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João Penalva's First Solo UK Exhibition At The Mead Gallery, Warwick Art Centre

By Rachel Junior

24/10/2007

The Mead Gallery recently commissioned João Penalva to create a unique and ambitious exhibition within its walls, incorporating all the art forms usually presented at the Warwick arts centre.

Showing until Saturday December 8 2007 the exhibition is an amalgamation of film, literature, installation, photography, music, narrative and theatre, which have all merged to create a vivid sensory experience in the gallery.

The intention of the artist was to create an exhibition in which space and time retreat as other spaces and times are coaxed into being, causing an unstable and otherworldly reality.

The visitor walks into the resulting exhibition and becomes an integral part of the art whilst creating their own narrative paths against Penalva's theatrical backdrops.



João Penalva, Photograph by Studio Leo Fobert, Warsaw, date unknown. © João Penalva

Born in Lisbon in 1949, Penalva came to England in the early 70s, training as a dancer before turning to painting in 1976. He was soon incorporating other forms and practices into his work, from music to written words, and his work came to be about the issues of translation or, more often, transposition.

An artist who has always striven to distort the notion of a static, immovable reality, Penalva invites the viewer to question the acceptance of a perceived status quo. In his world it is the light and time that are actual, relating to but not governed by the gaze of the viewer.

The show attempts to highlight the tensions between extremes, mixing ambient sound with manufactured, moving image whilst large installations are mixed with small. The idea is that each visitor is alone with their personal perception of reality as it changes from moment to moment.

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João Penalva, head of a woman. © João Penalva

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