



TIAGO MADALENO No Pescoço do Cisne  
13.06 – 08.08.2026

**WITH TIME STUCK IN THE THROAT,  
OR THE LAST DEPARTURE**

**Laila Algaves Nuñez**

*The lake is always calm, that is true. Still, there are moments when it is especially motionless, so tacit that it silences the tiniest ruffle of feathers, so perfectly level that it repeats the world upside down, clear as a stone and all the rest that stands above the waterline. I know it will be one of those when I stretch my neck, still sleepy and languid, and immediately touch a dense emptiness filled with prophecy, the waters already holding their breath, as if to guess with us which of the worlds will yield first. What follows is always an important event — a boat. A man cutting, with elegance, that excessive meekness that leaves me pensive.*

*There are several of them. I still find myself surprised, from time to time, when a new face appears on the edge. They are never accompanied and, therefore, I rarely hear them let out any sound. When they do, they sing — some embarrassed by us, others with indifferent confidence. I have seen them emotional, inspired, tired, and distracted. I have seen them scrape, scratch, measure, do a lot, and do little with the things they bring. Some have looked at me in the eye. This was one of them.*

*He was one of the least elegant, I must confess. At first, I recognized him by the crude noise his vessel made as it bumped against the lake. It seemed to ask permission, awkwardly, as though it didn't know the space its own body occupied, as though each time were the first to experience its weight upon the water. Later, I would recognize him by the irregularity of his steps. Although he lacked grace, I liked what he composed with his tools. I followed his creations — other doubles of the world outside the water — with enthusiasm, always only until that damned object insinuated itself from his pocket. That's when he would stop, leaving his gesture unfinished, and return to land. I saw him perform the same ritual countless times — and I also found myself longing for the moment when he, no longer wearing that air of urgency, would finish what he was making.*

*It was then that I realized that the key to the matter was there, so obvious beneath my beak. Although he was keeping it close at hand, perhaps that round piece sounded absolutely deafening and annoying to him, just as it did to us. Maybe it would be enough to put an end to the insistent tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock that ordered him away — and he would then stay until the end. One bite. I was sure everything would be resolved. I approached, gently, and stretched myself in a single motion. I swallowed it.*

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Time got stuck in a swan's throat. The story — which must have once been the most efficient route between here and there<sup>1</sup>, before and after — choked, short-circuited, turned from a line into a point (or whatever the opposite of a line might be). Wedged between inside and outside (IN and OUT), it now describes at least two directions simultaneously. These are the kind of stories that matter and inform Tiago Madaleno's work — powerful chronicles in producing and overflowing (con)texts, that is, adept at addressing certain subjects *precisely while* speaking about something else altogether. In his works, one senses that each word or image contains a drift, a misalignment between form and meaning. They open fronts, gaps, cracks; they are smoke in fact and figure — a sign of the fire that burns (or that burned, or will burn) somewhere out of sight. Staying in the middle is their strength.

The swan bites the clock, which is now a foreign body. Will it digest it? Will it mix it with the internal rhythms of its guts until all the little pieces of glass are properly crushed? Will it live to see time return to the painter<sup>2</sup>? Or will it have managed to stop, once and for all, every departure and every arrival? Personally, I like to imagine time there, almost still, finally silent, at the

mercy of the fermentation of saliva or an involuntary spasm in the esophagus. And what if it doesn't go down its throat? What happens to origin if there is not an afterwards? Or to exile, if there was never the possibility of returning? What language to speak with the other, if one is no longer native to anything? Time, an intrusive organism, settles in the center of the body, leaving us only and nothing more than *lingering*, “*demorar*” in Portuguese. It is not a simple verb. We know it derives from dwelling, shelter, habitation – which somewhat hastily leads us to ideas of autonomy, sovereignty, unity and, not without reason, fixity. However (and because Madaleno also shares the gesture of breaking words), there are some subtleties to be uncovered in one of its minor meanings: the pre-Roman root *mor-*, which indicates a *collection*, or, merely, a *pile of stones*<sup>3</sup>. To dwell, therefore, reflects a process of gathering, a gesture that collects and keeps *what has been*, but which, by creating a place of *excess*, equally nourishes *what can be*.

All these relationships reside in Madaleno's exhibition – we are received into a home, although we do not know exactly whether it is ours or someone else's; whether as hosts or guests. In French, the word is one and the same: “*hôte*”. This will therefore remain an open question, designating positions in constant exchange or perhaps always juxtaposed. In this space, on the neck of that utterly white swan, time trembles between assimilation and expulsion; it sediments dirt, ritual, and identity. The sovereignty of the self in this house is an illusion (as Freud already told us), because neither the self nor the house can be complete and enclosed entities. They never manage to fully coincide with themselves. They exist in *lingering* – eternal *accumulation* and *abundance*.

