

# /06

REVISTA DE  
**HISTÓRIA  
DA ARTE**



IH | INSTITUTO DE HISTÓRIA DA ARTE  
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E HUMANAS – UNL



**PORTUGUESE  
PERFORMANCE ART**

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*Música Negativa* (score), 1965, E. M. de Melo e Castro.  
Courtesy of the artist

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# EDITORIAL

**T**he first *International Symposium on Portuguese Performance Art* has held in Lisbon, in July 2016, joining artists and academics, as well as members of the general public(s), in a transdisciplinary discussion about the presences and absences of this artistic genre in the Portuguese panorama. The organization of this symposium was lead by the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, from NOVA University of Lisbon, in close partnership not only with institutions from the same University - Instituto de História de Arte, IFILNOVA, and the Department of Conservation and Restoration (Faculty of Science and Technology), but also with external entities, such as the Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares do Século XX, from Coimbra University, and the Berardo Collection Museum, which kindly accepted the challenge to host the event. This issue of *Revista de História da Arte — Série W* appears as a testimony of the exchanges that occurred during the symposium, offering expanded versions of a selection of papers, first presented in that context, and that since underwent a double-blind peer-reviewing process. The aim of this issue is, therefore, to provide a perspective on Portuguese Performance Art current state of research. We also hope that this publication can contribute to the creation and maintenance of a national and international network of researchers and artists whose line of work is related with Portuguese Performance Art, setting the basis for the urgent constitution of an archive of Performance Art in Portugal that can aggregate the scattered research about this genre.

Research about this theme was very scarce until recent years.

The growing interest on Portuguese Performance Art has been a catalyser of the historicization of this artistic genre, which first appeared in Portugal in the middle of Estado Novo, a period of dictatorship, characterized by political persecution, physical and psychological oppression and censorship. Although performance art as a medium has re-emerged in the Portuguese artistic scene during the 1990s, academic studies on Art History, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Museum Studies, or even Conservation, only recently started to be developed and disseminated. We consider, however, that the role Portuguese Performance Art history (or, somehow, stories) exceeds the traditional aims of historicization or even the possibilities for assembling a (selected) archive. It is possible that the development of this history, as well as the discussion about performance artworks in additional areas of social and human sciences, might operate as a starting point to examining other essential issues from various (inter)disciplinary fields. Artworks created until the 1980s, for example, have a historical importance that cannot be disregarded. At the same time, studying these works from other perspectives might bring light to some issues such as the social performativity of being Portuguese, for example; or critical questions about the dictatorship, the Colonial War, the revolution, the return of Portuguese people from the former colonies, or even, the processes of engagement from the post-memory generation. Indeed, perspectives might be drawn not only from the absence of Portuguese Performance Art history from that period, but also, from processes of historicization that take shape in other artistic manifestations, either being re-enactments of past events and artworks and different ways of seeing the artworks

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■ - percutir no ar ou procurar uns olhos em plena rua  
 ▲ - agitar no ar ou estar definitivamente só  
 ● - percutir pousado ou a inquietação

peça 59 música negativa ou poema

- segunde esta pauta foi apresentada em lisboa - concerto e audição pictórica de 7/1/65 - a música negativa : entãe A B C eram 3 instrumentos de percussão. Agera, no poema, que deve ser lido segunde e valer merfesemãnticoe des sinais indicades, A B C pedem ser 3 caminhos de procura .

*Música Negativa* (score),  
 1965, E. M. de Melo e Castro.  
 Courtesy of the artist

that were originated until the 1980s. Studying works created after the 1980s (with a prevalence from the 1990s until the present time), on the other hand, provides a window to the soul of artists that choose this medium, as they are often present in a wide variety of media. Intermediality, issues of representation and performance art ontology, or even new forms of using this genre in digital media, for example, are among the issues that are continuously challenged at this time. Finally, it is of utmost importance to mention the newly found relevance of these discussions within the field of Museums Studies. As art institutions are starting to incorporate performance art in their collections (with TATE Galleries, in London, for example, taking the lead), it is expected that national collections undertake the same path. Studying, documenting, and mapping Portuguese performance art, could, in this sense, be the step to initiate this process in Portugal, ultimately leading to the active preservation of historical and contemporary Portuguese performance artworks for future generations.

It was with a clear consciousness of the unstable boundaries of this genre, which define both its theory and multiple practices, as well as of the need of studying that instability through a transdisciplinary lens, that we aimed at creating a unique space of debate between people with different backgrounds and perspectives on performance and performativity. From artists to curators, from cultural programmers to conservators, from philosophers to sociologists, from historians to anthropologists, the Symposium intended to confront interdisciplinary ideas, generations and experiences. This publication echoes that intent by focusing on collecting perspectives outside traditional disciplinary borders. It is thus structured along three general themes: **Performance stories**, dedicated to testimonies from Portuguese performance art actors, or to historical perspectives about performance

art events; **Performance spaces**, where the clash between performance art and art institutions is reflected upon; and **Performance temporalities**, which is focused on the ideas of cyclicity, and present and future, as well as, in the notion of performance art as a changeable medium and concept. Besides the Revista's dossier, in this Special Issue a series of **Performative talks**, featuring dialogs between key-actors from the Portuguese performance art scene, are also presented along with some fragments of the documental exhibition (from the artist Manoel Barbosa's archive) and artistic show that happened concomitantly to the Symposium, also at the Berardo Collection Museum.

The dossier opens with an essay by artist and theorist António Olaio, about being *in* and *as* performance. In **Performance Stories**, Filomena Serra presents the history of the happening "To beat or not to beat" (Porto, 1967), created by the artist Ângelo de Sousa as a subversive gesture against the dictatorial regime. Sónia Pina explores some imprints from the Fluxus movement in Portuguese Art History, especially regarding the work and life of artists such as Ernesto de Sousa and António Barros, while characterizing the traces of this movement beyond a self-contained spatiotemporal perspective. Isabel Nogueira explores the activist/artistic performance-based projects that emerged after the Portuguese revolution in April 1974. Mariana Brandão, in "The map also makes the way", compares the paths undertaken by performance art and dance artists in Portugal. And finally, Bruno Marques and Alexandra do Carmo, departing from performance works by Gina Pane ("A Hot Afternoon", 1978) and João Vieira ("Caretos", 1984), reflect on the role that testimony and oral narrative, as well as the selective action of memory and the contingency of individual perception, can influence performance art stories. **Performance spaces** starts with Ana Bigotte Vieira's contribution about the

digital timeline created around the archive from ACARTE (from 1984 to 1989), which considers that such place of performance, as a commons tool, promotes Madalena Perdigão's idea of "curatorship of absence". António Contador explores the political repercussions of the performative gesture of the "Senhor do Adeus", who, for years, waved to car drivers in the anonymous traffic contemporary urban landscape of Lisbon. Rui Mourão, lastly, discusses the notion of activism and the institutional place of activist performance works. The last section of this dossier regards **Performance temporalities**. The term "temporalities" is used here in a broad sense, as this section's contributions reflect on time and performance art in various ways, which, in some way, are transversal to the issues raised in preceding chapters. Cláudia Madeira reflects upon two cycles of Portuguese performance art (1960s-1980s, 1990s-nowadays), characterizing its history as performative and speculative due to its necessarily fragmentary nature and reliance on oral testimonies. Daniela Salazar explores performing and performance art exhibitions as an anachronistic device, made of curatorial gestures that result in a creative montage. Hélia Marçal, last but not least, looks at the future of performance artworks as a process of an embodied memory of the works and the event, which could, ultimately, change institutional procedures that are usually linked to the archive.

This issue of Revista de Historia da Arte — Série W is a product of a joint effort of colleagues, artists, authors, reviewers, translators, and the editorial committee. We are very grateful to all involved by the invaluable contributions. We also would like to express our gratitude to all artists by the visual inputs that illustrate this special issue. The publication was made possible through the financial support provided by the Instituto de História da Arte (IHA).

# IN PER FOR MANC E

**T**o be in performance mood even when apparently you're not in performance mode... That's what I was led to think (probably by myself) to be the state an artist always is. Always in transit to something or somewhere else... And, mostly, being aware of the space between things, of the transit from one thing to the other. And keep on going.

And it's "in performance" that I look back and remember some of the things I saw and did, emerged in the world of performance art. Was that something close to Paradise? Surely a rough, very exciting approach to it. How interestingly ugly a Paradise can be? Or sometimes attempting to be beautiful, atrociously marvelous or, eventually, quite boring, but in such an interesting way...<sup>1</sup>

I began to do performances very early in my path as an artist at the same time I was a painter. So, the idea of performance art as a rejection of the work of art as an object (eventually an object that could be sold) was never an issue. And so, hopefully, saving my mind for other thoughts about it.

Having done my first performances in the early eighties I remember people asking us why we still made performances? Wasn't it something of the 70's or even before that?

Of course everything for us was always fresh and new, and to belong to those chosen ones of the world of performance art, witty and free, gave us the feeling of participating in a marvelous world of unique lucidity, as though the world, through art, was actually revealing itself to us as it really was.

Armando Azevedo, a visual artist and performer, was my introduction to performance, mainly through his vivid narratives. He was one of the strongest activists of performance and conceptual art in Portugal since the early 70's. Based in Coimbra, Armando lived artistically throughout the first years of the Carnation Revolution. And in the "Círculo das Artes Plásticas de Coimbra" were the headquarters for forms of artistic activism that defied the strongly ideological way of dealing with reality in those days.

<sup>1</sup> "(...) the point that they've brought out so well and interesting one is they play for you a play of boredom. It has been ... I'm not discovering that, but it's a very interesting to have used boredom as an aim to attract a public. In other words, the public comes to a happening not to be amused but to be bored. And that's quite an invention a contribution to new ideas is in it." Marcel Duchamp in a BBC interview by Joan Bakewell in 1968

Art lived the conquest of freedom, claiming also the right for ambiguity.

It was Armando who introduced me to Egídio Álvaro, a Portuguese/French art critic based in Paris with his “Galerie Diagonale”, a place for performances and installations, and from where he organized festivals in France, Italy, Germany, Holland... and, fortunately, Portugal.

I met him in Almada, a town next to Lisbon, one of the places where most of the Lisbon area working class lived.

And confirming how, in those days, a town with a left-wing mayor could be fond of an idea of art as a tool for change, and for a better world. And so, performances were quite welcome there.

It was in Almada that Egídio organized (with the help of the performer Manoel Barbosa) most of his International Performance Festivals, gathering many artists from different countries and creating there a temporary community of fascinating people who lived there, in performance, just for a few days, making the best out of it, hardly ever asking more than the scarce means they were given to make art happen.

We all slept on the floor of a school, closed for holidays and opened to us, these restless performers in their best performatic behaviour... and some were much quieter than others.

Aristocratically quiet and wise looking, in his generous grey moustache, was the Fluxus artist Serge III Oldenbourg. Except in his sleep. But, in that environment, his snoring seemed to me an involuntary Fluxus concert I had the privilege to witness.

Serge III was the one who had done a performance in 1969 (or Fluxus' concert?) hitchhiking with a piano. In 1982, in Almada, one of his performances was a “Concert for pianophone”, a small, handmade, single string instrument he kept on playing, hitting the same note in regular intervals, till he decided it was enough. What a wonderful idea of poetry, or what a wonderful attempt to get rid of it...

In that festival I confirmed how witty were Gerardo Burmester's performances, each performance as a short gag. Dipping a football in red paint and scoring goal in a net he had just spray-painted on the wall. Or, in a dark room, taking thousands of ping-pong balls from a black briefcase and making them jump, by throwing them to the floor. We could only see them for short instants thanks to the flashlight of his Polaroid camera whenever he took a shot. And there were so many white balls seeming to have stopped in the air, just because there was no time to watch any movement. And that frozen image lasted in our mind till it was replaced in the next Polaroid shot.



Albuquerque Mendes,  
Alternativa II, Almada,  
Portugal, 1982.

