

Texto sobre o vídeo – Carla Rebelo  
The Fort's Dream, 2013  
Vídeo 13'00"  
Cor/Som

*The Fort's Dream* is a video work about Fort Alexander I made on the context of the project *Viagem ao interior das cidades vividas*, as a result of an artist residency in the city of Kronstadt, Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Built on an artificial island in the Gulf of Finland, near the coast of Kotlin island, fort Alexander was part of a defense line of structures created to protect Saint Petersburg from the attack of enemy troops. Completed in 1846, this monumental architecture, however, never got to chance to shoot a single one of its 137 cannons. In the Crimean War the mere sight of this imposing structure blocked an attack from the British fleet, but in 1896 the Fort was excluded from the list of defensive structures of the army.

In 1898, due to an outbreak of Plague that reached the steppes of the Caspian Sea, its destiny of defense and protection came to life again. This isolated architecture seemed to be the ideal place to install an anti-plague laboratory to search a cure for this disease. Connected to the world by a boat named "Microbe", Fort Alexander gained then a new life.

As part of the research and testing in the production of a serum, the Fort became the final home to several animals. Ilya Moiseevich Eisen, an employee of the Academy of Sciences who visited the place in 1900, was impressed with the small and large scale animals he found there. This "small Zoo" in the middle of the Gulf was described by him as "ship of the desert". Walking silently in the courtyard he found camels, cows, reindeer and the horses, the animals that played the most important role in the investigation done on site. The laboratory was closed in 1917. The Fort became then part of the Russian Navy and was used for storage and repair purposes. It was abandoned in 1983 and has been empty since then.

"The Fort's Dream" evokes a possible memory of this place. The video shows a voyage to the Fort and also the empty galleries inside. In the stillness of the empty rooms, where the only sound is the water hitting the banks of the island, images seem to emerge from the past merging with the ones from the present. The galleries of the Fort are like the rooms of a forgotten Museum, the scenario where the animals that once lived there stand "still".