

# Sonia Falcone successfully intervenes the Royal Palace in Lisbon



The iconic work *Color Fields* in the entrance to the National Palace of Ajuda in Lisbon, Portugal.



From left to right: Mrs. Hernández, Prince Charles Philippe de Orleans, Sonia Falcone and Duchess Diana de Cadaval.



Perrine Falcone, daughter of the artist, next to *Eternal Love*.

The official inauguration of Sonia Falcone's artistic intervention: *Life Fields National Palace of Ajuda in Lisbon* on September 15, 2017 was unanimously praised by hundreds of attendees. After the opening speeches, the Portuguese Minister of Culture, Luís Filipe de Castro Mendes, led a guided tour. At the end of the tour Castro Mendes praised the quality of this project that displays 50 different pieces in 29 rooms of the Royal Palace, some of which were especially created for this occasion in order to establish a dialogue with the spaces inside this historical site.

Minister Castro Mendes congratulated the director of the Palace, José Alberto Ribeiro, for the election and coordination of this enormous artistic exhibition, while expressing his admiration for the body of the work of this Bolivian artist who exhibits in Portugal for the first time. "I want to highlight both the value of the art of Sonia Falcone and the success of the curatorship that has created a truly amazing dialogue with each of the spaces of the Palace," Castro Mendes said in his opening address.

For his part, director Ribeiro thanked the Minister for his presence, the collaboration of Paula Araújo da Silva, Director General of Cultural Heritage of Portugal, and Prince Charles Philippe and Diana of Orleans, who from the beginning of the project were key figures in fulfilling this exhibition that brings to Portugal an important part of the body of work of the outstanding Bolivian artist, Sonia Falcone, thereby advancing an important historical and cultural dialogue.



From left to right: Sonia Falcone, Luís Filipe de Castro Mendes, José Alberto Ribeiro, Príncipe Charles Philippe de Orleans and Duquesa Diana de Cadaval.



Color Fields Installation

In an atmosphere brought about by the installations' capacity to emotionally move those in attendance, Dr. Adriana Herrera, who with art historian Willy Castellanos is co-founder of the Curatorial Collective Aluna and person responsible for curating this project, emphasized Sonia Falcone's ability to transform our understanding of the past as seen through archaeological sites, as well as the prodigious landscape, socio-cultural practices, and the ancestral languages of all of South America. The body of her work manages to insert the skies, waters, plants, objects and the very memory of Bolivian and Latin American culture in the halls of the Royal Palace. "Her sensitivity brings together the ancestral and contemporary, the local and the universal," said Herrera. "Falcone's art combines natural elements and cultural traditions with the language of colors to sustain a continuous call to unity, both between cultures and between humans and the earth."

During the reception that followed, hundreds of guests surrounded Sonia Falcone in order to express her their amazement at the versatility of a work in media as diverse as stained glass, photography or virtual projections, combined in installations displayed with remarkable sensitivity according to the history of each one of the rooms. Prince Charles Philippe of Orleans expressed that for him and his wife Diana it had been a discovery to meet Sonia Falcone several years ago during one of her exhibitions at the Venice Biennale and since that moment it had become a dream to see her work in Portugal. "She is a fantastic person and artist," he said.



Installation in stained glass *Life Wave*.



Installation *Multicolored banners*



Sonia Falcone with Portuguese Secretary of Culture, Luís Filipe de Castro Mendes and Palace Director Jose Alberto Ribeiro admire photographs of cave paintings from Alto Mariana, located in the vicinity of Samaipata.



From left to right: Sonia Falcone, Ambassador from Bolivia to the United Kingdom Roberto Calzadilla Sarmiento, his daughter Yuma, his wife Maria and Perrine Falcone.

The Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Roberto Calzadilla Sarmiento was in attendance with his wife and was deeply satisfied by Falcone's capacity to bring to this historic palace an art related to his nation's origin, incorporating the legacy of both Bolivian geography and ancestral culture, as well as a message regarding Bolivia's present challenges, in scenarios that allow the message to resonate worldwide. In her speech Sonia Falcone, who lives in various cities around the world, emphasized how proud she feels of being Bolivian.

The windows of the Palace intervened with photographs of landscapes captured by Falcone while studying the origins of Bolivia and native languages in the mythical Lake Titicaca, as well as the Amazonian Water Lilies, captivated the visitors. Guest were equally astounded by the combination of works of presented in the different rooms, such as that in D. João IV hall, were royal artifacts mingled with the petroglyphs of Alto de Mairana, as well as with photographs of extreme resolution that were captured by the artist, who also displayed here an installation made from flowers of

Soto that are only found in the Bolivian Amazons. Falcone covered in gold these flowers found in the jungle, and placed them on top of smoked mirrors, evoking a crucial journey for the artist, as well as the presence of ancient rites regarding the mystery of death. Falcone often works with the celebration of life and the awareness of its transience. According to Herrera, "these flowers also allude to the splendor and demise of all kingdoms, both in the old and the new continent."