Armando Azevedo,  
Alternativa II, Almada,  
Portugal, 1982.

Gerardo Burmester,  
Alternativa II, Almada,  
Portugal, 1982.



Elisabete Mileu, Alternativa II, Almada, Portugal, 1982.

Serge III Oldenbourg, Alternativa II, Almada, Portugal, 1982.

Pedro Vasconcelos and Maria João Bastos' marriage, Alternativa II, Almada, Portugal, 1982.

Manoel Barbosa's performances titles, made of a sequence of letters, meaningless, at least for our earthly languages, were as mysterious and abstract as his actions that seemed to aim to be endless. As though we were given to see just a part of a ritual that might go on forever.

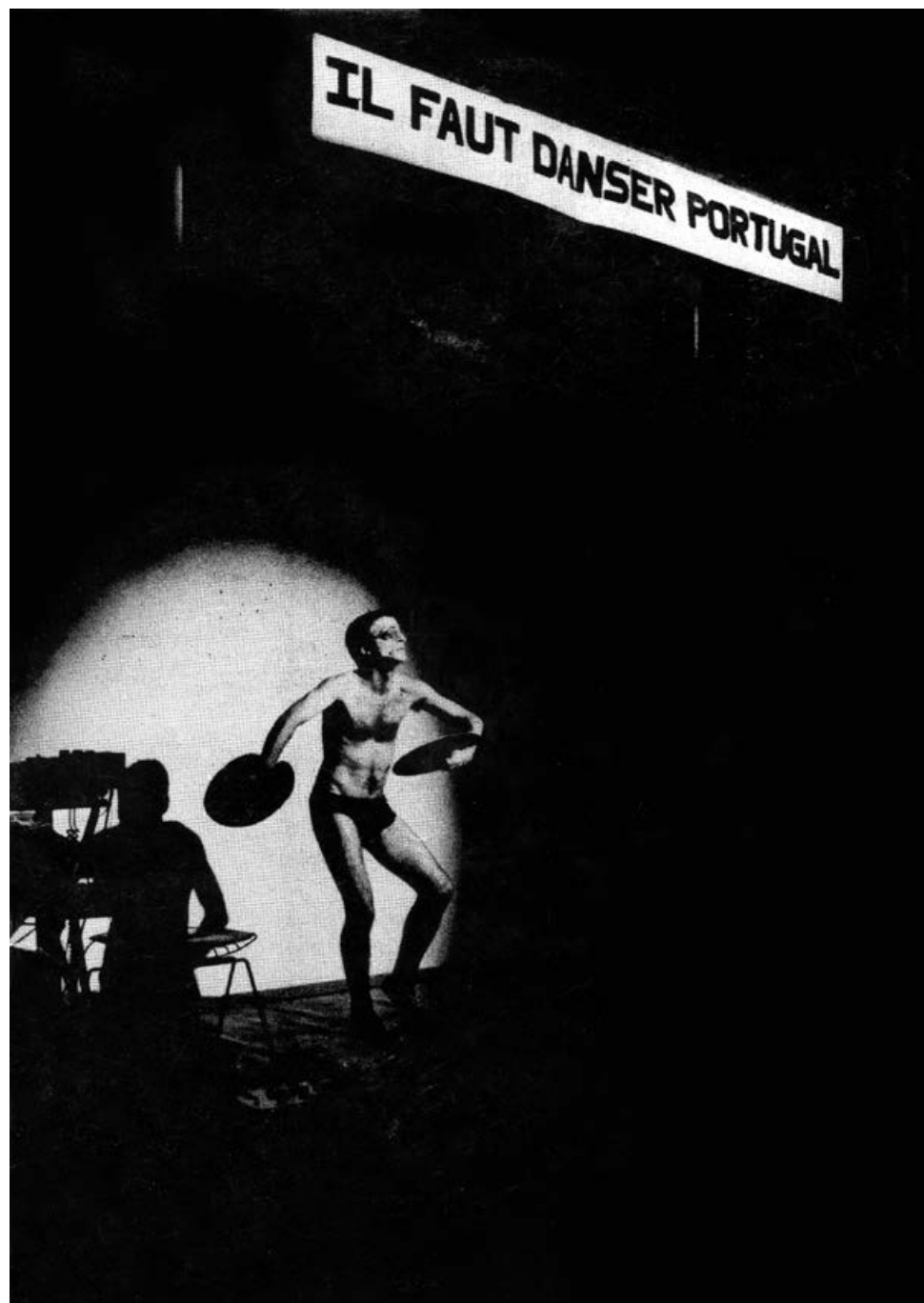
Armando Azevedo explored the conceptual scope of colours. In one of his performances, walking along the streets, kissing everything that was red, never refusing to do it whenever a red thing was there to be kissed. Or when he was performing as a painter, throwing colourful confetti to a canvas that kept nothing, but ending up with a wonderful, painterly, floor.

The German artist Natasha Fiala lying on the floor with a tight stray jacket tried very hard to paint a banana, the famous Andy Warhol's banana, with a brush in her teeth. And finally finishing it, adding an expressionist look that Pop image never had before, in a simultaneously sexy and tough feminist statement.

Albuquerque Mendes going to the barbershop and asking for a haircut and beard that would make him look like Stalin, using as a model one of his paintings he had just hang on the wall, where we could see Stalin and Lenin playing cards.

Elisabete Mileu, a gentle girl that experienced a complete mutation while performing, becoming the wildest creature, her naked body covered with silver paint, her mouth and teeth struggling with a smelly big fish and hitting hit violently on the floor, going back to a primal state long-forgotten to our species.

In someway, in those festivals, it seemed that performance had created a kind of alternative space to live, an alternative reality, a kind of simultaneously profane and sacred ground. It seemed to be sacred, at least for a young couple that decided that it was there they would marry. Staged with the help of Manoel Barbosa, their marriage happened on a wooden square floor, as a sacred wooden ground in the middle of one of the performances rooms. It was much more than a performance among other performances and it was probably more real than it was metaphorical. Dressed in virginal white clothes, Pedro Vasconcelos and Maria João Bastos celebrated their civil marriage there, for real. Not quite like marrying in Vegas, because this was meant to be quite serious and solemn.



Serious and fake, not quite like fiction, the world of performance presented itself in those festivals as a wonderful landscape from which you could go anywhere.

Having made my first performances there, they led later to something that looked almost like dance. Eventually something that pretended to pretend it was dance (and so, maybe it was really dance). Doing it without leaving the same place, like I did, two years later, in an emphatic and pathetic dance, wearing nothing but slippers and socks, ketchup for blood, dripping from my glasses. And a painter's pallet in each hand helping me to keep balance.

It happened at the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974, the Portuguese Carnation Revolution in a performance festival Egídio curated in Paris, in Pompidou. There I danced "You made me love you" sung by Nat King Cole, in a choreography where the movements tried to be as fluid as possible, attempting to have my whole body in motion, but never leaving the same place, my body weight in just one leg... The title was written high on the stage. "Il faut danser Portugal" was meant to be a strong statement that might be read as an order for Portugal to dance, or just Portugal being the music you should dance to.

As an artist, I may testify how performance may structure what you may do in art. Some decades passed, I still recognize those early performances as the ground that structures everything I did and I do, whatever media I use. Having never used dance again in such a way in my performances, the idea of dance, or even dance as a metaphor, more than dance itself, was a way to traduce a conceptual medium that enables you to put everything together, or the engine that may put everything in action.

"You made me love you. I didn't want to do it, I didn't want to do it". Of course I did! Or maybe I didn't... The lyrics of this song may have told me more than I expected them to. At least by making you think, when it comes to art, about what it has to do with will and what has nothing to do with it. In art (now quoting the Rolling Stones) you may not "always get what you want", but surely you're not getting "what you need", because art is something of quite a different nature. Maybe you get what you're told to, eventually by yourself, if you prefer to believe so... And you tell yourself to take what you really don't need. In a marvelous way, art tells you that if you need it, you shouldn't take it.

Manoel Barbosa com Silvestre Pestana, Alternativa III, Almada 1983

António Olaio, Pompidou, Paris, 1984.

**ANTÓNIO OLAIO, COIMBRA JULY 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2017**

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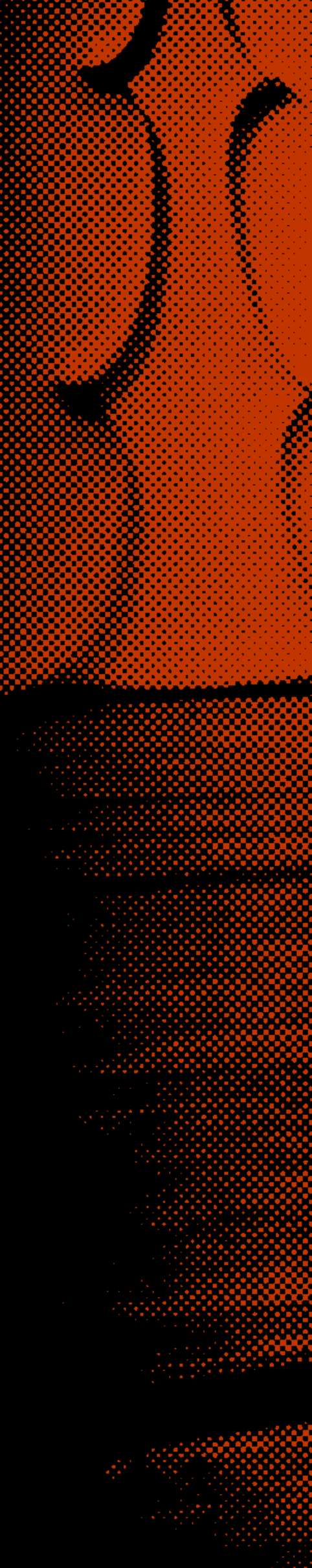
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AND A POLITICAL  
COUNTER-DISCOURSE**



## ÂNGELO DE SOUSA AND THE HAPPENING TO BEAT OR NOT TO BEAT: A FORGOTTEN STORY AND A POLITICAL COUNTER-DISOURSE

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present the happening *To beat or not to beat*, which took place in Porto in two sessions on the 29th and 30th June 1967 at the city’s Experimental Theatre (TEP). In order to document the event I will use a newspaper article and oral testimonies, one of them from the painter Ângelo de Sousa, who was at that time a lecturer at the Porto School of Fine Arts. I will discuss those two performative moments and their subversive impact at the time, as a counter-discourse to the regime and the political situation of Salazar’s dictatorship in the place that they were devised. Finally, I will underline synthetically the importance of this happening and the performative gesture in Ângelo de Sousa’s work.

**KEYWORDS** PERFORMANCE HISTORY; 1960S; HAPPENING;  
ÂNGELO DE SOUSA

### RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objectivo apresentar o happening *To beat or not to beat*, que teve lugar em duas sessões em 29 e 30 de Junho de 1967 no Teatro Experimental no Porto (TEP). Para o documentar usarei um artigo de jornal e testemunhos orais, um deles de Ângelo de Sousa, que era por essa altura professor na Escola de Belas Artes do Porto. Discutirei esses dois momentos performativos e o seu impacto subversivo na época, como um contra-discurso ao regime ditatorial de Salazar e à situação política então vivida. A concluir, sublinharei sinteticamente a importância deste happening e do gesto performativo na obra de Ângelo de Sousa.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** HISTÓRIA DA PERFORMANCE; ANOS 60’;  
HAPPENING; ÂNGELO DE SOUSA



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EDITORIAL



DOSSIER



PRINT

## Introduction

**T**o *beat or not to beat* was a *happening* that took place in Porto in two sessions on 29th and 30th June 1967 at the city's Experimental Theatre (TEP). The event involved actors from the TEP and teachers and students at the Porto School of Fine Arts, including the young painter Ângelo de Sousa (1938-2011), who had a prominent role in this *happening* (Serra 2005). Not only did he mobilized his friends, teachers and students of the School, but he also created the scenery. His friend, the musician Jorge Constante Pereira (1958-),<sup>1</sup> who had the idea of the event, had devised the texts and the musical background, while João Guedes (1921-1983), an actor and *metteur-en-scène* at the TEP, supported the group making the technical arrangements.

