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From the original: Júlio Alves and Hugo Barata, 24 February 2022 (video still).

THE ART OF WAR

João Pinharanda

War appears to be humankind's natural condition. Like art, in fact. Perhaps that is why their paths so often cross. According to Clausewitz, war is the continuation of politics by other means. Art can assume an auxiliary role in war, aestheticising it through its representations; but it can also expose its disasters, as Goya taught us before and above all others. Between that denunciation and today, humankind has continued to destroy itself and many artists have witnessed or anticipated this terrifying fate.

24 February 2022 by Júlio Alves and Hugo Barata is close to abstract: war is conjured by the frantic throbbing of the lights and the sounds of gunshot and explosions that are repeated to exhaustion against the darkened skies and city outlines. That decision does not denote a distancing from reality; it reveals how tired we are of the descriptive images that have invaded television news and social media for decades — to such an extent that the supposed humanitarian aims turn into abuse, cancelling out the effectiveness of each case. The date in the title of the work refers to the specific moment when Russia invaded Ukraine; and the images, like Goya's, will withstand time, because they denounce, with today's means and methods, the gratuitous violence of this and all other wars.

directly influenced by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is a constant reminder of the first days of the war and the images that both the media and the direct combatants in the conflict recorded for later global dissemination. As an attempt to ensure the sustained memory of the violation of international law and order, *24th February 2022* also reflects on the use of live footage based on bits collected from different sources: Youtube, Telegram, TV, etc. The outbreak of a conflict whose televising might only be compared to that of the Gulf War is today ubiquitously shown on various channels which, in addition to observing the unfolding of events in real time, record moments from it that can already be considered “historic”. Accordingly, and reflecting on the numbing voraciousness of the war’s broadcasting on various media, this artwork returns us constantly to these widespread images and amplifies the inexorable sensation of distress and nausea through the repetition and highlighting of its sound component. The link between past and present – not just as re-transmission but as repositioning – indicates a continual awakening to the collective importance of such events. The appropriated images are not presented as archives, in the documental sense; rather, they possess

JÚLIO ALVES (Lisbon, 1971) is a director whose work consists of 18 films divided between the fiction, documentary and experimental genres. His most prominent recent work includes *Diálogo de Sombras* [Dialogue of Shadows] (2021), *Arte de Morrer Longe* [The Art of Dying Faraway] (2020), *Chantal + Pedro* (2020) and *Sacavém* (2019). All of his films have had national and international premieres. He has also directed advertising films in different European markets. He has a PhD in Communication Sciences and an MA in Film Studies, and lectures at Universidade Lusófona on the BA courses on Film and Media Arts and Photography and the MA programme on Film Studies. He is also a member of the Centre of Research in Applied Communication, Culture and New Technologies (CICANT).

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a pictorial quality that expresses their state of potential transformation. In other words, the light spectrum created from the sequence of polyphonic screens that are synchronised one minute and out of phase the next accentuates the material character of these images, building a delimited realm, a kaleidoscopic landscape. This realm, essentially an area of observation, establishes itself as a monolithic structure that creates a parallel with a kind of remnant structure from a building or debris turned into a screen. Now, almost a year since the start of the conflict, past and present overlap in a testimony to our own condition – not just as spectators but also, and above all, as witnesses for the future.

Júlio Alves and Hugo Barata

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Synchronised HD video, 16 LCD monitors, colour, 4.1-5-channel surround sound, 5 mins 30 s, loop; 50 × 983 × 43.5 cm

Image editing: Vítor Carvalho

Sound editing: João Alves

HUGO BARATA (Lisbon, 1978) is a visual artist who has been exhibiting and working as an independent curator since 2000. He is a lecturer and cultural mediator, interweaving his work as an artist, curator and educator. He has a PhD in Media Art from Universidade Lusófona where he lectures on the BA courses on Communication Design and Applied Communication and the MA programmes on Visual Arts Education and Game Design and Playable Media. He also works as a researcher at the Centre of Research in Applied Communication, Culture and New Technologies (CICANT). His most notable recent projects comprise *Constellations I, II and III* (with Ana Rito, Museu Coleção Berardo, 2019-2021), *Nella Coborte di De Chirico* (with António Olaio, Colégio das Artes, 2021) and *Eating the Table* (with Luís Alegre, Colégio das Artes, 2022).

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