

# ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Maybe Museum is the world's only living museum, housing a growing collection of invaluable intangible artifacts from around the globe. Founded on principles of democratic expertise and spatial multiplicity, the Museum offers tourists and residents alike a new way of understanding a locality and its potential histories.

## SUPPORT US

The Maybe Museum is a non-profit organization, and we rely on the generous support of our Friends to develop and exhibit all of the work we do. In return, our Friends enjoy free entry to all Maybe Museum exhibitions, as well as exclusive access to the Members Rooms across the sites the Museum operates on.

Become a Friend today by completing the water exchange ritual on the steps of the Lady, or speak to any of our staff to find out more.



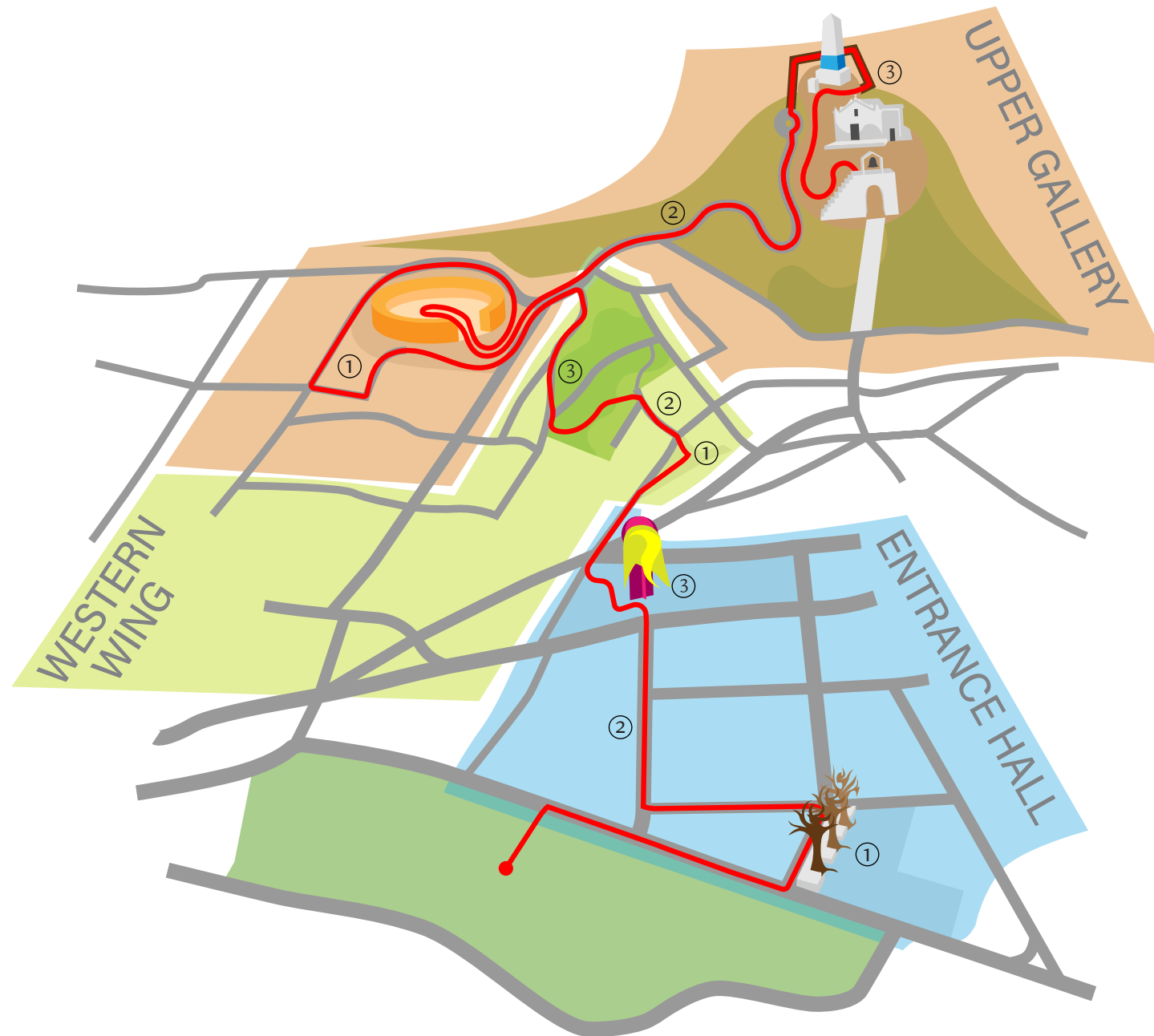
Digital Image by William Stupp, July 2017