Due to the fact that Ângelo de Sousa had been a well-known lecturer since 1962 and was a frequent TEP collaborator and set designer, he was able to mobilize colleagues and students, such as the young painter Joaquim Pinto Vieira (1946-) and the sculptor João Machado (1942-).

The initiative was borne of this milieu of camaraderie and dialogue between teachers and students at the Porto School of Fine Arts, where everyone knew each other and lived in relative freedom, due to their comparable remoteness from Lisbon, the capital, where the Salazar regime censorship was most stringent. However, there are virtually no material documents of the happening, but only some oral testimonies (my interviews with Ângelo de Sousa<sup>2</sup> and Constante Pereira<sup>3</sup>), a written account by Julio Gago<sup>4</sup>, an email from Joaquim Pinto Vieira, then a student and later a teacher at the Porto School of Fine Arts, and, finally, a leaflet that was distributed to the spectators<sup>5</sup> and an article by the journalist Hugo Rocha published in *O Comércio do Porto* on 30 June.

This represents the barest essentials for an archive. Is it possible to capture those moments via these fragmented testimonies and thus make them survive through time? My aim is not just to reconstruct the happening as it happened, but rather to try to transmit, in a mediatized form, those two performative moments and their subversive impact at the time in which they took place. This means, however, that they

are not 'a stable item of value that is preserved' (Schneider 2001, quoted by Müller 2015, 22). In Irene Müller's definition, performance documentation is a flexible cluster of manifold 'pre- and after-lives' of a live event', affiliated with 'various forms of authorship and intertwined processes of media transfers.' (Müller 2015, 22).

*To beat or not to beat*, which had the sub-title of "The evolution of American popular song", is a "flexible cluster" which took place within the context of the first Portuguese experiences with experimental music and spatial poetry, as conducted by the PO-EX Group.<sup>6</sup> It was precisely two months after the 'Conference-Object' (Conferência-Objecto) *happening* by the PO-EX Group at the Gallery Quadrante in June 1967 that *To beat or not to beat* was conceived. At that time Ângelo was about to leave for London with a scholarship from the British Council to attend an advanced course on painting at St Martin's School of Art. The title Ângelo gave to it played with the meaning of the verb *bater* ('to beat'), while making reference to the Beat Generation and the famous phrase from *Hamlet*, 'To be or not to be'. Constante Pereira, then a young student and a music composer who collaborated with the TEP, imagined a sort of conference on American folk music, because at the time theatrical shows were submitted to censorship, so a music conference had a better chance of avoiding prohibition.

Besides the conference, they put together a 'collage' of poems and other texts that echoed the protest element of writings of North American authors from the Beat Generation. It is worth remembering that this generation was from the USA, which like Portugal was living through a colonial war at that time, in their case the Vietnam War.

Ângelo designed the stage device and Constante Pereira organized a musical

<sup>1</sup> Jorge Constante Pereira, composer and playwright was, too, one the first professionals in Portugal in the area of psychomotricity therapy, alternating the work in this field with a permanent activity of musical composer and author of texts for theatre and television.

<sup>2</sup> Interview to Ângelo de Sousa by Filomena Serra at the artist's atelier, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Interview to Jorge Constante Pereira by Filomena Serra, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Julio Gago, personal communication and two Facebook messages March 3 and 11, 2015.

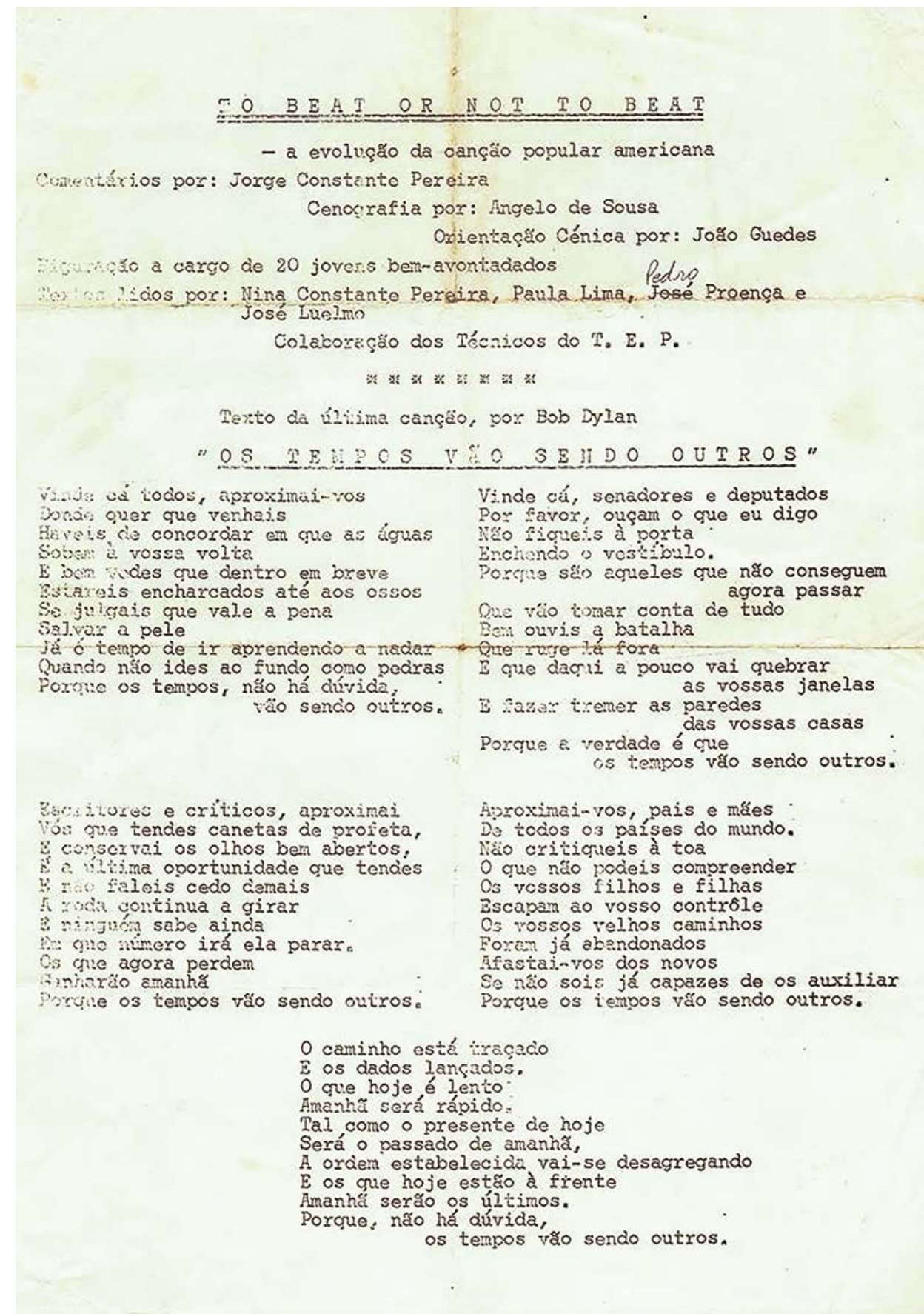
<sup>5</sup> To which we had access through Julio Gago ex-director of TEP.

<sup>6</sup> It was in 1963, with the publication of the two issues of *Poesia Experimental* (edited by António Aragão and Herberto Helder) that was created the *Grupo de Poesia Experimental* — the PO.EX, which meant to expand the term *experimental* into a metamorphosis of the world and of things. It was evidently a «mental attitude of investigation and search of the artist's vital synchronism», as it reads in Melo e Castro's *A Proposição*. In 1965, after John Cage gave his concert-conference in Lisbon (1962), the first Portuguese happening, entitled "Concerto e audição pictórica", took place on January the 7<sup>th</sup> at the Gallery Divulgação. Several members of PO.EX participated in it, such as António Aragão, Clotilde Rosa, E. Melo e Castro, Manuel Baptista, Jorge Peixinho, Mário Falcão and Salette Tavares. Both happenings were associated to exhibitions: the first one to the collective exhibition *Visopoemas* of the Poesia Experimental Exposição Colectiva team, inaugurated a few days earlier, with António Aragão, Melo e Castro, Herberto Helder, António Barahona da Fonseca and Salette Tavares; the second one was associated to the exhibition and publication of *Operação I*.

introduction with lyrics that touched upon the Beat music of Bob Dylan, such as "Times are changing", and songs by Woody Guthrie. For his part, the actor João Guedes directed the show in order to unify a scenario that apparently lacked any no sense. During each of the two sessions, the School of Fine Arts students — Nina Constante Pereira, Paula Lima, Pedro Proença and José Loelmo — read several texts, recited poems and immersed themselves in all sorts of performative actions on the stage. In an interview with Constante Pereira in 2001, he stated that he had been looking for the latest documentation and music, and was fascinated to discover the writers and poets Jack Kerouac, Alan Ginsberg and Gary Snyder and several other authors of the Beat Generation like Gregory Corso and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Angelo, too, declared himself a great admirer of those writers and that music. Meanwhile, Angelo collaborated with João Guedes in the theatre and soon brought him on board for the project. They soon got the idea that the TEP would be the best place to perform the event.

Jorge Constante Pereira recalls that on the first night the small theatre was full. He did an introduction that lasted about five minutes, a sort of a musical conference. After that he brought out a big ream of paper with nothing written on it; it was just to impress the audience, who included their friends and several other people from the School of Fine Arts.

Meanwhile, Constante Pereira made a serious speech. Suddenly the lights (directed by Fernando Teixeira) came up and he declared that there was going to be a 15-minutes interval. But this break was not a normal interval. He recalls that everybody was puzzled and 'looked kind of stupid' when they saw that he had changed clothes. The 'décor' and the *lights* had also changed. Constante Pereira recalled that when the spectators came back, there was a dark ambience typical of a *caveau* with psychadelic lights. He himself was dressed in a grey shirt and bell-bottom trousers. More characters now entered the scene, reciting poems. Some musical records were played while the apocalyptic actions occurred. Several versions of texts were uttered as the lights went on and off, and a mix of songs was heard. Constante Pereira was still on stage and started hammering on pieces of wood and steel plates, as well



To beat or not to beat Program, Porto, Junho 1967. Courtesy Júlio Gago.



as a door that Ângelo had painted with illuminated stains and some structures made of metal tubes. Everything was used to make noise. Close to the finish, Constante Pereira announced that he was going upstairs. Two stage engineers then pulled him up with pulleys and, when he was on top, a cry was heard and something fell on the floor. Pum! It was a puppet dressed exactly like him. The public must have thought that he had fallen from the heights when they saw the puppet plummet downwards. Suddenly, the lights went off and there was chaos. When the lights went on again, all the actors involved walked towards the audience. Some people loved it, while others were horrified and complained after the session. The students told the TEP management that they wanted to do another show. Constante Pereira adds that the theatre directors, who at that time were 'connected to the Communist Party [which was illegal under the dictatorship], said NO: it was not convenient; it was not possible. People had been invited to a conference

and not to see all that 'sing-song'. But there was so much pressure from the public that the TEP direction reluctantly had to give in'.

The second show involved more people: around twenty students from the School of Fine Arts, as well as Ângelo, Constante Pereira, João Guedes and the actors. The last scene was modified because each participating group of student 'finalists' invented a gag of their own. Constante Pereira tells us that at the end, 'when a rather lengthy musical piece was played, they grasped a plaster *mamarracho* [defective statue] from the School's life modelling classes, dubbed 'St Mary's statue'; they painted it with a bikini with small coloured balls and destroyed it with a Black & Decker tool as though they were performing an ultra-sadist ritual. Actually, they had several of those plaster models, but I only remember that one.' He also remembers 'Joaquim Vieira Pinto standing before the public, making holes in 'Maria's' breasts with refinement.'

