

CURA

10/2017

In conversation with
JOÃO MOURÃO and LUÍS SILVA

**BRUNO
ZHU**

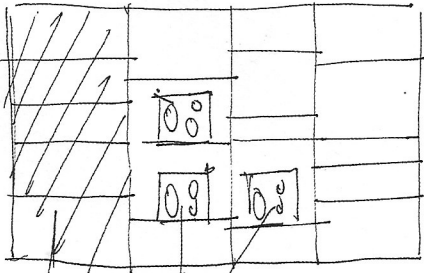
Thick floor

Start unit w/ for display

Full shelves for stock floor.

Original office Brown display

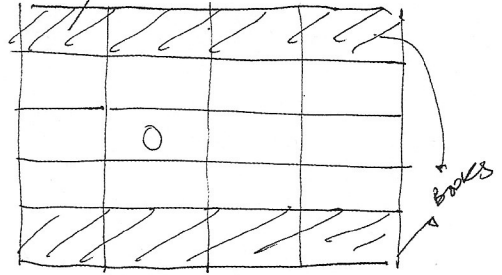
1



Books

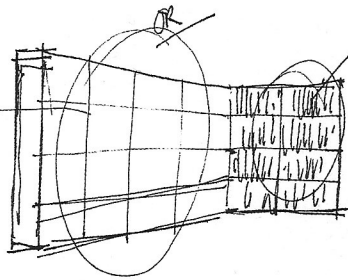
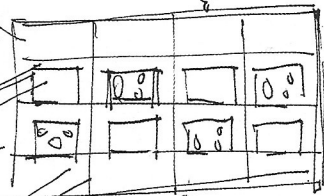
Smile on display

2



Books

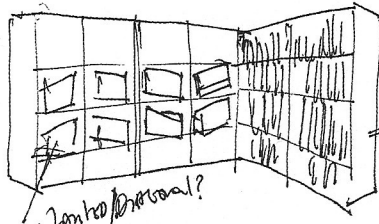
Top & bottom row bright



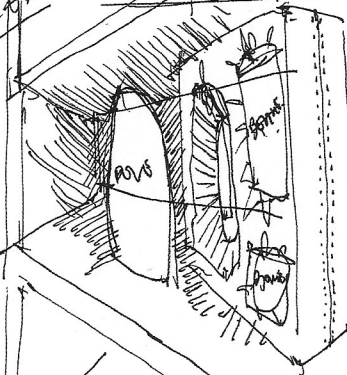
All books organized on right shelf

Remove containers in or out of room place

Pin in place rather than on shelf



8 books/personal?