*Aljustrel: from Mine to Mind* was made possible by:

Atalaia Artes Performativas  
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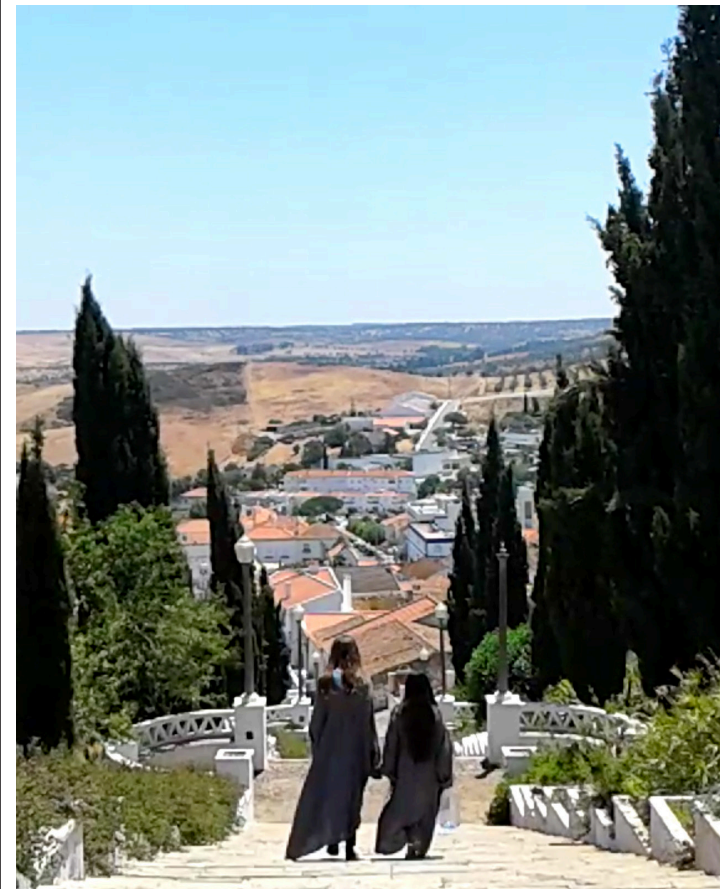
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# EXHIBITION MAP