Ângelo de Sousa, *Environment*  
[*Alternativa Zero*, Lisbon, 1977],  
Serralves Museum, Porto, 1998.  
PHOTOS BY ÂNGELO DE SOUSA.  
COURTESY MIGUEL DE SOUSA.

Some students from the School came to help with the event, in numbers that went far beyond those of the previous session. However, he does not remember whether they repeated the scene of the falling puppet. He concludes that “It was lots of fun!”

On the other hand, Júlio Gago, who later became a dynamic art director of the TEP, stresses that “this event was the first pluri-disciplinary show to be organized in Portugal. The various artistic and literary areas were represented [...] and took the perception of the body and its senses to the extreme through acting, making theatrical art predominant, mixing all of the different areas together, but leading them.’ Júlio Gago also states that ‘these enthusiastic young people, mainly composed of students at the School of Fine Arts and some actors from the TEP, was joined by well-known people from Porto’s intellectual circles, or those aspiring to join their ranks’. He noticed that the show was viewed with delight by people like Ernesto de Sousa, the musicians Jorge Peixinho and Joly Braga Santos, painters like Júlio Resende, Augusto Gomes, José Rodrigues, Armando Alves, Jorge Pinheiro and José Mouga, and the Porto gallerist Jaime Isidoro. Also present were the poet Eugénio de Andrade, the writers Deniz Jacinto and Bernardo Santareno (who was Porto at the time and with whom we discussed the matter several times), and also other friends, including Fernando Gusmão, Manuel Pinto and Fernando Barroso and ‘Zé Bizarro ... plus the management board of the CCC/TEP, led by the writer João Araújo Correia.<sup>7</sup>

The daily *O Comércio do Porto*, so far as I know the only newspaper that wrote about the event, mentioned an ‘astonished audience’ who had watched ‘a demonstration of anti-theatre *à la* Ionesco’, with half-improvised absurd situations and sounds, lights, mixed songs and music, as well as various entrances and exits, a performer who was pulled towards their ceiling, and a dummy that eventually fell to the floor at the same time as the plaster statues were punctured.<sup>8</sup>

The mediation proffered by the fragmented recollections of those who experienced the event have presented us with an ensemble of ‘improvised sketches’, which reveal that these performative moments evade labels and definitions (Cohen

2002, 128), making our research a performative process (Müller 2015, 24). Moreover, those ‘anarchic characteristics’ may be understood as political and socially engaged actions that surpass the artistic context and its modes of institutional organization, be it the Porto School of Fine Arts or the TEP itself.

We may, however, as theorized by the Brazilian performer Renato Cohen, point out the following performative elements (Cohen 2002, 132-140), which from the very outset emerged as alternative and a mode of intervention in the political reality, even without an explicit theory:

- The conference conveys a combative discourse that concludes with a deconstruction text and with visual elements that draw upon the absurd, the uncommon, irony and simulation;
- The use of poems and prose from Beat songs leading to free writing, which is hybrid and has no stylistic preoccupations;
- The use of collage as a structure involved in both the creative process of the show and the final realization of the spectacle;
- There is an anarchic process of creation without an emphasis on either the word nor the image;
- Its estrangement and weirdness are not of the type idealized by Berthold Brecht, i.e. imposing the observation of a given object by detaching it from others, but instead by creating new uses for objects, such as the ‘statue of Mary’;
- While recreating images and objects, non-conformity is emphasized in order to reach another reality;
- Noises create a kind of collision with the clichés and predictability of theatre;
- There is a freedom of acting, allowing the participants to eschew the initial script, for instance in the second show;
- The viewer experiences Freud’s ‘principle of pleasure’ (Dionysus), rather than the ‘principle of reality’ (Apollo). It addresses transgression as well as freedom of creation, without commitments to the public’s expectations.

*To beat or not to beat* fell within an initial period of ‘hybrid art’ in Portugal (Madeira 2007, 236); a transgressive period, an

<sup>7</sup> Julio Gago, Facebook message March 11, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Rocha, Hugo (H. R.). 1967. ‘Teatro António Pedro — O espectáculo ‘To beat or not to beat’, pela Escola do Círculo de Cultura Teatral’. Porto: *O Comércio do Porto* (30 June).



Ângelo de Sousa, [Metal Strips], *EXPOA/CA72*, National Society of Fine Arts (Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes, SNBA), Lisboa, 1972. PHOTOS BY ÂNGELO DE SOUSA. COURTESY MIGUEL DE SOUSA.





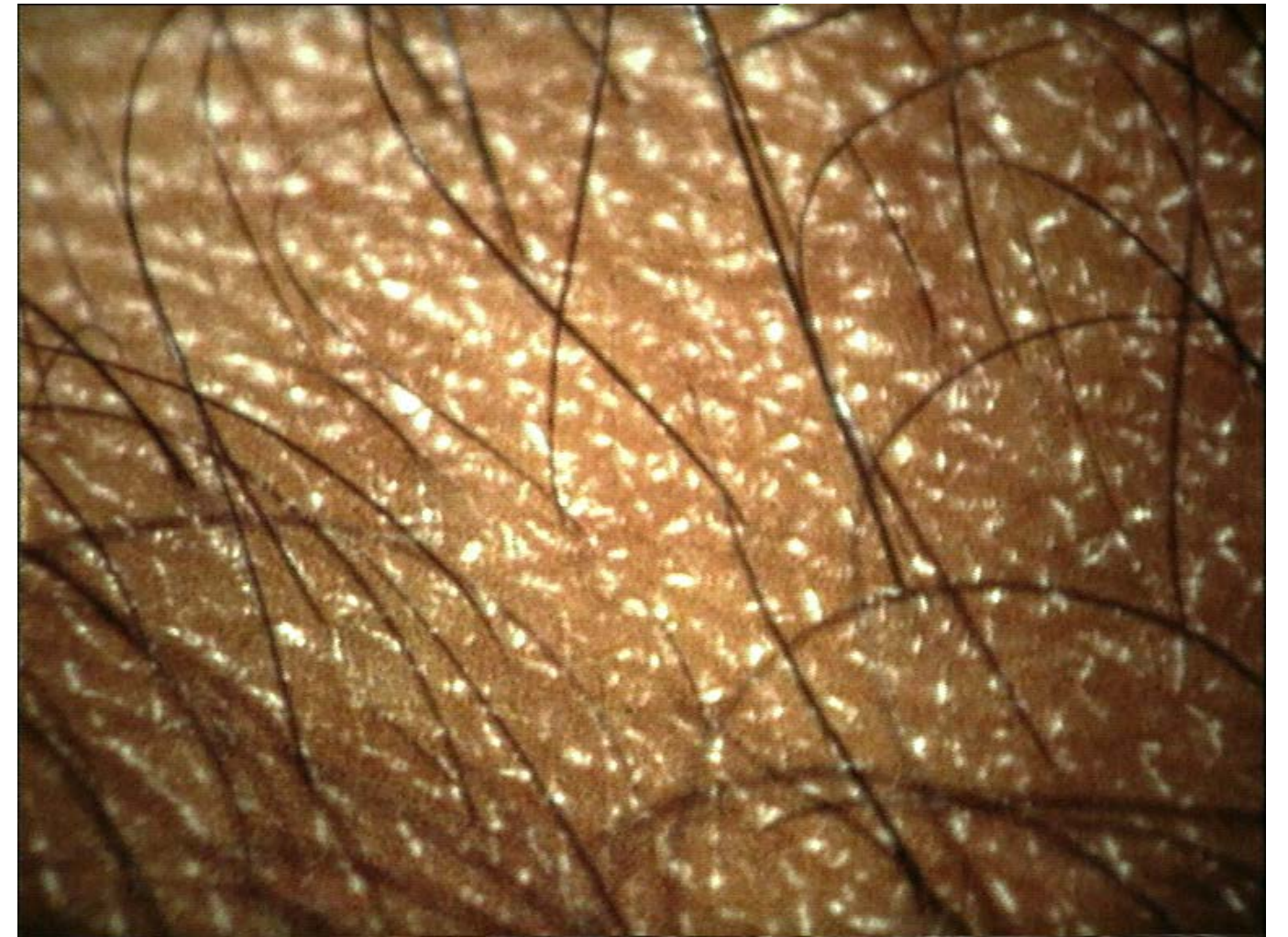
Ângelo de Sousa, [Metal Strips], Valentim de Carvalho Gallery, Lisboa, 1985.  
PHOTOS BY ÂNGELO DE SOUSA. COURTESY MIGUEL DE SOUSA.

experiment in art, whose hybrid practices emerge as a flood in a changing context, despite its 'slow and difficult assertion' (Wandshneider 1999). Those were times of resistance to the authoritarian regime and the colonial war that had been raging since 1961. The country was then bled by the mass emigration of workers and expatriate artists. In Porto Ângelo de Sousa, Jorge Constante Pereira and the actor João Guedes, as well as the students and other participants, were responding to the *Zeitgeist*, thus diverging from a mere rhetoric of transgression for the sake of transgression. Taking a broad perspective, we can place it within the context of cultural protest prevailing at the time among the younger generation. Due to its irreverence, it somehow anticipates the mood of May '68, a momentous event that sparked profound social changes in Western Europe and the art world.

Indeed, in Portugal those years were times of innovations, of breaks with old naturalisms and modernisms; with figurations and abstractions; with realisms and surrealisms. Essentially, what was at stake was the nature of art beyond the frontiers of the medium and the art experience as a proper life event and a moment of history, by looking towards future times of freedom.

*To beat or not to beat* bore testament to the activity of some artists and the expansion of art's borders, meaning that its stance was an increasingly experimental one. Ângelo de Sousa was one of such artists. His career as a painter started in the late 1950s with a work that we might associate with free figuration, exalting an 'orphic joy' and celebrating the landscape, the house, the flower or the animal (Almeida 2016a, 293). From that point onwards, however, he was always keen to examine drawing and its perception as a 'floating plane' (José Gil 2015) or an 'action drawing' (Ângelo de Sousa, cited by Nuno Faria 2003, 82),<sup>9</sup> as well as painting and new materials, processes and situations. By 1964 had thus accomplished a passage from painting to sculpture and was focusing his attention on materials such as polyester and glass fibre, on folded sheets of iron and steel, and three-dimensional formal explorations, which he sometimes painted in complementary

<sup>9</sup> Ângelo de Sousa spoke of his drawings as a form of writing, an "action drawing", something that had to do with an instantaneous discovery and that was not the same thing in the case of the painting.



colours, thus investigating and problematizing space (Alves 2012, 182-183). In the Summer of 1967, before leaving for London, he planned *To beat or not to beat*. Once in London, he gave continuity, both in painting and sculpture, to his research into different materials by pursuing this interest, encouraged by the ideal working conditions that he found in London. He then produced the series 'Sculptures' in acrylic, iron and steel sheets, which, adhering to the physical characteristics of the materials, he created on several planes as an experimental game exploring three-dimensionality and the relationship with the observer. His intense interdisciplinary research continued in his later works, which involved the use of language in media, and eventually led him to installation, photography and film (Serra 2004). It was in London that he made most of the thousands of colour slides that he later called *Epiphanies* (*Epifanias*). And for many years he obsessively photographed

the same motifs: plants, clouds, trails left by aeroplanes in the sky, buildings, dead animals and the rope hanging at the back of his house. All these were the result of casual circumstances, because he did not want to have a programme or a project. He was, as Sergio Mah called him, a *flâneur* in his 'epiphanic detection of reality' (Mah 2014).

On his return to Portugal, he was part of the Quatro Vintes Group<sup>10</sup> that exhibited collectively for the first time in Porto at the Galeria Alvarez and Árvore – Cooperativa de Actividades Artísticas (Serra 2005). The challenges posed by his work revealed the expansion of his concept of medium due to the three-dimensional experiences with new materials, video and photography that Ângelo de Sousa initiated during his stay at London in 1967-68 and continued to pursue after his permanent return to Portugal. Such processes are visible in, for instance, the video

Ângelo de Sousa, *The Hand* (London, 1968).

