



Exhibition «The Lisbons of Pessoa»  
19/02/1997 - 01/06/1997

## City and Heteronymy

The city as the semantic place of heteronymy. Heteronyms spread over an urban reality: Lisbon. Exhibition? Installation? The Lisbons of Pessoa. The city of diversity which determines the poet's multiple presences. An encounter between a real city and some imaginary cities. The seven circles which the Pessoaan snake coils itself around. Or, put another way, seven expressions which confirm that literature still has more faces than the author himself.

*The Lisbons of Pessoa* continues the series of exhibitions begun with *James Joyce's Dublin*. It therefore runs the risk of comparison with an exhibition which was a surprise and another which, with this point of reference on the horizon, will have to prove its ability to surprise. The challenge is the same. We are continuing to explore this mythical territory, in the sense that it is located at a crossroads between reality and ideas which is defined by the encounter between the literary and the urban, between the writer and the city. We cling on to the creation of a place where both city and artist can express themselves as one.

If the position is decisive and the perspective determines the dimensions of things, we must pay attention to the peculiarity of the gaze which verifies the union of literary experience with an urban framework. The gaze is foreign: strange to the artist and the city. The gaze of the stranger who approaches, with few prejudices but also with little experience of that everyday universe. Hence, the construction has, at one and the same time, the passion of fascination, the melancholy of bookish experience and the innocence of the discovery of the alien city. Because literature cannot be all literatures and the city cannot be all cities. There is no desire to project the encounter onto an ideal territory, but instead to materialise in objects, images and shadows, an interpretation of the footprints the writer leaves on the urban imaginary and the imprint left by the city on the body and soul of the writer who confronts it.

Barcelona, Lisbon, Frankfurt: the three venues for *The Lisbons of Pessoa* are three tests. Distance, memory and culture are not the same. In the diversity of sensibilities lies the fact that the exhibition endeavours to show that it has incorporated that peculiar ability of literature and cities to bring closer those meanings with different roots (heteronyms) and to diversify the interpretations of familiar experiences. After all, isn't this the meaning of projecting a *drama em gente* over the framework of the city?