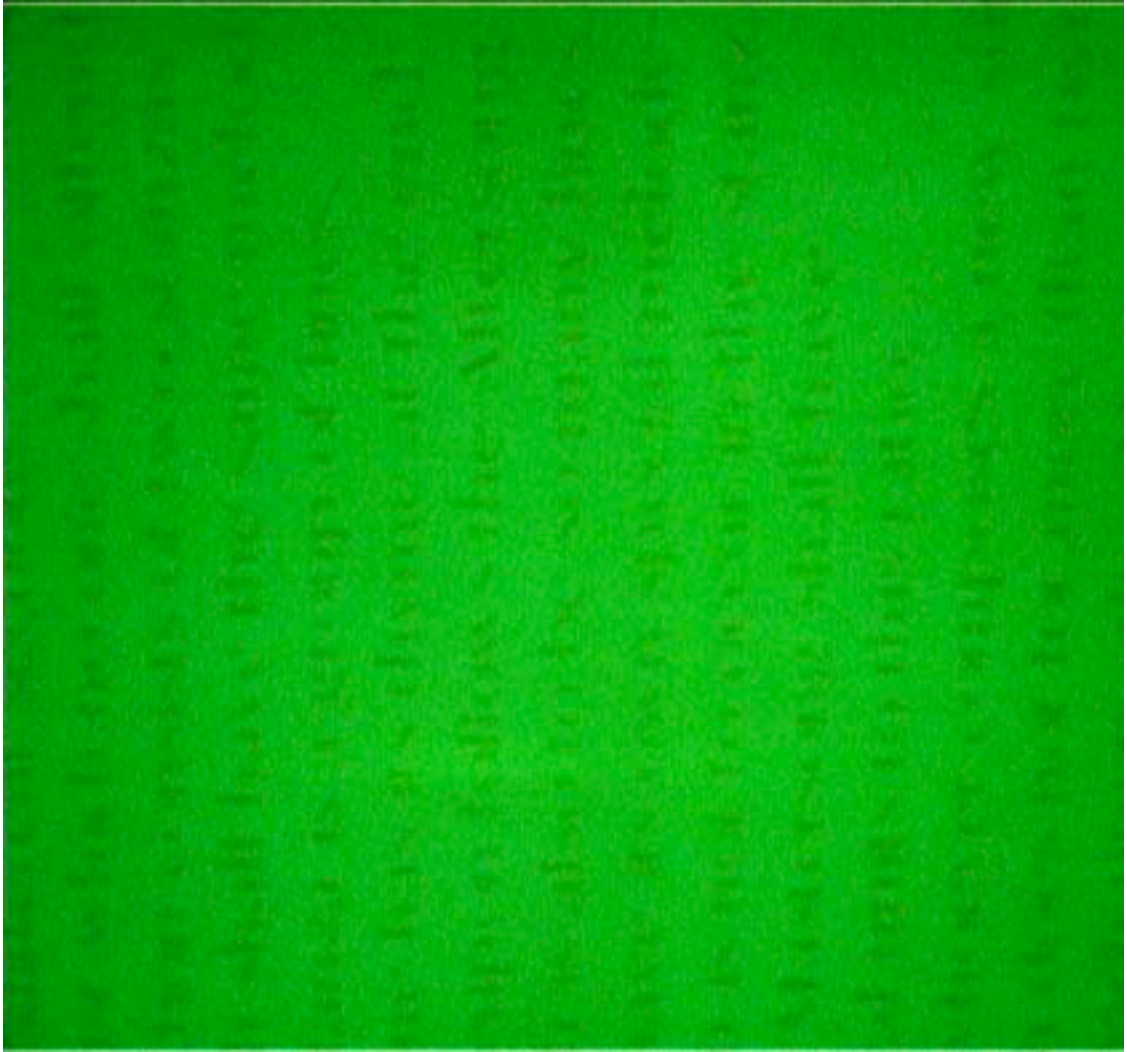
*35 mm film transferred to digital video and black digital video source. No sound.*

*The work Blank Black reveals the major challenge to a video projector; to display full black using light. By cross fading a physical black source, 35mm, with a digital black source different blacks are revealed by the projection.*

*DCA gallery*

*525 west 22nd street, New York.*

*Milk, with Joao Simoes, Jasper Sebastian Sturup, Morten Schelde and Yoshiaki Kaihatsu. April 30th - June 4th 2005.*



***10 Giugno-30 Ottobre 2001, 2002***

*Barco Cine 6 video projector with burned phosphor .*

*Video projection. No video input.*

*During the 49th Venice Biennale the artist Penalva presented his work 'R'.*

*One of the video projectors used in 'R' projected the same image during almost five months, from June 10th to October 30th, 2001. After tracking the video projector used by Penalva in Venice I found it one year later. My work presents the 'local burn-in' image of the phosphor in the video projector without any video input. The ghost image of 'R' was already burned in the lens.*