PHOTOS BY ÂNGELO DE SOUSA.  
COURTESY MIGUEL DE SOUSA.

<sup>10</sup> The *Quatro Vintes Group* was formed in 1968, on Porto, by Ângelo de Sousa, the painters Armando Alves, Jorge Pinheiro and José Rodrigues.

*The Hand* (London, 1968), or in the metal strips presented in an exhibition at the National Society of Fine Arts (SNBA, 1972), culminating with the presentation of an environment at the *Alternativa Zero*, a programmatic collective exhibition which took place in Lisbon in 1977 (Serra 2004; 2005).

But Ângelo never gave up painting. An 'ideal immateriality' attracted him to minimalist painting, although he was also distanced from it by his immense 'formal freedom', which summoned the viewer to the state of utter 'completeness' offered by each painting (Almeida 2016a, 294). Returning to white painting and creating a 'Catalogue of forms for the hands of all', Ângelo de Sousa adopted a height of formal simplification that corresponds to the modular structures of sculptures and photographic repetitive experiences, as well as his experimental cinema (Almeida 2016, 295).

From the time of *To beat or not to beat*, Ângelo never abandoned the idea of the performative gesture (Serra 2004) and, ultimately, the performative body — both the gesture of the artist's body and that of the spectator — as a transmitter of meaning and a research method.

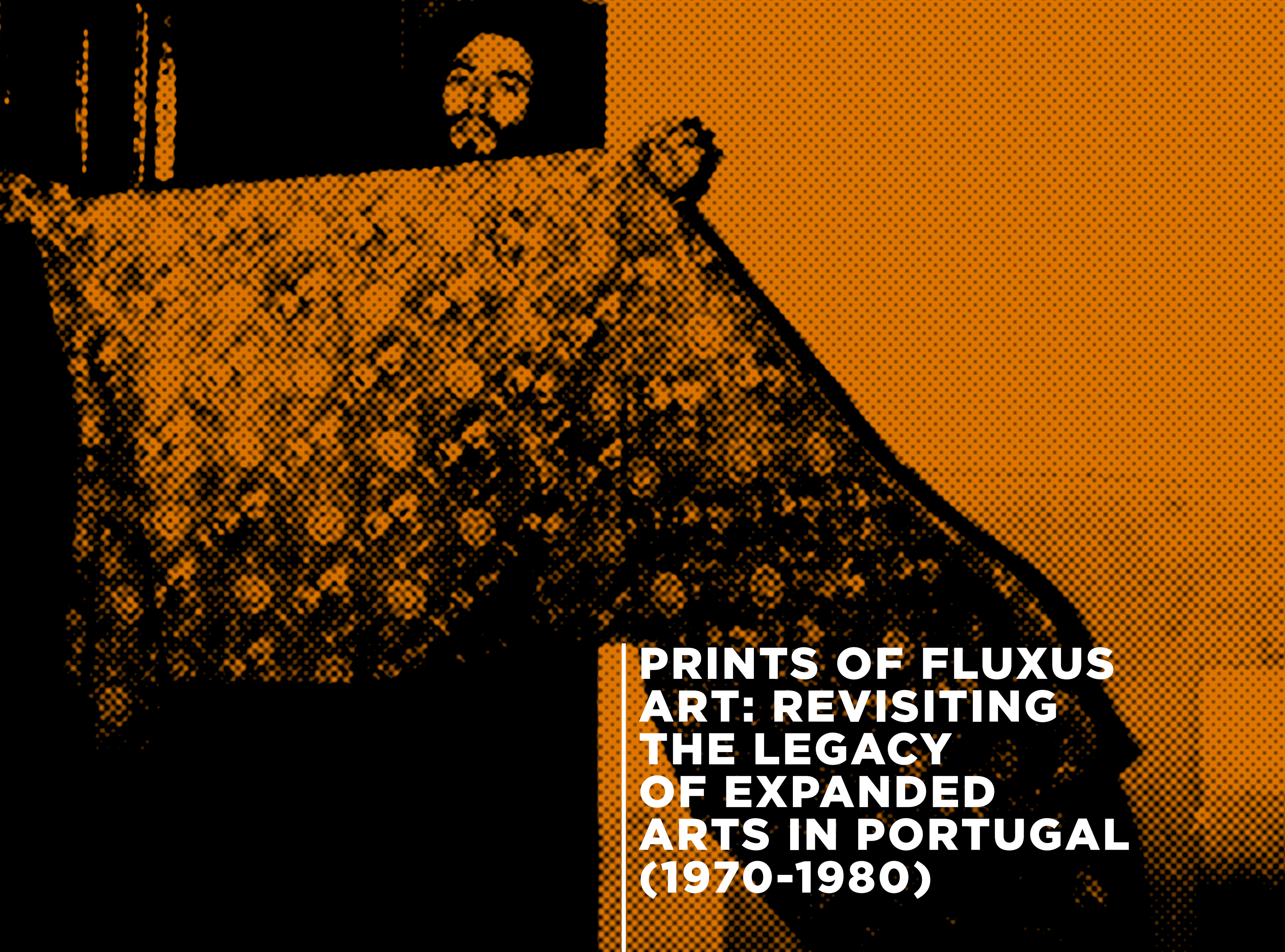
### Finally

The author would like to thank all those who gave their testimony about *To beat or not to beat*. In the first place to Ângelo de Sousa himself, now deceased, but always present in my memory, who was the first to tell me about the happening when I was doing my Masters on Angelo's work; second, to Jorge Constante Pereira whom I interviewed at the same time in 2001; more recently, Joaquim Pinto Vieira, with whom I got in contact via email, confirmed his participation. Last but not least, I would like to thank Júlio Gago, the dynamic director and generous spreader of TEP for their additional information. Acknowledgments finally to MVC for his help with the earlier English version of this text. Miguel de Sousa for the images

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**PRINTS OF FLUXUS  
ART: REVISITING  
THE LEGACY  
OF EXPANDED  
ARTS IN PORTUGAL  
(1970-1980)**

## PRINTS OF FLUXUS ART: REVISITING THE LEGACY OF EXPANDED ARTS IN PORTUGAL (1970-1980)

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### ABSTRACT

This article is a result of the research carried out in PhD on the correspondences of an art of canon Fluxus (1961) in Portugal, from the perspective of the concept of “intermedia” by the international flux artist Dick Higgins, and of a communication presented at the Symposium of Portuguese Art, held at the Berardo Museum (CCB Lisbon), on July 20, 2016. From the notion of “Intermedia”, which refers to the convergence between media that merge with each other and create a new medium, it was explored the influence of Fluxus International in a series of events that took place in Portugal between 1960 and 1980, based on study cases, the Fluxus semantic and critical texts of the time. This was a period of great creative effervescence that resulted in the intense participation of many protagonists in collective events, so, unfortunately, it will not be possible to cover all here. It was highlighted the action of Ernesto de Sousa, the “Esthetic Operator” by Ernesto Melo e Castro, the neo-concretist poet, and of Antonio Barros, the visual poet. With this analysis, it was intended to highlight the expanded arts in Portugal in this period, in order to give visibility to the heritage of an ‘art-communication’ that remains opaque and surely will be useful to the understanding of contemporary communication phenomena.

**KEYWORDS** FLUXUS; INTERMEDIALITY; CORRESPONDENCES; EXPANDED-ARTS; ART-COMMUNICATION

### RESUMO

Este artigo resulta da investigação desenvolvida em sede de doutoramento sobre as correspondências de uma arte de cânon Fluxus (1961) em Portugal, na perspectiva do conceito de “intermedia” do artista e investigador do Fluxus internacional Dick Higgins, e de uma comunicação apresentada por ocasião do Simpósio de Arte Portuguesa, no Museu Berardo (CCB Lisboa), a 20 de julho de 2016. A partir da noção de “Intermedia”, que se refere à convergência entre meios que se fundem entre si e criam um novo meio, abordou-se a influência do Fluxus internacional numa série de eventos acontecidos em Portugal entre 1960 e 1980, com base em casos de estudo, no referencial semântico Fluxus e textos críticos da época. Foi este um período de grande efervescência criativa que se traduziu na participação intensa de inúmeros/as protagonistas em eventos colectivos, pelo que, infelizmente, não será possível abarcar todos/as aqui. Tendo sido destacada a acção de Ernesto de Sousa, o “operador Estético”, de Ernesto Melo e Castro, o poeta neo-concretista, e de António Barros, o poeta visual. Com esta análise, pretendeu-se evidenciar as artes expandidas em Portugal neste período, para assim visibilizar a herança de uma ‘arte-comunicação’ que perdura opaca e que, certamente, será profícua à compreensão de fenómenos de comunicação visual contemporâneos.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** FLUXUS; INTERMEDIALIDADE; CORRESPONDÊNCIAS; ARTES-EXPANDIDAS; ARTE-COMUNICAÇÃO



## Preamble

Prior to the mid-70s, Portugal was an isolated country as a result of the political regime that had been in power for over 40 years, thus delaying cultural development. Many artists had to leave the country to fulfil their need for freedom of expression and freedom of creation. The Revolution of April of 1974 finally opened the long-desired window. Nevertheless, there was a great way to go. For many “new” artists back then, as the artist and art *commissaire* Ernesto de Sousa writes, Portugal was still dominated by a hegemonic elite. De Sousa goes so far as to call it a *salon* (a French concept imported to the Portuguese lexicon), so to ridicule the assumption that art was a privilege for a small group of people but not accessible to all:

**“The *salon*. The permanence of French terms ably denounces the presence of a certain European strain (...) of Portuguese culture; the *vernissages* and other events that have had different yet reliable fortunes to this very day — perhaps because they could be covered by a small number of people who exclusively constituted the milieu: a more or less self-sufficient social micro-class, with conservative means of support and internal vanguards.”<sup>1</sup> (Sousa, 1977)**

Afterwards, the context of post-revolution brought out new artists and new ideas based on freedom, dialogue, transgression, and political and social intervention. Art became “life” and “action”. Moreover, the categorization of “fine arts” was dismissed from this new, transgressive, critical attitude to art.

A new trend in arts emerged, characterized by the idea of multiplicity: all *media* must be mixed, the events must be collective and pedagogic, art must be a critical attitude, art is to be lived, art must have a poetic dimension, art must be experimental and experienced, art is performance, art is “direct democracy” (as proposed by Joseph Beuys, the German Fluxus artist); and, fundamentally, art must be revolution against all norms, a regression to “zero” stadium, to a conceptual form.

## 1. “Memory is a silence that waits for?”<sup>2</sup>

The research undertaken showed that it is not possible to establish a linear chronological timeline between Fluxus events and this new art attitude in Portugal, in the focused period. But, it is undeniable that there is a straight correspondence between both art movements. To get there, the focus must be syncretic and based on the notion of “expanded arts” formalized by the Lithuanian George Maciunas (1973), which is “architect” of the International Fluxus.

In this regard, Ken Friedman, the Fluxus artist from the group based in California (USA) and international co-supervisor of this research, told me, in an informal remote conversation held in 2012, that the correspondence between international Fluxus and the experimental art in Portugal must be framed in a non-chronological way. This is in part due to the fact that Fluxus doctrines are timeless, according to its seminal definition of something in ‘flux’; and, because there was a delay in the emergence of the “expanded arts” in Portugal, something that can be explained by the fact that the country lived through one of the longest-lasting totalitarian regimes in Europe, which consequently isolated Portuguese culture from the rest of the world.

The text “Fluxus” by Ernesto de Sousa, published in the magazine *Opção* in 1978, was taken as the starting point for the reflection:

**“— And in Portugal? Of course, in Portugal there was and is a Fluxus spirit, even under the most disparate names: Abjectionism, Surrealism, Experimentalism, and even Dadaism, and no-name movements that are even more interesting. This is proven, for example, by Alternative Zero. But I assure you that there remains a lot to be done before we are through — let’s not be complacent.”<sup>3</sup> (Sousa, 1978)<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Original quote: “O “SALON”. A permanência de termos franceses denuncia bem a presença de um certo modo europeu (...) da cultura portuguesa; as *vernissages* e as outras manifestações afins tiveram fortuna diversa mas segura até hoje — talvez porque a sua cobertura pôde ser garantida por um número reduzido de pessoas, que constituíam precisamente o ‘milieu’: microclasse social mais ou menos autosuficiente, com suas reservas conservadoras, suas internas vanguardas.”