They remake themselves on the threshold between the interior and the exterior, between two animals and a clock. Thus, even if time survives the throat and resumes its organizing duty, we will now know that returning home, or returning to oneself, implies understanding that both are places we have never been<sup>4</sup>.

- 1 I quote the author, lawyer, and political activist Dylan Saba, in his essay *Point of No Return* (2024).
- 2 I write this note last, after much deliberation on whether or not I should provide some proof of the text's veracity. Without any attachment to the reality of events, I concluded, however, that the reader may rejoice in knowing that this anecdote seems to have actually happened to the German painter Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948). One summer's day, in Grasmere, England, his pocket watch was eaten by a swan – which, under the guardianship of the British Crown, went unpunished and never accounted for the theft. Various moments in Schwitters' life have guided the works of Tiago Madaleno, such as in *A Garden at Night* (2020, RAMPA), *A Leaf in the Pocket* (2022, Estabelecimento Prisional do Porto, a commission from the Museum of Contemporary Art of Serralves), or *Smoke Room* (2023, Guerra Junqueiro Museum).
- 3 According to the historian Armando de Almeida Fernandes, in *Toponímia Portuguesa - Exame a Um Dicionário* (1999).
- 4 I refer directly to the phrase by Ursula K. Le Guin, in her novel *The Dispossessed*, translated and published by Edições Saida de Emergência: “[y]ou can go home again, [...] so long as you understand that home is a place where you have never been” (1975, p. 44)

Please don't touch the artworks.

TIAGO MADALENO Tiago Madaleno (Vila Nova de Gaia, 1992) In his artistic practice, he uses narrative speculation as a guiding principle for the creation of installations in which freedom and constraint, presence and absence coexist in a state of tension, within a hybrid approach that blends the media of drawing, painting and writing.

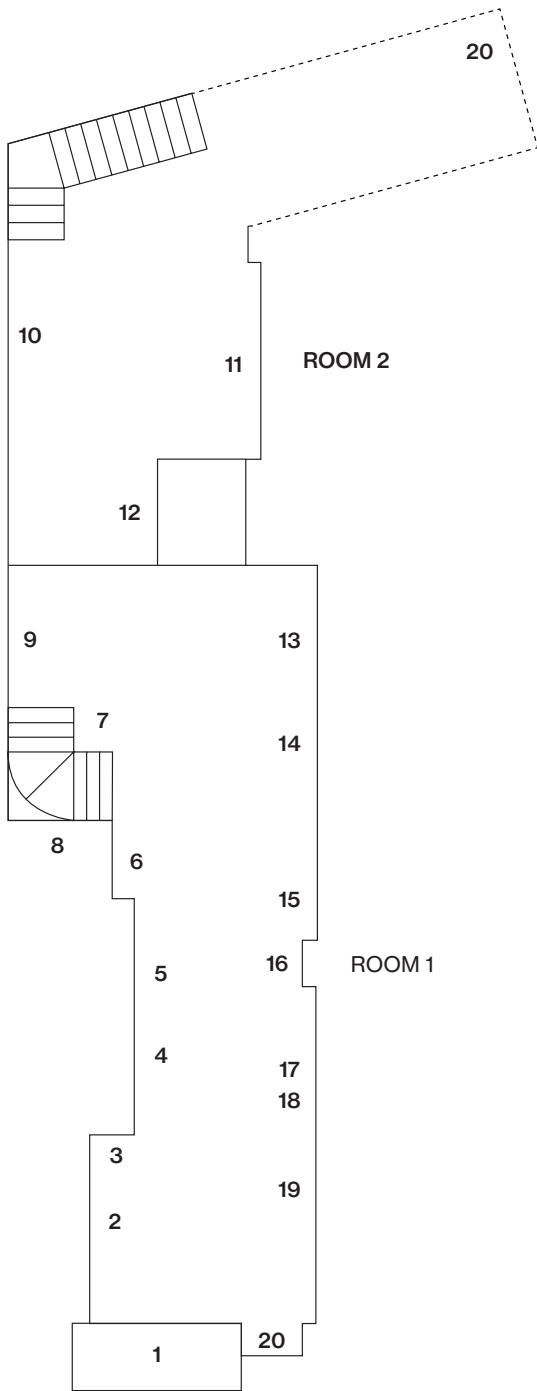
He has a Bachelor's (2014) and a Master's degree (2016) in Fine Arts from FBAUP, Porto, and has exhibited regularly since 2013. Special mention to the solo shows *Glossolalia* (2026) (in collaboration with Joana Patrão), curated by Nuno Crespo, School of Arts - UCP, Porto; *A Garden at Night* (2020), RAMPA, Porto, supported by Criatório 2019; and *Honeymoon* (2019), Appleton - Cultural Association, Lisbon; and the collective exhibitions *Lucid Reverie - Panorama of Portuguese Contemporary Art*, (2025), curated by Hiuwai Chu and Raphael Fonseca, Galeria Municipal do Porto, Porto; *Beyond Space and Time - On the Seventh Continent*, (2025), curated by António Olaio and Paulo Mendes, Colégio das Artes, Coimbra; *TheSpaceInYourHead* (2025), curated by Eduarda Neves, Galeria Dinamo, Porto.