*Museu Nacional de História Natural, Lisboa.*

*November 2002*



***PAL, 2001***

*'The relation between art and technological development has always been a schizophrenic one ricocheting between affirmation and revulsion. the works in Air Portugal, a recent exhibition of digital video, attempted to imagine a third possibility: art the fetishizes digital media even as it gleefully disrupts their intended functions. (...) Joao Simoes intentionally transferred his video from european format PAL to american NTSC rendering its final form blitzed and unintelligible.'*

*Julian Myers, in Frieze magazine #65*

*Pond Gallery, San Francisco, USA.*

*November 2001.*



***NTSC, 2002***

*'Press record. A black screen won't say much to start with. Press play in a different country, and then the mute cube suddenly speaks: a field of black and a bar of buzzing multi-color. The title signals the process of work's creation. The artist recorded several seconds of blank video in New York using the NTSC system, and then played them back on a PAL system for an exhibition in Berlin. Because PAL has a wider video bandwidth than NTSC, it doesn't have enough information to fill the frame, and so fills screen-space with seemingly random color-distortion at the bottom of the screen.'* Julian Myers in Joao Simoes' NTSC

*Parkhaus Treptow, Berlin.*

*Hi8 video festival with Joao Simoes, Franck Scurti, Aida Ruilova, Adam Putman  
Ted Szczepanski, Derek Zeitel, Chloe Piene and Daragh Reeves.*





***On Display, 2004***

*On Display* was created by displaying the former video work *NTSC, 2002*, in a LCD video projection and in a CRT monitor in the same room simultaneously.

LCD projection using a Sony VPL-VW11HT, CRT monitor using a Sony Triniton 14'.  
Video signal output (image presented) using a single Phillips DVDR1000.

*'Simoès invites us once more to reflect on of the central problems of contemporary art: to display. The scandal of the same is not the same. The materials which one works with (monitor) and the materials in which one shows (video projection/screen) reveals different images. That is the scandal of seeing that the artist's work is conformed to the machines.'* by Paulo Jose Miranda

*Museu Nacional de História Natural, Lisboa.*

*June 2004*

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*A second to none, 2005*

*A un-fast-forwardable copyright warning message exists in any domestic DVD. Those copyright warning messages contains no reference to the message itself regarding copyrights. My proposal is to copyright the copyright warning message as a movie, not as a text, and therefore to enable the possibility to fast-forward the message and to have legal rights of the message.*

*'The artist's reserved rights transfer and sale agreement' will be signed by the artist and the buyer of A second to none. The agreement as been draft in 1971 by New York lawyer Bob Projansky after Seth Siegelau's discussions and correspondence with over 500 artists, dealers, lawyers, museum people, critics and other concerned people involved in the day-to-day workings of the international art world.*

*ISCP, International Studio and Curatorial Program, New York.*

*Open Studios exhibition, may 2005*

*323 west 39th street, New York, NYC.*



***Sound Demo #3, 2005 Goliath, Brooklyn, New York.***

***Sound Demo #2, 2004 Tagawa, Brussels.***

***Sound Demo #1, 2004 Malmö Kunsthall, Malmö.***

*MiniDisc with a blank disc in stand-by rec. mode. With Rob Mazurek in trumpet.*

*Originally developed to be a gallery sound work, the concert version uses a 'in-stand by rec. mode' MiniDisc. The inner sound of the machine waiting to record sound is revealed and amplified.*

*Also with Rob Mazurek (Chicago underground), Dominique Petigand, Andre Chini, &Gedeon, Lena, Yoshiaki Kaihatsu and Boris Beaucarne.*

**Joao Simoes' NTSC (2002)**

**by Julian Myers**

*Julian Myers is an Art critic, Musician, and Historian living in San Francisco. His writing has been published in Frieze, Documents, October, and in SFMOMA.*

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*Press record. A black screen won't say much to start with. Press play in a different country, and then the mute cube suddenly speaks: a field of black and a bar of buzzing multi-color. A dark field twitching with movement on a microscopic scale. And, across the bottom, trembling chroma, shivering electrons.*

*NTSC was made in 2002 by João Simões. Its title is an acronym borrowed from one of the three major color standards for television broadcast and video recording. The others are PAL and SECAM; indeed NTSC has a companion piece called PAL (2001). Will SECAM someday complete the trilogy? Each broadcast convention is dedicated to a particular region: NTSC is standard for North America and Japan, PAL works for most of Europe and Asia, and SECAM for France, Russia and their (former) dependencies.*