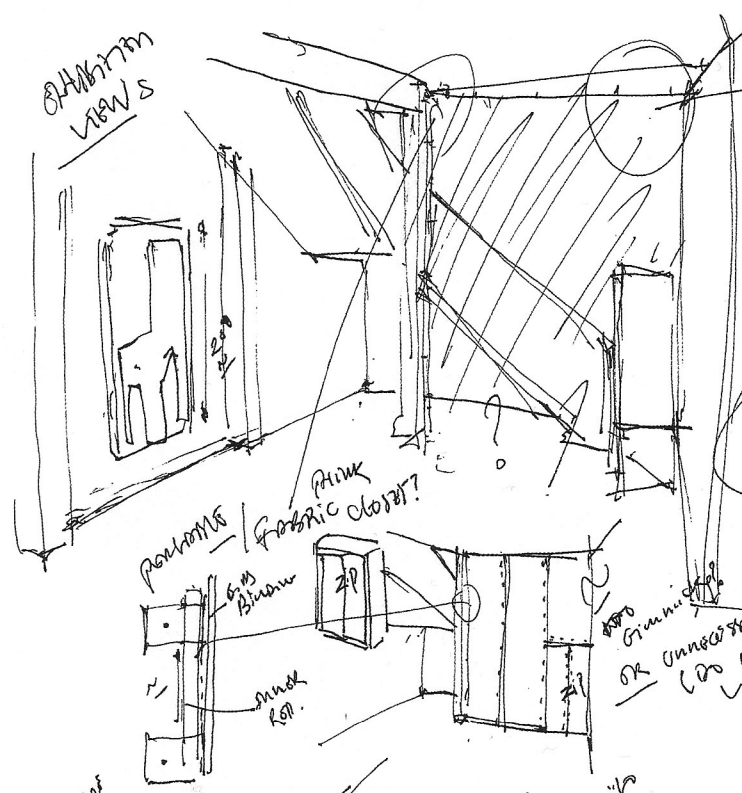


Handwritten

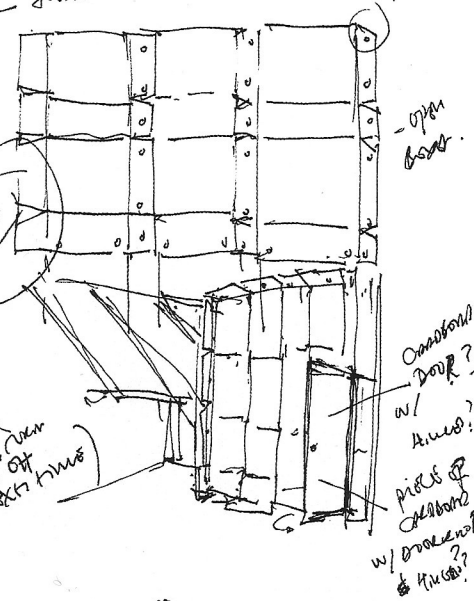
Remove book (open space)

Entrance

Other views



Change a
division?
- To isolate kids
from upstairs
- might involve: one-sided wall?
both?



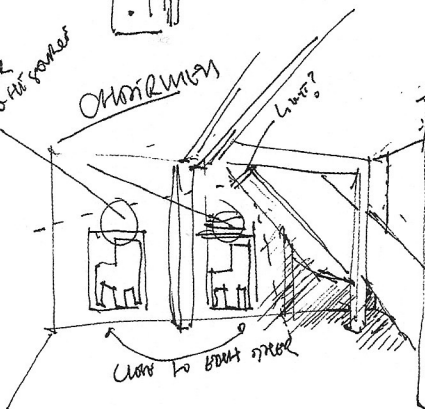
Perkins
Fabric closet?
Pink
6th Binom
Pink
LSP.

OR connect this?
(Do not want
work off
next time)

one-sided
door?
w/
Ams?
pieces of
chairs
w/ broken
& things?

pink
to the corner

Chairman

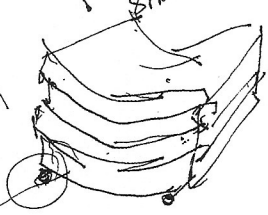
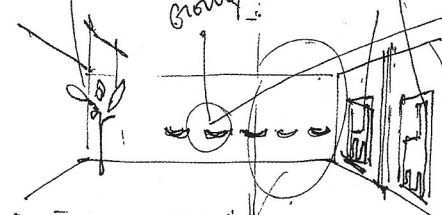