His work has been supported and distinguished with several prizes and mentions, such as the NOVO BANCO Revelação award 2017, promoted by the Serralves Foundation.

His work is represented in several public and private collections, such as Contemporary Art Collection from the Portuguese Republic (CACE), MAAT - Fundação EDP, Culturgest - Caixa Geral de Depósitos, Porto City Council, among others.

+ info: [www.tiagomadaleno.com](http://www.tiagomadaleno.com)

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| 1  | <p><i>TICK TOCK</i>, 2026<br/>Rug, 110 x 161,5 cm</p>  | <p>(...) <i>The swans will be fantasies, almost shadows, in the juggling of curved fingers.</i><br/>(...) <i>Fingers which, until then, had grown unaccustomed to touch in order to surrender to dance. / The night will remain hidden beneath the whiteness of the feathers, made into unnecessary ambition</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 41 x 50,8 cm</p> |
| 2  | <p><i>Just the muffled sound of an unrestrained clock</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 41 x 50,8 cm</p>  | <p>Variable Dimensions</p>   |
| 3  | <p><i>Images so cruel, that they only allow to be glimpsed for a brief moment, before the mist covers them once more</i> 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 50,8 x 41 cm</p>  | <p>12 <i>From their petals will fall a black soot, a sort of inverted dew or ghostly manifestation of a nature still accustomed to ancient rituals</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 47 x 70 cm</p>   |
| 4  | <p><i>Here too, the furniture must be made silent, so that only the ticking of the clock lodged in the throat could be sensed</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 62 x 74 cm</p>  | <p>13 <i>During the bonfire season, the memory of heat will be the new law, the animals' roars will come from the creaking of wood stretching, and the house will no longer have a place for you</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 41 x 50,8 cm</p>   |
| 5  | <p><i>All houses are governed by principles of exclusion</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 63,5 x 51 cm</p>   | <p>14 <i>The visible breath</i>, 2026<br/>Rug, 140 x 200 cm</p>  |
| 6  | <p><i>Fingers themselves, also wrapped in white bandages, adorned with orthopaedic rings, as if pretending to be in a wedding ceremony, with all its vows and commitments</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 50,8 x 41 cm</p>  | <p>15 <i>The dogs' barks will have no owner once again, they will be the voice of universal suffering</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 44,3 x 59,5 cm</p>  |
| 7  | <p><i>The cup and the landscape</i>, 2026<br/>Rug, 91 x 290 cm</p>   | <p>16 <i>The suspended song of the flies will be swallowed up by a deluge of white, and in the reflection of its waters one will be able to read that the reckless joy of flight will have to wait</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 47 x 70 cm</p>   |
| 8  | <p><i>This crying will have to be wiped away with the same animalistic haste with which one rushes to a newborn baby</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 49,5 x 44,3 cm</p>   | <p>17 <i>With the same frenzy with which one pursues happiness in an insensitive world</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 41 x 50,8 cm</p>   |
| 9  | <p><i>From the walls will emerge, with increasing insistence, the rules, the regulations, the implied notations, the corrections, the little preferences, the time schedules that have always constituted the score of the space</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 62 x 74 cm</p>   | <p>18 <i>Without hesitation, with clenched, merciless teeth</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 50,8 x 41 cm</p>  |
| 10 | <p><i>A dim bulb</i>, 2026<br/>Shoe box, led, rug, 21,7 x 34 x 14 cm (shoe box), 108 x 204 cm (rug)</p>  | <p>19 <i>The flowers will rest upon their lost freshness with the mournful delight of a colourful bouquet</i>, 2026<br/>Smoke on wood prepared with acrylic paint, 50,8 x 41 cm</p>  |
| 11 | <p><i>There will be no more creatures under the rugs. (...) Perhaps new nests will form in the darkest corners of the house, where the darkness cannot reach with the same intensity. But not just yet. / Summer ended with the conviction that a first prize had been awarded by mistake. Silent and childish. (...) The desire for comfort hides behind a disciplined fervour.</i></p> | <p>20 <i>WELCOME</i>, 2026<br/>Rug – dyptich, 69 x 88 cm</p>   |



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