*The title signals the process of work's creation. The artist recorded several seconds of blank video in New York using the NTSC system, and then played them back on a PAL system for an exhibition in Berlin. Because PAL has a wider video bandwidth than NTSC, it doesn't have enough information to fill the frame, and so fills screen-space with seemingly random color-distortion at the bottom of the screen. Though the situation is constructed by Simões, what we see is essentially produced by PAL. We watch the code itself using its surplus bandwidth to generate a twitching chromatic bar; an appliance using its leisure time to paint nervous rainbows.*

*If a VCR could speak, what would it say? Perhaps it would show us snapshots of a hidden city, or read us letters from an impossible place. It might be sexy, domineering, angry, brusque, or bored. Perhaps its voice would be as old as the broadcast language it speaks. NTSC was born in 1949; it might speak in the voice of a man in his fifties. He would offer us a history of technology, its matte-black shell the index of economic power struggles across the 20th century.*

*It might show us low-resolution portraits of the 315 men of the National Television System Committee (NTSC) after which it was named, who argued for thirty-two months over subcarrier signals and field-sequential circuits to invent the standards for color television still in place today. That story would be triumphant, a tale of American ambition and innovation.*

*His story might, on the other hand, be regretful or tragic: a story of obsolescence and discord from the Cold War era. It would tell us about the power wrangling in the 1960's that created the improved PAL, but left the obsolete NTSC in state in North America. A story of two siblings that can't speak the same language.*

*NTSC could also tell us something of the man who made it, the story of an itinerant artist and a map of his travels. A list of borders he has crossed. It would show us an image of his passport, and the stubs of his airplane tickets. It would offer us a real-time recording from the window of a plane of the endless ocean between New York, where it was recorded, and Berlin, where it was played. This voice would talk to us of difficulties in translation, and the fortuitous accidents they create. It would dream in Esperanto, but during its waking hours it would fall in love with the beauty of Babylon: with fragmented languages, and the artistic possibilities inherent in mistranslation.*

*Simões' video brings into representation technological errors that would otherwise be invisible, and in doing so presses at the limits of the video medium. He does so in pursuit of the moments that the machine says something unscripted, blurts out something wrong. His images are often of technology under duress: voices trapped in circuits that don't want to speak but suddenly must. This is something he shares with the great innovators of early video art: people like Peter Campus, Steina and Woody Vasulka, and the early Gary Hill. Simões' work, though, is simpler in its gesture, closer in spirit to Marcel Duchamp, for whom a shift in context meant everything.*

*But simpler is the wrong word. NTSC is collapsed, frantic in its presentness: pixels vibrating with energy, or mute in anger. If a VCR could speak it might lose its temper. It might use the stunted speech spoken by Lynda Benglis in her 1973 video *Now*: "Now?" it would ask, "Now? Is it Now? Start Recording! Do you wish to direct me? Start Recording. Now? Now! MmmmmMMMM! NNNNNGH!"*

*Or perhaps its voice would be closer to the placid stutter of Alvin Lucier, speaking patiently into his *Electro-Voice* microphone an empty room in the autumn of 1980. It might sound vacant, shattered, almost haunted. It might say, slowly, "I am...sitting in a room...different from the one you are in now...I am recording..."*

*Julian Myers, 2004*

***On Matter: Three Works by João Simões***

***By Paulo José Miranda***

*Paulo José Miranda is a Portuguese writer and poet. He has a Graduate degree in philosophy from University of Lisbon. He has published three poetry books, four novels and one theater play. His first poetry book won the Teixeira de Pascoaes Prize in 1997 and his second novel won the first José Saramago Prize in 1999.*

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*On Matter : Three Works by João Simões*

*The works of João Simões remit us, not to a question about art and its limits, but rather to a question about the things that allow art. Before human ingeniousness there's what human ingeniousness transforms and the instruments through which it transforms.*

*But it isn't about showing a thing that ceases precisely to be a thing through human intervention, in the tradition of Duchamp, for example, in which a urinal transforms itself in art by being placed out of context. If what underlines this position, in Duchamp, is the conviction that we have to start seeing things in other ways, that everything can be something beyond itself and that the artist creates things themselves by conferring them a new meaning, that is, it is implicit the need to see more, in the work of Simões what's in stake is not a lack of giving new meaning to things, but rather a lack of seeing things themselves, because we see too little; seeing more is seeing less.*

*Consequently, these works show the cumbersome evidence that we don't know well the things we utilize, we don't see them well. And, independently of this, not only do we utilize them constantly but we also use them to produce works of art. When one looks at a projector what does one see? A thing that is used to show something else. And that other thing is not more important, that other thing is what is important. When one looks at a VCR what does one see? Again, a thing that is used for another thing, more important than itself. These things that are used to see other more important things, do not interest us truly unless as means to obtain what is important: that which they reveal.*

*But what they reveal is from the start inflated with meaning. It is as if, in painting, colors were less important than what they represent. Insisting on a comparison with painting: for Simões, independently of the use that one gives to the yellow color, it is necessary to understand that yellow. What is the yellow color? What is the blue color? What is color? The question, here, is not philosophical, but artistic. It is art that demands for its own body, not theory. It is not a question for art, but for the body of art, for its matters.*