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the statement of António Barros, the visual artist from Coimbra, Portugal, (June 2016): “Mémorial d’abolition de l’esclavage” — Musée d’Histoire de Nantes in PAP — Simpósio Performance Arte Portuguesa 2016, Portugal.

<sup>3</sup> Original quote: “— E em Portugal? — Claro que em Portugal houve e há um espírito Fluxus, mesmo com os nomes mais díspares, abjecionismo, surrealismo, experimentalismo, e até dadaísmo, e sem-nome o que ainda é mais interessante. Isso provou-se por exemplo com Alternativa Zero. Mas — garanto-lhes — há muito que fazer até chegarmos à despesa inútil: não cruzemos os braços.”

<sup>4</sup> This text was republished and compiled by José Miranda Justo and Isabel Alves (1998), *Ser Moderno em Portugal...* Lisbon: Assírio Alvim, pp. 249-251.

1.1. Origins of Fluxus: defying classification

“Fluxus has been able to grow because it’s had room for dialogue and transformation. It’s been able to be born and reborn several times in different ways. The fluid understanding of its own history and meaning, the central insistence on dialogue and social creativity rather than on objects and artefacts have enabled Fluxus to remain alive on the several occasions that Fluxus has been declared dead.” (Friedman, 1998: FLUXUS IDEA ½, pp. 237-253)

The event “Fluxus Internationale. Festspiele Neuester Musik”<sup>5</sup> in 1962 (Wiesbaden, Germany), marked the beginning of a series of collective Fluxus art events. The “Festspiele Neuester Musik” comprised fourteen flux-concerts, including musical compositions and choreographies in a new performative scheme. Several artists took part, among them Joseph Beuys (Germany, 1921-1989), George Brecht (USA, 1926-2008), John Cage (USA, 1912-1992), Alison Knowles (USA, 1933-), Nam June Paik (South Korea, 1932-2006), Wolf Vostell (Germany, 1932-1998), Robert Watts (USA, 1923-1988), La Monte Young (USA, 1935-), and many others.

In 1962 and 1963-64, these concerts expanded to other European cities such as Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Paris, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Nice, Stockholm and Oslo. They were initially directed by George Maciunas and La Monte Young, who, along with Henry Flynt (USA, 1940) and Robert Morris (USA, 1931), mutually influenced action by Yoko Ono’s studio (Japan, 1933) and the proto-group YAM (initiated by Robert Watts and George Brecht, which is considered the prototype of Fluxus).

Although Fluxus is formally considered to have been created by George Maciunas in 1961, its genesis came long

FIG. 1 “Fluxus Internationale. Festspiele Neuester Musik” – poster (1962):

[http://post.at.moma.org/content\\_items/686-festum-fluxorum-posters-of-fluxus-festivals/media\\_collection\\_items/7034](http://post.at.moma.org/content_items/686-festum-fluxorum-posters-of-fluxus-festivals/media_collection_items/7034)

<sup>5</sup> “International Fluxus Festival of the Newest Music”

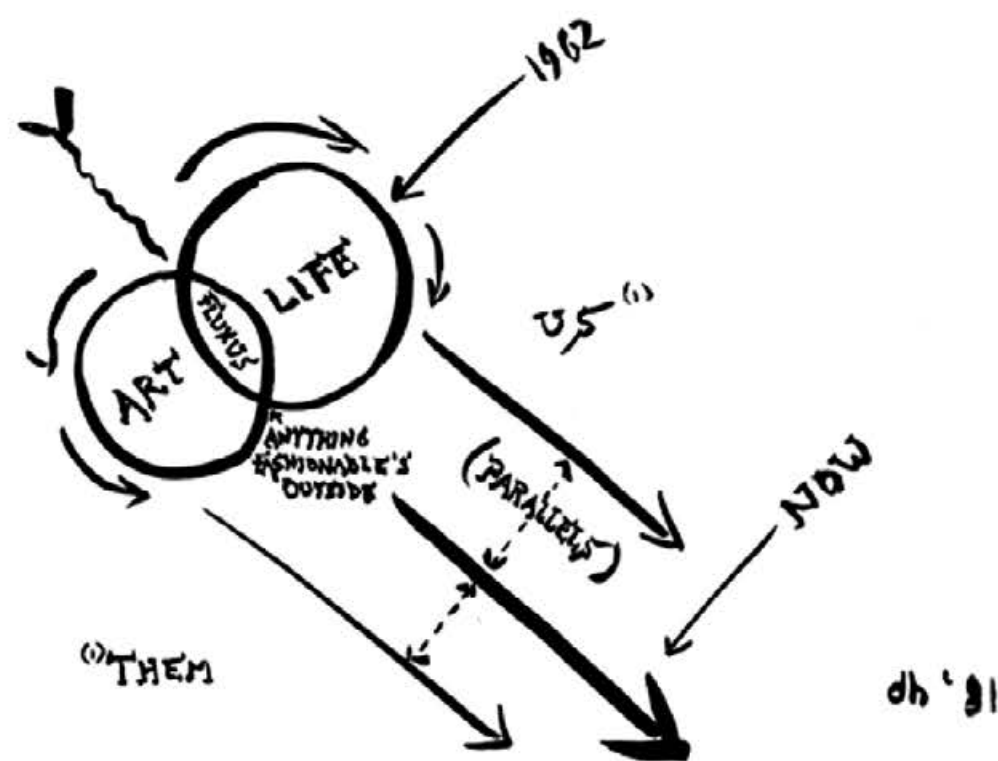


before, it is in the first and second avant garde movements and in John Cage's concrete music movement. According to Fischer-Lichte (1998, pp. 143-169), the "Untitled event" (1952) was very important because it initiated the first turning point in art history. From that point onwards, the proceedings of art changed radically. "Untitled event" is considered the proto-performance. The event featured the musician John Cage, the pianist David Tudor, the composer Jay Watts, the painter Robert Rauschenberg, the dancer Merce Cunningham and the poets Mary Caroline Richards and Chalets Olsen. During the happening the performers' guidelines (scores) were distributed, consisting of "parentheses of time" indicating moments of action, inaction and silence that each individual should fill. In this way, the score came to be used as instructive element of the performance. For Fischer-Lichte (1998, pp. 143-169), this action radicalized the performance as an everyday practice and as a musical event. The "Untitled event" outlined a new artistic field that was ruled by collective and interdisciplinary events, which incorporated performance and happening and the use of supporting documents, as manifestos, posters and music scores, in the same way that a concert or an orchestra does.

This prolixity of artists, their different geographical origins, disciplines, mediums used in the events and their resistance to becoming "history" made complicated to classify Fluxus as an art movement. As such, the artists felt the need to create their own story by materializing the memory of the events through using special artifacts, thereby ensuring their status as outcasts, free from all classificatory precepts. They began to incorporate manuscripts, manifests and diagrams with the view to 'fabricating' their own 'memory'. The main preoccupation was to create their own ways to communicate.

Dick Higgins, the English Fluxus artist, called Fluxus "intermedia", precisely defining it as flux or connection between ideas, doctrines, mediums and different art disciplines. With the aim of circumscribing the doctrinal field of Fluxus in a non-fixed form, he wrote the "Statement of Intermedia" (1996), where he declares intermedia to be the future of art:

**"Art is one of the ways that people communicate. It is difficult for me to imagine a serious person attacking any means of communication per se. Our real enemies are the ones who send us to die in pointless wars or to live lives which are reduced to drudgery, not the people who use other means of**



Intermedia Chart  
Dick Higgins

Molvena Italy  
19 January, 1995

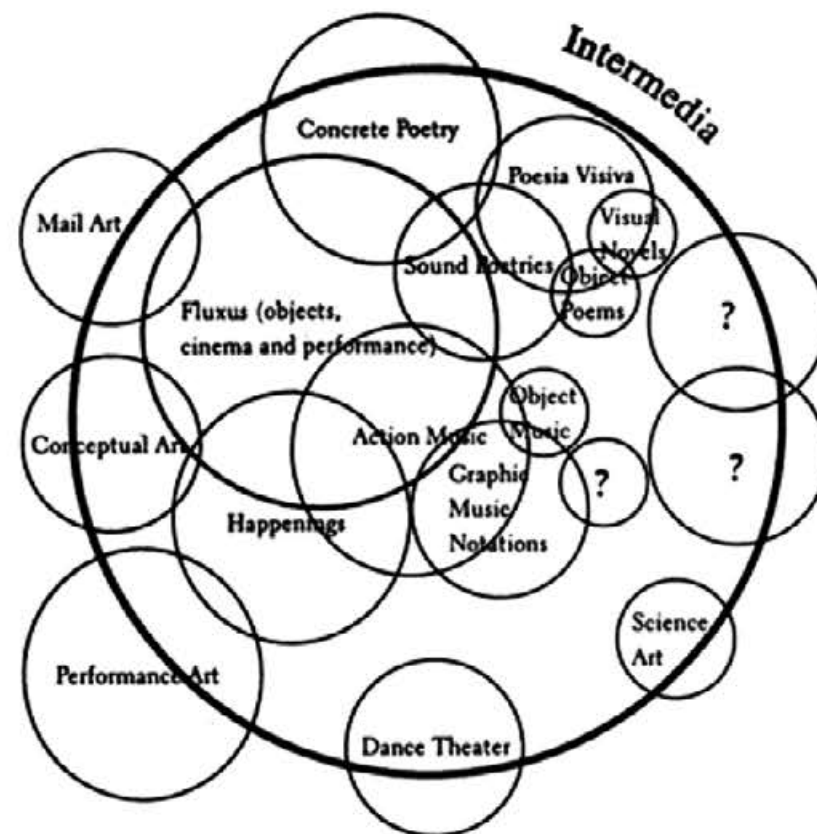


FIG. 2 Dick Higgins, "Fluxus Chart" (1995): <http://stendhalgallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/p1021.jpg>