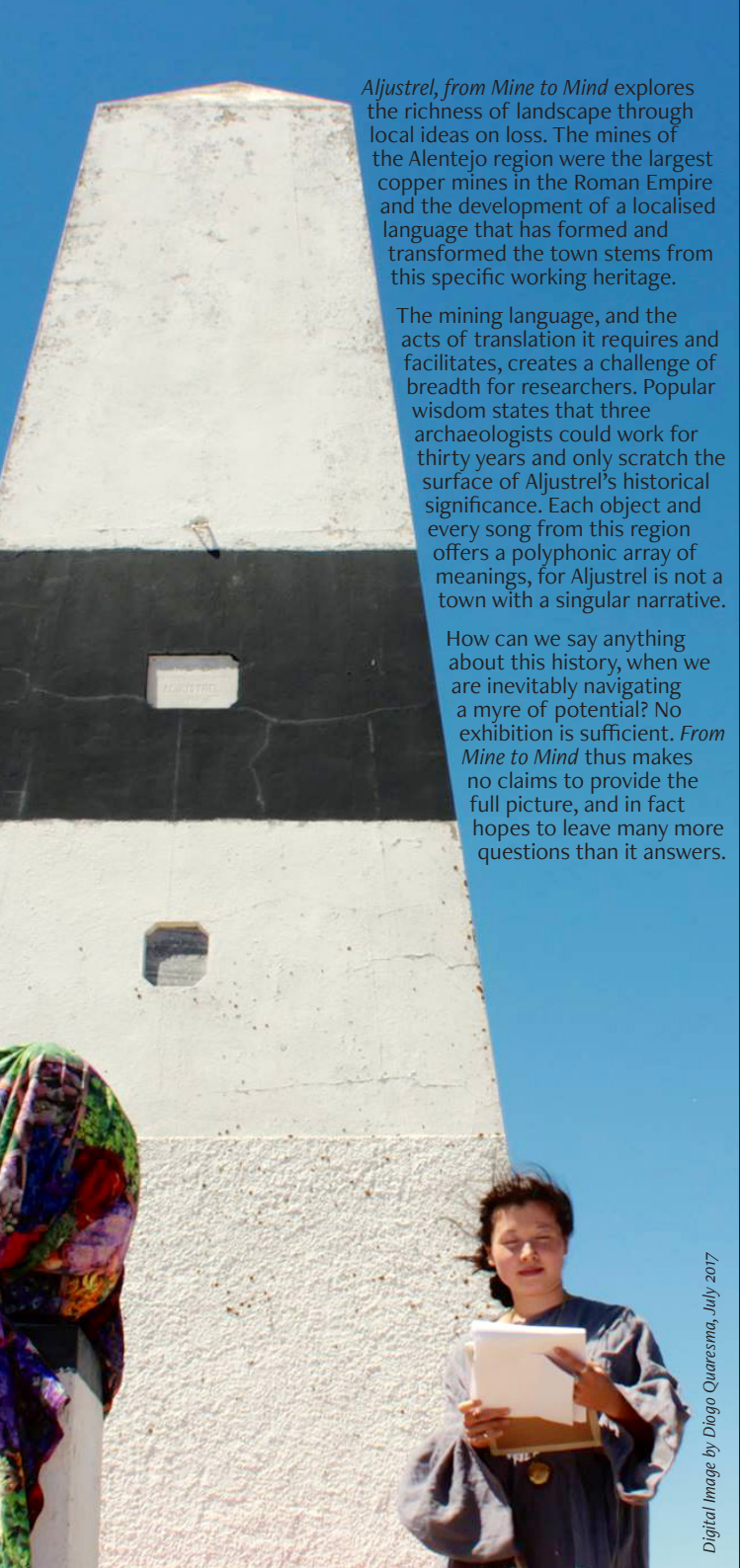
# THE MAYBE MUSEUM

## EXHIBITION GUIDE



## ALJUSTREL: From Mine to Mind





*Aljustrel, from Mine to Mind* explores the richness of landscape through local ideas on loss. The mines of the Alentejo region were the largest copper mines in the Roman Empire and the development of a localised language that has formed and transformed the town stems from this specific working heritage.

The mining language, and the acts of translation it requires and facilitates, creates a challenge of breadth for researchers. Popular wisdom states that three archaeologists could work for thirty years and only scratch the surface of Aljustrel's historical significance. Each object and every song from this region offers a polyphonic array of meanings, for Aljustrel is not a town with a singular narrative.

How can we say anything about this history, when we are inevitably navigating a myre of potential? No exhibition is sufficient. *From Mine to Mind* thus makes no claims to provide the full picture, and in fact hopes to leave many more questions than it answers.

Digital Image by Diogo Quaresma, July 2017

# ENTRANCE HALL LANGUAGE

**1. The faults of Messejano, Represa and Castelo**  
Messejano, Represa and Castelo are ethnographical, non-political figures, whose geological anomalies are of the utmost interest and worthwhile disclosing. Not tied to place as much as they are tied to direction, the faults of the three have led to the Atlantic Ocean, where the wind, weak or strong, still carries on its wings the scent of the Alentejo siblings.

**2. The Battle of the Languages**  
As in Almodovar, the inscriptions of the early Iberian belief system remain indecipherable until this day. Held within this tablet is a host of stories and poems, memories of strikes and the smell of sulphur, of constant struggles and brief moments of happiness. Akin to the two tablets found in the Museum of Aljustrel, experts are convinced that The Battle can shed vital light on the meaning of much, and continue to undertake attempts at translation.