Work in

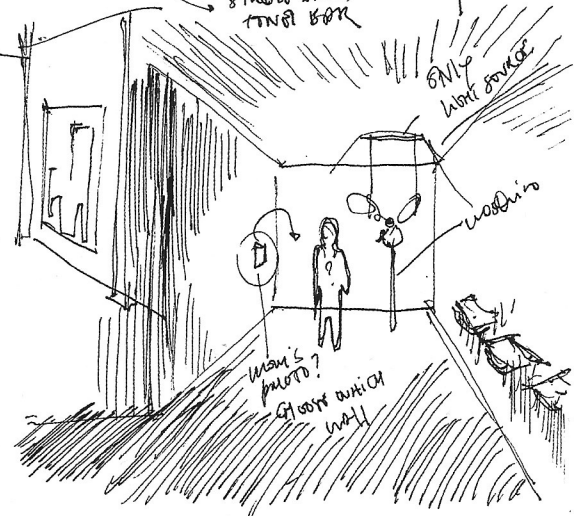
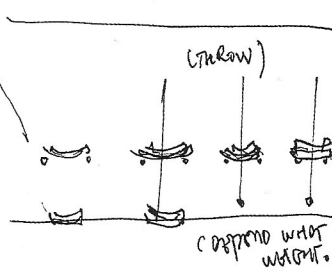
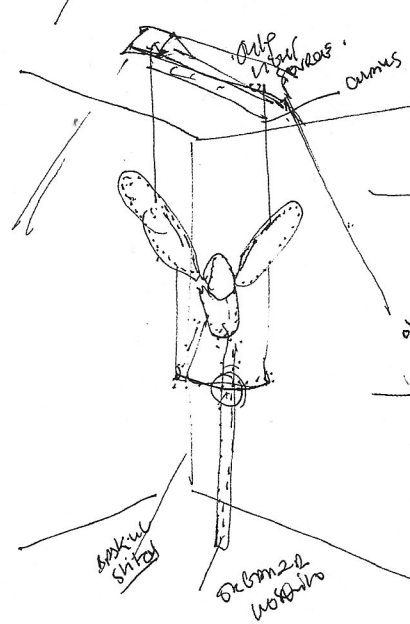
Boys boxes

Chairman

Colophon
Shed.



Two rods:
- commercial of props?
- bathroom towel rods? or
- just to?
- single arm
Towel bar

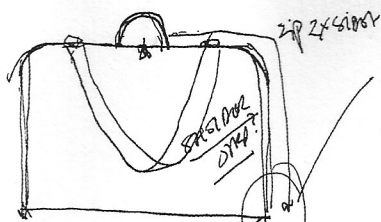
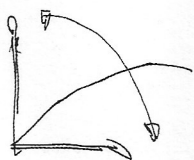


Work in

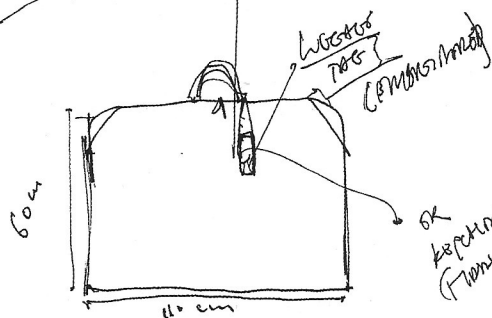
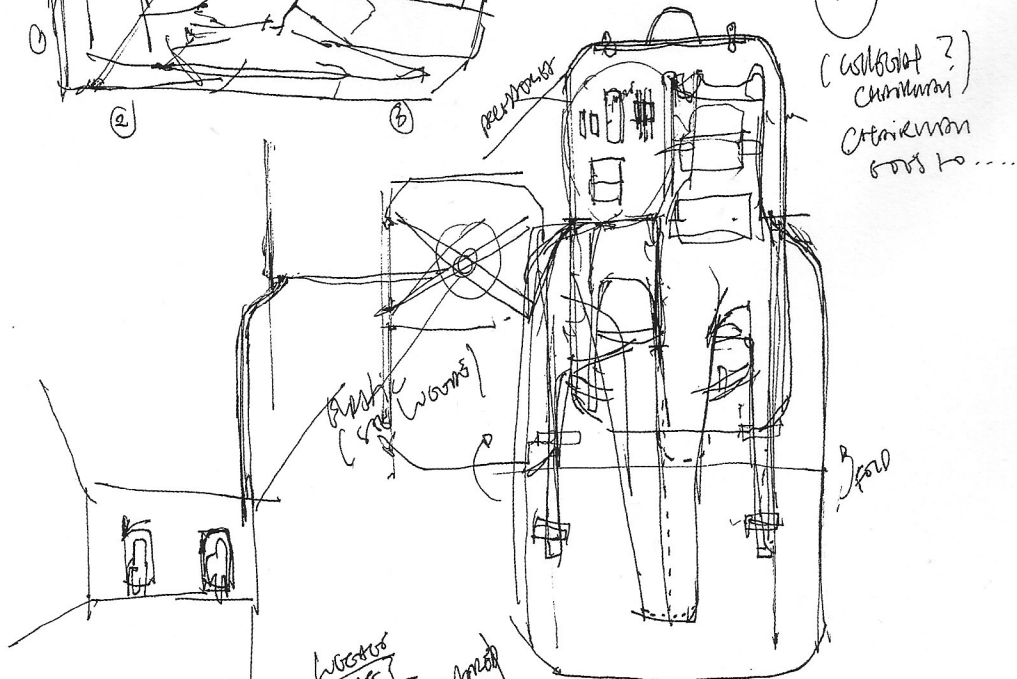
Debris
work in