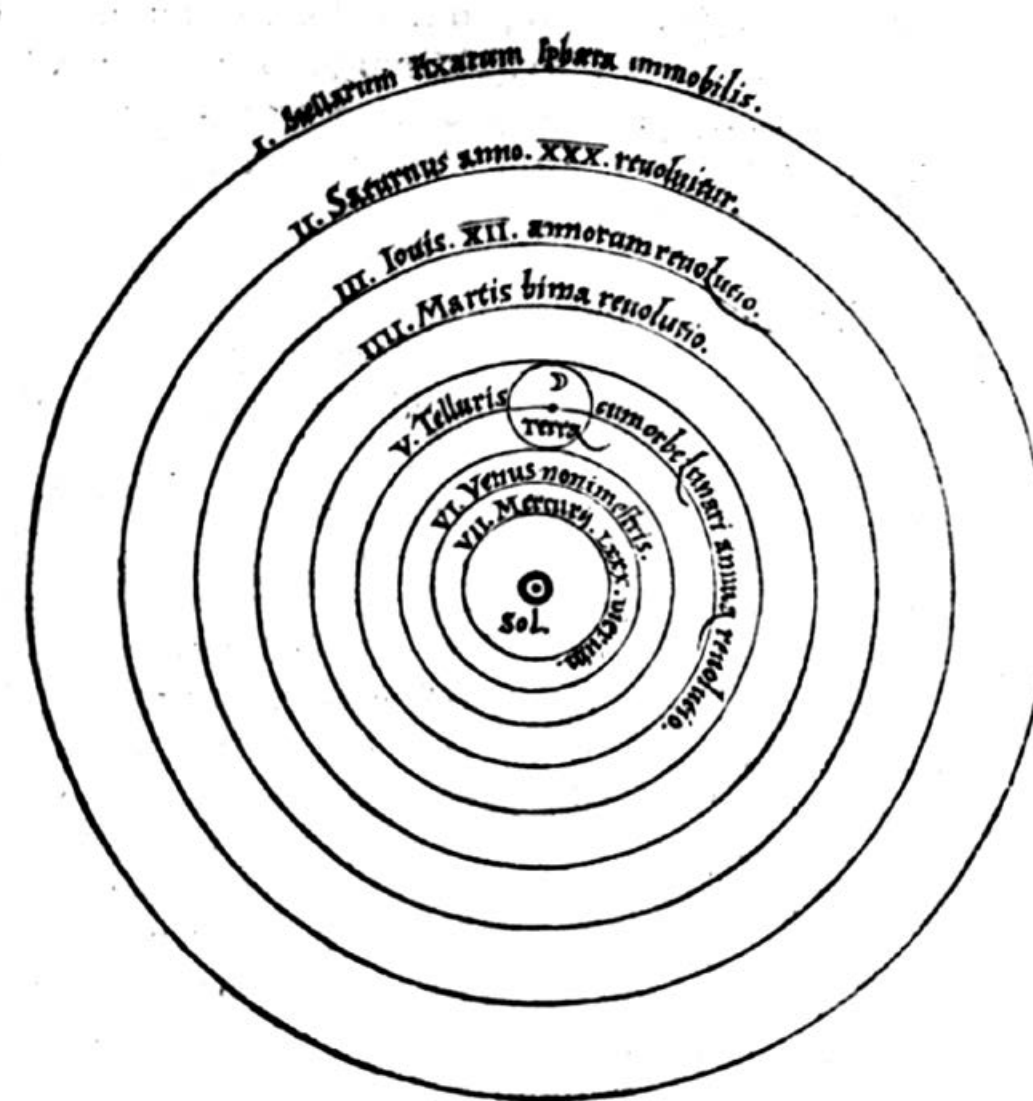
communication from those which we find most appropriate to the present situation. When these are attacked, a diversion has been established which only serves the interests of our real enemies.”<sup>6</sup>

Later, he conceived the “Intermedia chart” or the “Flux chart” (1995), a graphical representation of Fluxus in its innumerable links with other artistic and non-artistic disciplines and with the “science art”, as he called it. It was his conviction that it was not possible to submit Fluxus art to a chronology, because it was only representable in a cognitive inter-dynamic way, in flux between “life” and “art”, like a mini-web. This argument lends support to the notion that it is not possible to make a ‘history’ of Fluxus, because Fluxus is not classifiable as ‘history’ or even capable of being put in ‘museums’, as it is a “living art”, not a “dead art”.

He recovered the concept of “Horizontverschmelzung” (the method of the “fusion of horizons”) from the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960), and the concept of “intermedia” from the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1812), giving it an actual significance to define the language that lies conceptually between literature and experimental electronic music (Koltelanetz, 1980). The term expresses such interaction by delimiting a new aesthetic field generated from the border zones and presents a specific design that shows the interaction of ideas/concepts.

Fluxus artists produced innumerable figurations precisely to delimit the territory of Fluxus. It became a sort of obsession that led, namely Maciunas, in a long term projects: “The Charts”. This recalled the ideograms of Poetic Concretism (and Neo-Concretism),<sup>7</sup> which created a visual representation of the poetic text, exploring its triple dimension: visual, morph-semantic and phonetic; as well as drawing upon the diagrams of philosophy of science, used by philosophers and astronomers to explain the links between ideas, such as the those conceived by Galileo or Copernicus, driven by factors such as the invention of Gutenberg press (1491).

In 1966, George Maciunas, now resident in Germany, created the “Expanded Arts Diagram” with the precise aim



**FIG. 3** Nicolaus Copernicus, “The heliocentric diagram” (1473-1543): <https://hypescience.com/12-diagramas-que-mudaram-nossa-compreensao-do-sistema-solar/>

of representing the connections of Fluxus in art history, displaying the “history” of the “expanded arts” in a visual ontology and hypertextual analogical structure. This diagram was published in *Film Culture No. 43* (New York, 1966) and was printed in *Fluxfest Sale* (1966). These diagrams were linguistic-mathematical procedures that were introduced by Fluxus artists in the field of “new-media arts”.

In 1973, Maciunas also initiated what would be the largest map of the expanded arts, the “Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus and Other 4 Dimensional, Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial and Tactile Art Forms” or simply “The Chart” (1973). This figuration was

<sup>6</sup> Published in: Vostell, Wolf, ed. July 1967. “Dé-coll/age (décollage)\* 6, Typos Verlag, Frankfurt.” In *Something Else Press: New York* — excerpt

<sup>7</sup> For more information on this topic, view the Master’s thesis by Sónia Pina: *Fluxus: do texto à acção. A cartografia de uma a(r)titude — Fluxus em Portugal?*, 2011, p. 36-46: <http://hdl.handle.net/10362/7018>

ISSUE  
THREE WINTER  
ONEHUNDREDSIXTYSIX  
DOLLAR

# Film Culture - Expanded Arts

EXPANDED ARTS CENTER. Those who want either to book some of the events or to obtain more information on listed artists and events should write: EXPANDED ARTS CENTER, P.O. BOX 1601, NEW YORK, N.Y.

0-BAROQUE THEATRE, EXPANDED CINEMA, KINESTHETIC THEATRE, ACOUSTIC THEATRE, NEO-HAIKU THEATRE, EVENTS, READYMADES, PUZZLES, GAMES, GAGS, JOKES,

## EXPANDED CINEMA: A SYMPOSIUM N.Y. FILM FESTIVAL 1966

PANEL MEMBERS: KEN DEWEY, HENRY GELDZAHLER, JOHN GRUEN, STAN VANDERBEEK & ROBERT WHITMAN.

Geldzahler: We're going to begin the discussion with short statements of five or six minutes by each of the panel members. I want none of you to feel nervous because we all have the intention of...

is potentially within our grasp and somehow massage it or use it and give it back to us. It seems to me, how would I say this, this is essentially a very logical procedure and it seems to me a very exciting one and for me to simplify the issues here I would say something to the extreme that, for instance, painting is dead and that just recently we've grown out of our kind of industrial puritan background and our romantic aspects and are now quite seriously and enthusiastically embracing our technology, it seems to me. And I think that this embrace will help and will lead to all the

Theater Arts. Now, Students? (approximately ten hands). What do you study? (inaudible responses). And the rest of you are all in the CIA (laughter). Like most people my work is based on really two things -- in part, experience -- those things that have been worked out in previous pieces -- and then, in part, on the things we all I suppose work on the edge, the things we're not quite aware of, the things we're groping with. What I'm going to say now has to do with only that first part, the experience that has come clear to me from previous pieces. Later on, if

going on or it has no justification to be included, and that's my relation to expanded cinema. I've just stumbled into it, just as I've stumbled into street theater, happenings and I... (inaudible)... Geldzahler: The nice thing about the topic 'Expanded Cinema' is that it makes everybody feel like he's talking about his own work and I think that's true of any topic we should have at a symposium and I think what I'd like to hear from Ken and Stan and Bob is... well, I think the phrase "expanded cinema" isn't something that should pin us down, but I think it might be wise to cla-

plicated optical principles and electronic principles and so on, so it's hard, and I'm satisfied, I'm happy enough, sure. It's going to be great in a year. Geldzahler: And the work you've been doing is geared specifically to be shown there, so that my question is about audience... Vanderbeek: Yes, well, I have a lot of theories and beliefs about audiences and technology and the role of the artist in it and I don't know whether I want to, you know, unravel those ideas at this particular time or this particular moment in the conversation. Sure, no, the building

you in a certain context when you see the film. Well, now, as we move into new areas, some film-makers -- Stan Brakhage, other film-makers, have been acutely aware of the problems of introducing their work into that kind of a situation -- it doesn't work, or adjustments have to be made. One of the things that's haunted this film festival is the problem of which films can make it in Philharmonic Hall. Which ones can make it in those conditions, and which ones can't. Which ones should be shown on the side of a boiler in your basement, or in your loft, or

given to you. Whitman: Yeah. But also, that you could go find a part of the image. Vanderbeek: It seems to me what we're leading ourselves into here, and what I think the central concern is a question of element -- in either case I think what we're dealing with is a particular case, both Ken's and mine, that there's an idea they're trying to present to an audience. And really all saying is that a

to have been even more ambitious, representing Fluxus and all the links within art history, across all time. He dedicated himself to it obsessively but would never finish it, as he died in 1978, before its completion. As David Doris states:

“George Maciunas staked out the historical parameters of these territorial researches with a zeal bordering on the maniacal. Trained in architecture, graphic design and art history, Maciunas had a considerable attraction to structure and order; he has been described as an obsessive/compulsive personality that accumulated, hoarded, classified, and dissected. Maciunas’s art historical essays took the form of charts: painstakingly drawn evolutionary diagrams of the

newest occurrences in the arts (those new occurrences, that is, that were of interest to Maciunas). Perhaps the largest of these charts is his *Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus and Other 4 Dimensional, Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial and Tactile Art Forms (Incomplete)*, in which kudos are paid to Futurist Theater, Marcel Duchamp, Surrealism, Dada, Walt Disney Spectacles, Byzantine Iconoclasm, the Japanese Gutai Group, Vaudeville, Joseph Cornell, and many more in short, a fairly broad spectrum of historical traditions and isolated phenomena which have in common a re-evaluation of accepted notions of structure, both aesthetic and ontological.”  
(Doris, 1998, pp. 91-135)

FIG. 4 Special issue “Expanded Arts” of “Film Culture” (1966) — Newspaper format designed by George Maciunas: <http://www.walkerart.org/collections/artworks/film-culture-expanded-arts-43>

**FLUXUS (ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIP TO AVANT-GARDE MOVEMENTS)**

Today it is fashionable among the avant-garde and the pretending avant-garde to broaden and obscure the definition of fine arts to some ambiguous realm that includes practically everything. Such broad-mindedness although very convenient in shortcutting all analytical thought, has nevertheless the disadvantage of also shortcutting the semantics and thus communication through words. Elimination of borders makes art nonexistent as an entity, since it is an opposite or the existence of a non-art that defines art as an activity.

Since fluxus activities occur at the border or even beyond the border of art, it is of utmost importance to the comprehension of fluxus and its development, that this borderline be rationally defined.

Diagram no. 1 attempts at such a definition by the process of eliminating categories not believed to be within the realm of fine arts by people active in these categories.

**DEFINITION OF ART DERIVED FROM SEMANTICS AND APPLICABLE TO ALL PAST AND PRESENT EXAMPLES.**

(definition follows the process of elimination, from broad categories to narrow category)

	INCLUDE	ELIMINATE
1. ARTIFICIAL:	all human creation	natural events, objects, sub or un-conscious human acts, (dreams, sleep, death)
2. NONFUNCTIONAL: LEISURE	non essential to survival non essential to material progress games, jokes, sports, fine arts.*	production of food, housing, utilities, transportation, maintenance of health, security, science and technology, crafts, education, documentation, communication (language)
3. CULTURAL	all with pretence to significance, profundity, seriousness, greatness, inspiration, elevat on of mind, institutional value, exclusiveness. FINE ARTS** only, literary, plastic, musical, kinetic.	games, jokes, gags, sports,

\* Past history shows that the less people have leisure, the less their concern for all these leisure activities. Note the activities in games, sports and fine arts among aristocrats versus coal miners.  
\*\* Dictionary definition of fine arts: "art which is concerned with the creation of objects of imagination and taste for their own sake and without relation to the utility of the object produced."

Since the historical development of fluxus and related movements are not linear as a chronological commentary would be, but rather planimetric, a diagram would describe the development and relationships more efficiently.

**Diagram no. 2 (relationships of various post-1959 avant-garde movements)**

Influences upon various movements is indicated by the source of influence and the strength of influence (varying thickness of connecting links).