An example of a Cante Al-etcetera, digital image by Vitor Alvas Brodas, July 2017

**3. The Cante Al-etcetera**  
The Cante Alentejano and its lesser known variants, the Cante Alegorico and the Cante Al-etcetera, all follow a similar structure that centers on verses as core carriers of meaning. With voices that entwine to create communal powerhouses of meaning, all forms of the Cante employ polyphony to tell stories that rise above their linguistic anchorings. The Cante Al-etcetera is the youngest of the three forms, and distinct as such due to its far greater integration of modern lifestyle and musical references. Unlike the other two forms, which use solely the human voice as an instrument, the Cante Al-etcetera employs rhythmic counterparts to allow for a slippage of emphasis between the verses and otherwise repetitive chorus.  
  
The Moda you are encountering in this room is one of the original Modas of the Al-etcetera form, and as such is specifically concerned with breaking away from the Alentejano and Alegorical traditions. Its counterpunal lyricism pays homage to the writings of Edward Said and brings them to bear on the otherwise superficially homogenous nature of the region. Simultaneously harking back to a North African heritage and forwards to a pan-European position, this Moda is typical of the Al-etcetera's ambiguous form.

# WESTERN WING LAND

**1. Biodegradable disappearance**  
Language is only sound in time, and all that remains of the natural is dust. A drawing dated 1922 in the Museum of Aljustrel offers the contemporary viewer a since destroyed Roman copper mine, of which no archaeological remains will be found. The acidic waters of the metal mines meant that tools had to be wooden to be of functional value, and as such our Museum can only offer an intangible utterance in the face of a disintegrating history.

Akin to the gradual disappearance of lovers and languages, wisdom too is lost. Water continues to drain away from the parched landscape, youth departs and the Cante Alentejano too risks becoming a gesture of preservation, a pebble smoothed by the ocean into roundness. Did the miners make their own lamps? Did the French rooster eat the Ervidel chickpea? What remains, remains.

**2. The Origin of the Portugese Present**  
When the records were destroyed, and the castles rebuilt into contemporary apartments atop the hills of Ourique, nobody would ever quite know. We lowered the exhibition boxes and all the plinths to allow the next generation to see what culture came of building, and we wept for the holes that may have been musical, but ultimately were merely decorative.

Tourists now flood the shores of the streets, and there are wolves without being in the mountains. So great is the Alentejo, so much abandoned land. The wind with the scent of Messejana carries too the whisper of a worry of a wonder, of remains that still hold power and can topple churches if they are not built around the correct rocks.

**3. Cork: a chronological history**  
The western wing's narrow climb soon opens to a triangular, expansive plain, where cork trees stand in lines. With bushy crowns and boughs like raised arms, it is as though the trees have pulled up their tops to flash us all. Withstanding the fires and ravages of time, these trees create a culture of superficial preservation, drawing water, tourists and wine to the region - but at what cost?

Just a tight metallic twist that sometimes sticks, a copper void and a cork stopgap. When the Obamas visited in 2010, Barack was presented with a cork tie, Michelle with a cork purse, and their dog with a cork collar.



Still from footage by Diogo Quaresma, July 2017

# UPPER GALLERY LOSS

**1. A flexibility in form**  
Opening the show in the upper galleries is a circumnavigation. Here, imagine taking the entire catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art, shredding it into microscopic pieces and letting the confetti fall onto the front steps of the gallery. Archeology is akin to then attempting to piece the entire of history of art back together from the pieces you can find. And that's without even considering what the British Museum might have to say about the catalogue's critical credentials.

**2. A slippage in meaning**  
Linked to an intriguing wedding ritual that is still practiced locally, Hermit mythology describes the legend of this stone in song, and numerous sightings of the Sulphident Occidental, a rare agro-pastoral bird figure, have been recorded here over the years. The twelve midnight bells and the howl of a bull continue to marr the sight known otherwise for happiness, with the legend of Rosa and her lack of bravery confusing what is otherwise a celebrated stone.

**3. The Birthstone of the Soul's Hole**  
A number of captured, circular views offer an ephemeral closure to the exhibition. Here, over the ruins of a castle and a rock that holds the ocean back from the town, the galleries seek to imitate those in Algaes, which are of 118m in depth.  
  
From this vantage point, it is clear to see that the town's skyward face is circular. In the center of the circle drawn by the horizon, the landscape holds its language coded history tightly. As with the miners who communicated in fatally misunderstood Morse Code, meaning is a quagmire of creation and destruction.



Still from footage by Diogo Quaresma, July 2017