man's
photo?
ghost which
wall

work in

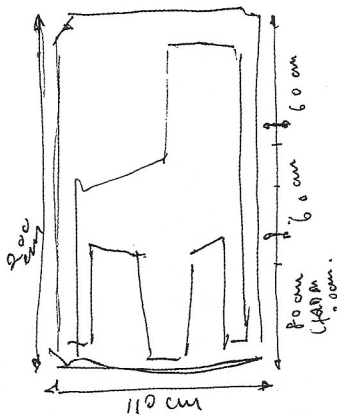


A hand-drawn diagram of a vertical pipe or tube. The top part of the tube is labeled 'sim bond'. The bottom part of the tube is labeled 'zip stitcher'.



OK
Kochman
From 11/04/17?

Prink how to
How shari car



João Mourão/Luís Silva Hi Bruno, we usually take this opportunity to meet with the artists in their exhibitions so they can show us around, which serves as a pretext of sorts to discuss their own practice and how it relates to some display choices made specifically for each project. In your specific case, the situation is somewhat different since the space is empty (well, in reality it isn't empty, there's a show currently on, but for the purpose of this guided tour, let's assume it is empty) and the show won't open until February 2018. There is nothing to see of your work, only to imagine. At the current stage it is, and it will remain as such for a while, an imaginary solo exhibition. Having said this, we're sure you had time to think about the project and we were wondering how you are thinking about your work vis-à-vis this specific exhibition space on one hand and also in relation to such an idiosyncratic institution such as Kunsthalle Lissabon.

Bruno Zhu Since your invitation I've been both excited and baffled by how confusing it feels to be welcomed home. What does it mean to return to Lissabon, and not Lisbon or Lisboa? Where does my work situate in a place where shops and restaurants seem unable to see past my Chinese face speaking fluent Portuguese? How should I look at my birthplace that would rather accept me as an Asian tourist than one of their own? I am foreign to my own home, and I'm not able to brush away that resentment whenever I think of our show. So I am wondering if it is possible to work through that feeling; to engage with space via its negation; to think about community while feeling utterly alone; to reencounter family, an image of unity, and be reminded of the conflicting infrastructure that defines it. Could our exhibition be an experiment of affective cartography, one where timespace and spacetime collapse onto each other, bent and twisted to locate and resolve a broken narcissism? Would you like to wander with me, scour and drag through

pseudo-territories, geo-emotional boundaries, bitter timelines and stitch an image of self-worth?

JM/LS Of course! We are no strangers to wandering, scouring and dragging ourselves, so we're game! You said something very curious, which for us seems to speak volumes about this city as a geopolitical formation: that people would accept you as an Asian tourist rather than one of their own. You didn't mention acceptance as an Asian immigrant or worker, you mentioned tourist. Alterity is only understood these days as a source of income. Not necessarily changing topics, you already mentioned a few ideas which will conceptually be anchoring the exhibition. We would like to focus on two of them, that of affective cartography on one hand and that of the image of self-worth you just mentioned, on the other. How do you see those manifesting in the show?