*One does not ask «what is art? », but rather «what makes art?». What are the things, the matters, that is, that make art be art. It is not a question for things, but for the things that make art. It is not even a question about the criteria (the judgment that makes this art and that not art).*

*Because it is not a question about the after (that which will decide what is art), but a question about the before (that with which one makes art). And the most interesting thing in these works by Simões is to show us, that regardless of our definitions of art, it begins always with an enemy. I say enemy and not difficulty, because one can live well with more or less difficulties, but one cannot live well with an enemy.*

*And art begins with this not living well, with an enemy. This enemy does not belong to the realm of the quotidian (regardless of the artist having it or not), but to the realm of the spirit. That is, art begins with experiencing matter as the enemy.*

*Matter is not necessarily an enemy of life, it can even be the contrary, but not for art. And it's precisely this that the works of Simões show us. What we see is the enemy, only the enemy is shown to us. More: we feel, we understand in his works that without an enemy there doesn't even exist art. Thus, we could risk saying (avoiding any misunderstandings) that in the works of Simões we do not see art but why art.*

*We stand so utterly facing the evidence of the enemy, that is, we start to know that the origin of art, each time, is the enemy, every and each time it is matter thrust into the spirit. Or, in other terms, a war between matter and anti-matter. Returning to the yellow color, but a step ahead: it is not even the yellow that is being questioned here, but the application of the yellow. The yellow in a wall of a house, interior or exterior, the yellow of a chair or a table are not being questioned. But the yellow that is applied in a canvas, in painting. That yellow that is formed in part of a work by Mondrian, for example (or the white in the painting *White on White* by Malevich), is what is being questioned in the works of Simões. It is not the transformed color that matters, but the color that transforms. Better: the color that creates itself.*

*Canvas' colors are, in much of contemporary art, a projector or a VCR. These colors on the canvas are the ones that Simões questions in his works. Yellow does not constitute an artistic thing, it presents itself as an artistic thing; the projector does not show a thing, it presents itself as a thing. Yellow doesn't say: I am a sunflower; it says I am yellow. With Simões; the projector or the VCR are. That is, they aren't sheer means to show artistic sunflowers, but entities that present themselves as art or part of a work of art. It is evident the adherence of these works to abstractionism, in the same way that, for example, the works of Pedro Cabral Santo (artist from the same generation of Simões) adhere completely to figurative (narrative) art. On the other hand, contrarily to abstractionism, in Simões it is not the idea that is being questioned but the matter. Besides, and once again, similarly to Mondrian's work in painting. Matter is everything.*

*The matter is everything. The matter is everything, not by negating the rest, but by concentrating a point of view, an aesthetic preoccupation. Matter is everything, but everything on work, on this particular aesthetic preoccupation. There aren't any traces of contamination or subconscious ambitions of thesis constructions. There isn't a beyond to be deciphered. There isn't a deconstructive or constructive hermeneutic. The matter presents itself in its own materiality, that is, in its condition of appearing before us as the enemy, that is, as a thing that offers resistance. Matter and resistance are impossible to disassociate in these works of Simões. The instruments with which one works, with which works of art are presented appear before us, not as allies, but as enemies. A brush is not a thing that is used to make something else, but rather an unknown thing. Unknown because, as if in the absence of other reason, it is a thing about which one does not ask. That, about which one does not ask, is used.*

*And it's precisely the use that is refused by Simões. In the same way some writers center their work on the enquiry of what makes writing, that is, language, Simões centers these works on the enquiry of the things that today are part of most of contemporary art: VCR, projectors, and sound systems. Materials that, for him, are pre-determined things of a work of art; things that offer us resistance. That which comes before and is necessary to a work of art is a previous and unexceedable condition, a resistance, hence, that which or who opposes us. What is then the relationship that is established between the artist and its enemy?*



*The works of Simões show us that the most common attitude is complete unknowingness that is, contemporary art does not ask for that which conceives it; it does not ask for the things without which it wouldn't exist. And it is precisely in this unknowingness, in the revelation of this unknowingness, that the works of Simões attain an unavoidable pertinence. Without question, it is not necessary to enquire about language to write books, nor to enquire about projectors and VCRs to make works of contemporary art. But the presentation of a work that reveals us matter as an invisible material enemy, in the conception of a work, is a work that assumes a very particular place in contemporary art. One could say, the place of matter.*

*Paulo Jose Miranda, 2004*

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*The works that I'm referring to here are from the exhibitions in San Francisco (PAL, 2001), Berlin (NTSC, 2002), and of the Museu Nacional de Historia Natural/Sala Veadó, Lisbon ('10 giugno-30 ottobre 2001, 2002').*