Falcone also presented for the first time her new installations in virtual reality: a real heart floating in holographic form in the middle of the monarch's bedroom facing a painting of King Don Luis in a form of dialogue, which had a great impact on those in attendance. Using a binaural sound technology, a heartbeat can be heard through five speakers, which amazed everyone present particularly by the intervention and incorporation of technology in her new piece. "In this existentialist installation, God created us in a body that is a machine that one day will stop. Too often we fail to recognize that our life is simply a breath. In this spectacular palace lived many sovereigns who are no longer here, and that transience will also be ours one day," said the artist.



Sonia Falcone with the piece *Real Love* based on Soto Flowers found in the Amazons of Bolivia.



Windows intervened with landscape of *Victorian Water Lilies* in room next to sound installation *Golden Voices*, based on study of languages of Bolivia.



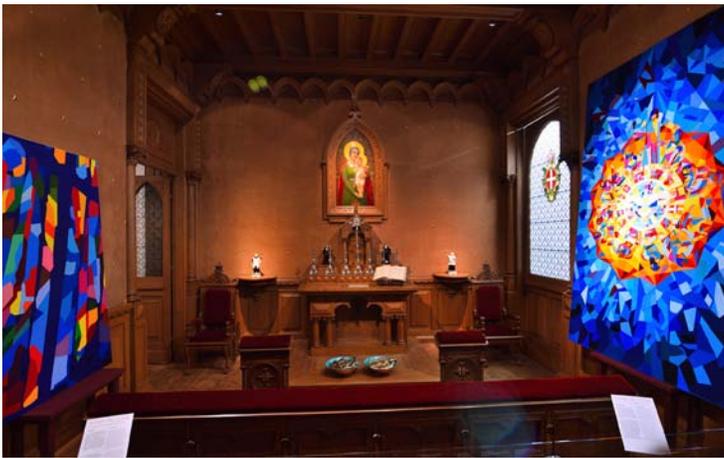
Sonia Falcone with her *Color Fields* Installation



Hand-embroidered textiles, Rosita Pochi dress with Guarani embroidery and handmade shoes in Queen's dressing room.



Installation *From East to West*, wall in Murano Crystal.



From left to right: Oil painting *Tormento (Torment)* and *The Last Supper*.

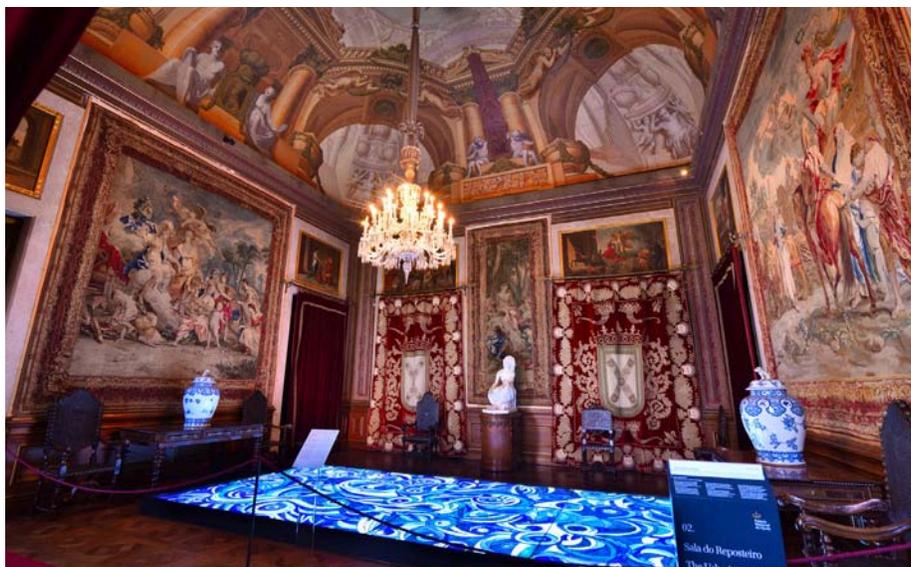


The Painting *Santa Face of Christ* by El Greco with Sonia Falcone's *The Last Supper*.

The installation also included her work *Drops of blood*, unpublished high quality photos in Tiwanaku, the Andean mountain Illimani, the Pantanal, works in bronze, gold and semiprecious stones, Spanish coins of the colony (macuquinas), which was the first currency accepted all over the world and that gave rise to a first era of globalization, stained glass and oil paintings monumental as *The Last Supper*, seen from the heavens, as if it were God who looks through his omnipresence to his disciples in this scene so often captured on canvas, but never with this aerial perspective. This painting of Falcone is hung in the chapel of the Palace, side by side the wonderful work *Santa Face de Jesus* of El Greco.

Thus, the intervention of Sonia Falcone, who has exhibited in countless scenarios of the world, has successfully inserted the cultural and geographical presence of Bolivia inside the Palace of Ajuda. As she expressed in her opening words, it is an artistic display and almost a practice that reverses the direction of the displacements of the conquest, a movement of re-conquest. "In a way we are conquering a space much like the conquerors did 500 years ago. Today Bolivia transports itself; Bolivia the beautiful, in its entire splendor and in a very artistic, very contemporary, very 21st century fashion," said Falcone.

In 1938 the Ajuda National Palace was converted into a museum and opened its doors to the general public. In this site, visited by hundreds of tourists from all over the world, the most important ceremonies of the Presidency of the Republic are celebrated. Sonia Falcone's exhibition will remain open until December 2017.



Installation in stained glass *Life Wave*