BZ I grew up watching my parents being exoticized and demonized for opening their businesses. Customers would throw a fit if things didn't go their way, especially caught shoplifting, calling us thieves and invaders, but also drawn to the novelty, wide-range and affordability of the 'made in China' label. My parents took the high road and lived with it, ignoring criticism because they literally couldn't understand it. But I did, my cousins too and we had to go on every day, tip toeing, pretending we weren't educated, being passive, because looming above us there was, and still is, a sign saying 'alien, but cheap'. The show being set so close to home, it becomes inevitable to think about these events and wanting to unpack this micro-history of shame. But how did it begin, who are the actors, where did it take place? I am looking at the family, the first infrastructure of care we get to know, and the one that wasn't able to protect me. I am imagining the show to be loosely set in a pantry that could also be a supermarket, but at the same time

a walk-in closet, a basement and an attic. I would like the show to disorient our sense of place and touch; to speak to nurturing and affective cultivation as modalities that should sit outside ruling narratives of power and privilege. If home is interpreted as a site of fantasies negotiated, oppressed and pending, we might allow ourselves to walk the thin line between perversion and grace, to perform or live, lie or confess who we want to be, showing why we are how we are.

JM/LS In practical terms how do you propose to do that? Will the works in the show be connected to some of your previous projects or are you considering making something completely new? Looking at the space, do you already have a sense of how you intend to proceed?

BZ I have recently made a series of men trousers turned evening gloves that are now needing a "home" when archived. While thinking of a box for each pair, individuating each 'wearer,' I started to draw lines between packaging products and packaging lives: is "home" a temporal construction? An object or body extracted from its production cycle into a latent state, waiting either for its debut or its re-activation: does packaging designate and 'design' time for us? This time seems to be circumscribed by actors that have already or are yet to arrive, never present in the same temporality that I am in. Only their absence is present, meaning my time is never mine, it's always compromised, I will always be waiting. We can see this tension everyday when packaging conceals and conserves new things, or store things we have used before. Time would only be mine if I set out for isolation, a lonely "home." Another parallel I drew while thinking of a box for the gloves was to see packaging sharing

the same plane, albeit in different poles, with coffins. I would like the gloves to be almost inseparable from their use value by giving them a bodily funereal 'turn.' As the gloves return to their respective boxes, they will enter a state of rest. The pull between new and used, sealed and returned, dormant and lifeless, will be echoed by a found photograph and mosquitoes. The photograph shows my mom wearing her waitress uniform standing in front of our old restaurant. The angle is slanted and the image blurry. I had a mosquito infestation last summer in my studio that lasted until November. They had been nesting in the flooded basement and spreading through air conducts. I spent a long time killing them with my zapper and started to look into other ways of killing them that wouldn't make my studio smell like roasted mosquito, plus burning one attracted five more every time. A quick web search tells us blood sucking mosquitoes are females who need protein to develop their eggs. When thinking about our show, and considering it as a drawing board for a "home," these mother figures came to the fore. They are both at work, navigating their ecosystems, working to take care. The former opens a restaurant and the latter opens a hole on our skins; the former moves to another business venture when the previous one fails, and the latter gets squashed. In different ways and scales, both entities work to provide care to their family units, but caring comes at a risk: she exhausts or even dies for it. Her self expands and infiltrates via affective labor, but becomes contingent. She gives by giving herself away, and her actions create ripples around her as she takes from one to give to another. So perhaps the whole show could be seen as a big box haunted by mothers, dead and overworked, suggesting a potential legacy: that surviving time might ultimately mean to arrive home.

All images Preliminary sketches of Bruno Zhu's solo show
at Kunsthalle Lissabon Courtesy: the artist

Office
+ work
books

- consider
Johns
conduct. room.
work

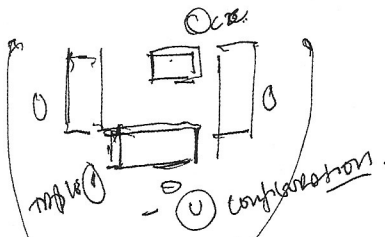
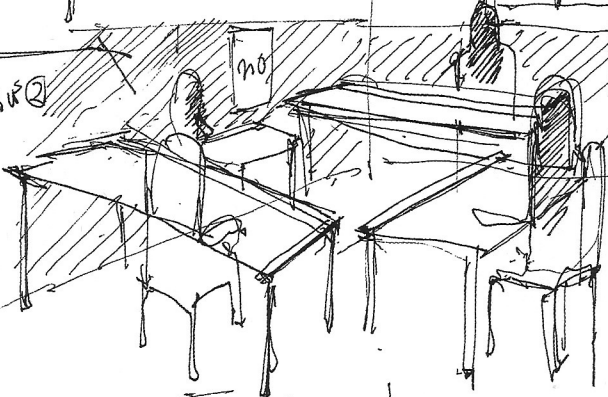


