

ARTFORUM

Lisbon

Luisa Cunha

CULTURGEST

Rua Arco do Cego, 50

June 19, 2013–December 22, 2007



Do What You Have to Do, 1994, two speakers, CD player, wire, and recorded voice, 17 minutes.

Suspended from the ceiling of the large hall of the 1930s building that hosts Culturgest's galleries in Porto, two speakers draw the attention of visitors, on closer inspection disclosing a series of whispered short sentences. The text begins with the phrase "Do what you have to do"—also the title of this early piece by artist Luisa Cunha—then cycles through variations on the same words. The work has not shown in Portugal since 1994, when it was on view in the main lobby of a university building in Lisbon; its text reflects the original context of its presentation through references to the disciplinary dimension of educational institutions in modern society. As is common in Cunha's sound installations, the careful arrangement of the words conveys a double meaning—in this case, the command also registers as a call against power. Using discourse metaphorically characterizes much of Cunha's output. This was demonstrated in the recent survey of her work at the Serralves Museum, in which photographs, drawings, and sculptures, along with the sound installations for which she is best known, allowed a deeper understanding of how the economy of symbols—in particular, language—is central to her practice. This trait is present again in *Turn Around*, 2007, the second sound installation on view here. The visitor is told three times "You are so beautiful," then asked to turn around. Evoking the myth of Narcissus,

Cunha once again addresses the grand narratives that inform our present moment. She remains one of the best investigators of the intersection between personal narratives and collective consciousness in the Portuguese art scene.

— *Miguel Amado*



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