Table 3

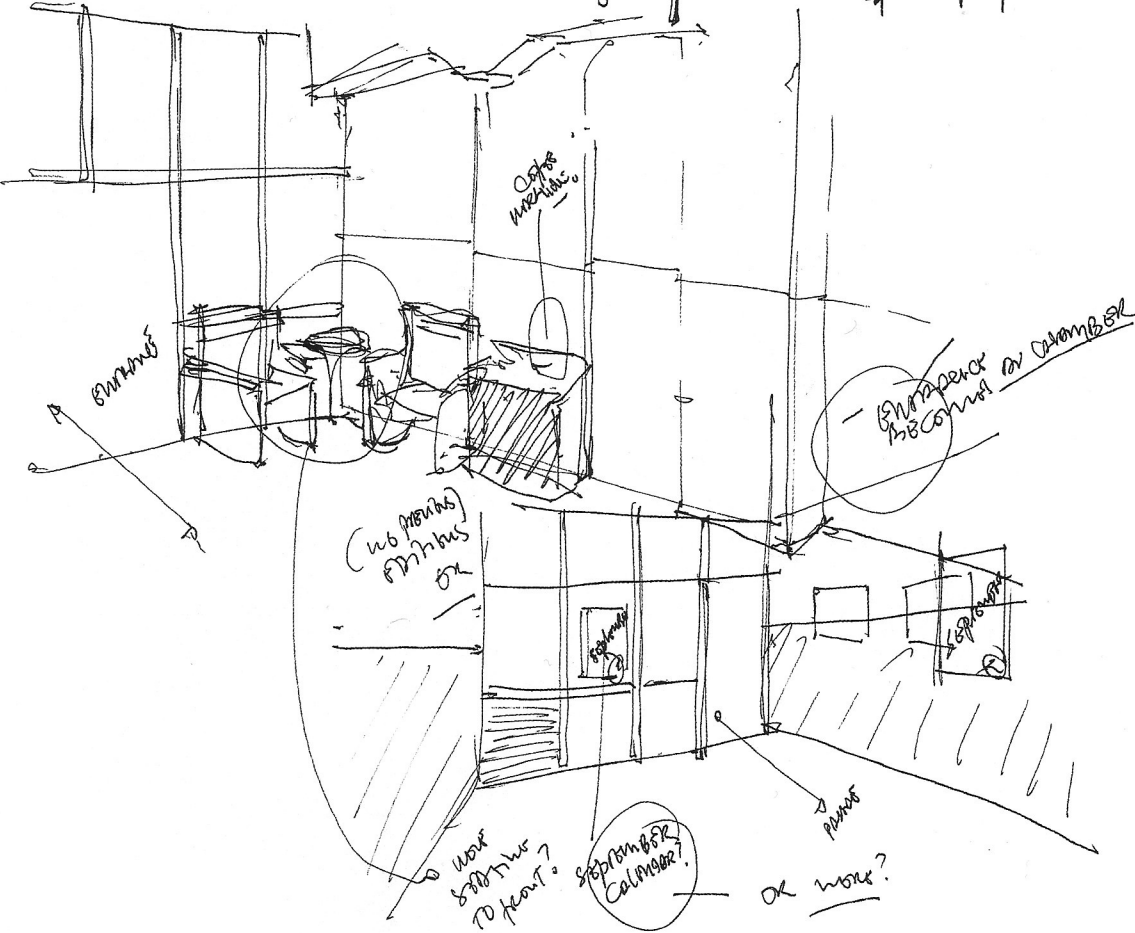


Table 2



- Question:
- whether to
put the chairs
and whether
we have to
bring them.

exterior
space



Entrance

Office
machine

- Entrance
recovered in October

(no more)
chairs
or

work
station
to front?

September
Calabria?

or work?