Within fluxus group there are 4 categories indicated:

1) individuals active in similar activities prior to formation of fluxus collective, then becoming active within fluxus and still active up to the present day, (only George Brecht and Ben Vautier fill this category);

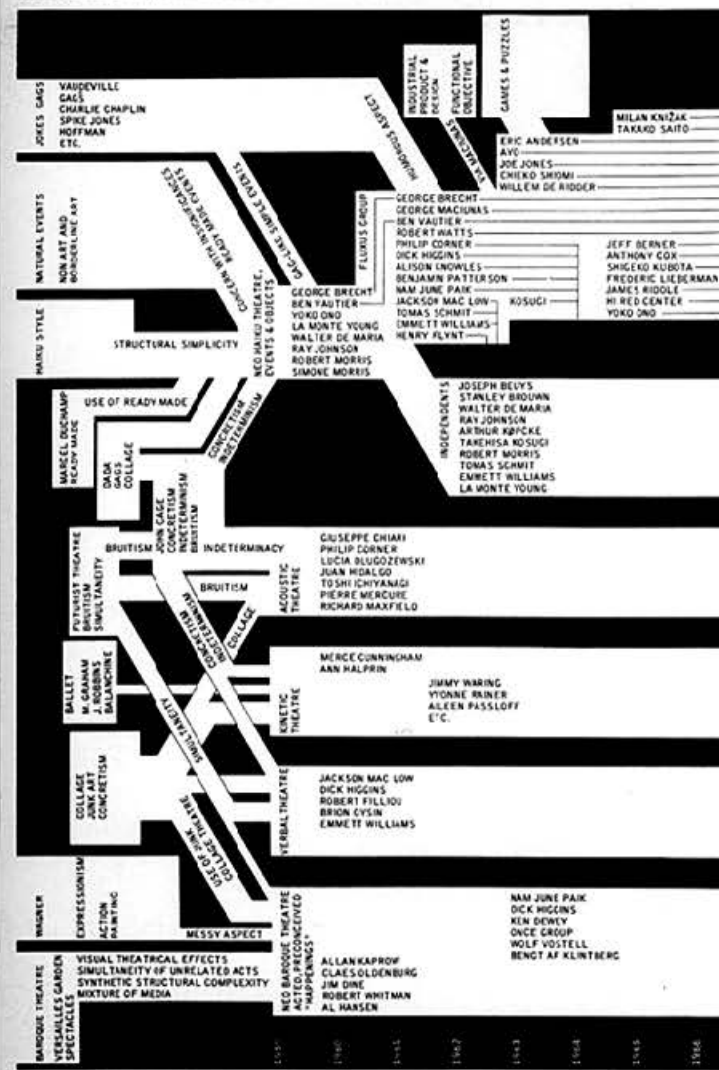
2) individuals active since the formation of fluxus and still active within fluxus;

3) individuals active independently of fluxus since the formation of fluxus, but presently within fluxus;

4) individuals active within fluxus since the formation of fluxus but having since then detached themselves on following motivations:

- a) anticollective attitude, excessive individualism, desire for personal glory, prima dona complex (Mac Low, Schmit, Williams, Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Kosugi,
- b) opportunism, joining rival groups offering greater publicity (Paik, Kosugi,
- c) competitive attitude, forming rival operations (Higgins, Knowles, Paik).

These categories are indicated by lines leading in or out of each name. Lines leading away from the fluxus column indicate the approximate date such individuals detached themselves from fluxus.



**INTRODUCTION TO DIAGRAM**

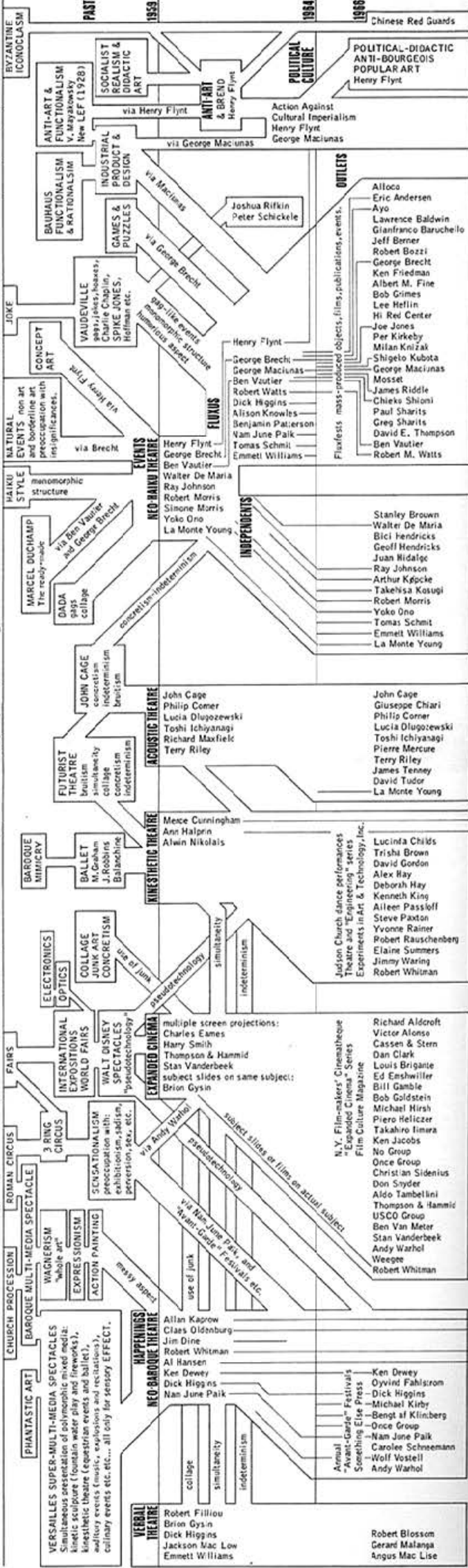
The diagram on the right categorizes and describes planimetrically the development of various "Expanded Arts" movements. It describes movements rather than individuals and therefore should not be taken as a catalogue of names. Except for the Fluxus group, none others are complete. By the next edition it is hoped the diagram can be expanded to include more artists. Any comments, suggested additions and/or changes from readers will be welcome. The grouping of various artists was determined in most cases from statements of the artists themselves. When such statements were unavailable, their work was studied to provide clues. Some controversial subjects such as sensorialism or pseudotechnology were based on careful observations of many performances rather than hearsay. Dropping in public or lowering own parts to expose own bare bottom, or urinating in public, any such acts are considered by any dictionary definition exhibitionistic. Throwing oneself into water or covering self with cream etc., etc., can be considered as masochistic acts. Examples of preoccupation with sex and perversion are too numerous to mention. All these stragglers are intended to arouse strong emotional response from the audience (and attention from the press of course), which may be a main motivation for such stratagems. Pseudotechnology or "engineering" (in quotes) has been derived from the fact that artists at best can acquire technical knowledge or understanding comparable to that of a technician (TV repairman or the like) rather than that of an engineer or scientist who spends many years studying his specialty (just like artists spending many years on producing art). Such knowledge among these artists at best represent understanding wiring diagrams, function of basic electronic components, mechanism of electric motors, simple engines, terminate structures and the like. Collaboration with engineers can achieve only a level of sophistication comprehended by the artist since (1) artist's new ideas or concepts will be affected or rather limited by his own past and recent technical-scientific knowledge rather than the uncommunicated knowledge of the engineer.

(2) the collaborating engineer meanwhile can't very well communicate a sophisticated technical and scientific knowledge to the artist without giving him a four year university course on related subjects.

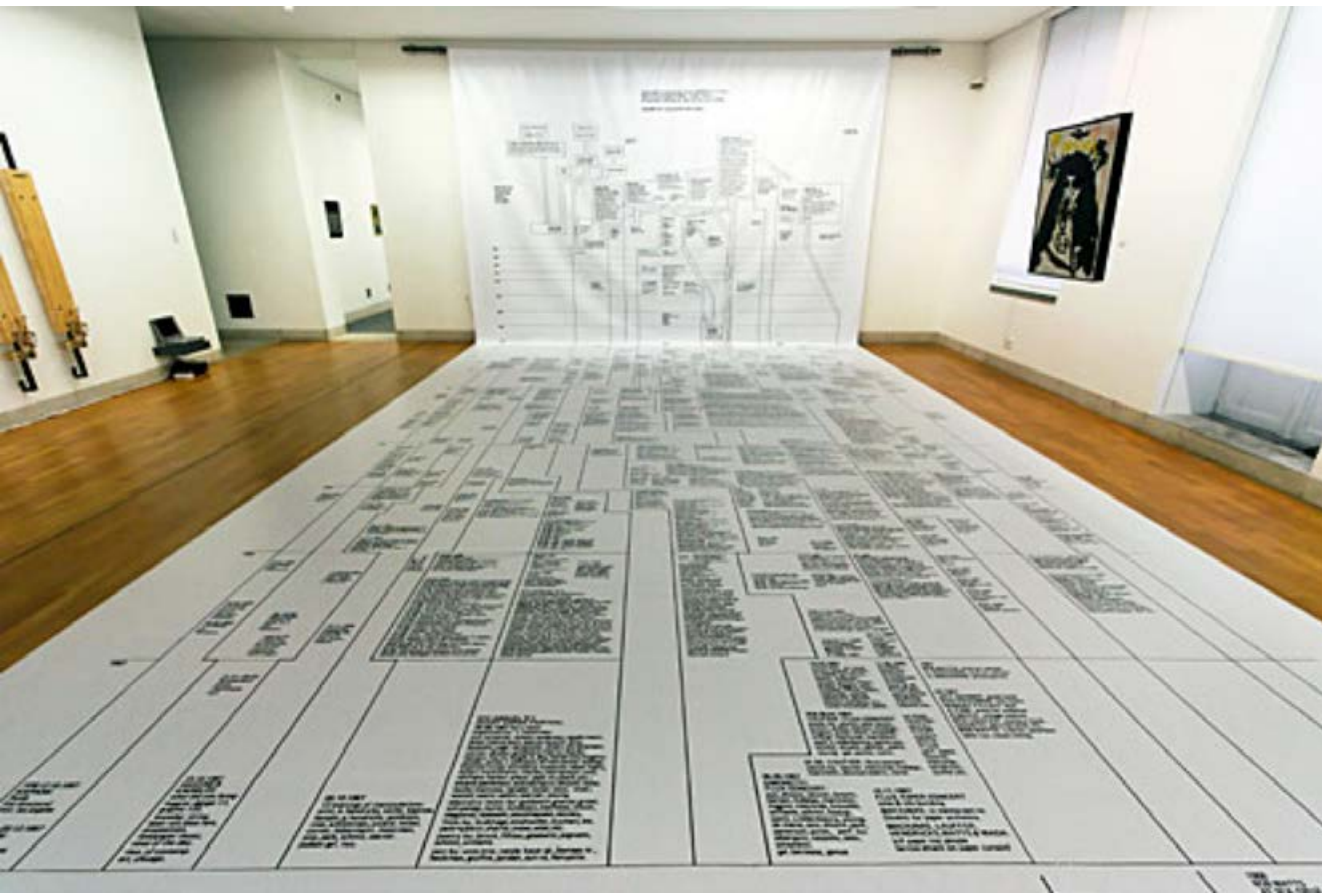
Categories are ordered on the vertical scale to some degree within a spectrum of artificiality. Thus most "artistic" or "cultural" or "serious" are at the bottom and least so at the top ending with anti-art at the very top. The horizontal scale is chronological. Influences upon various movements is indicated by the source of influence and the strength of this influence (varying thickness of connecting links). Another vertical column indicates outlets, or major organizations, events, publications or institutions associated with the particular movement or group. Lines leading in and out of each persons name indicate various changes in the persons associations or chronological continuity of his work within any particular movement or group. Thus within Fluxus group there are 4 such categories: 1) individuals active in similar activities prior to formation of Fluxus collective, then becoming active within fluxus and still active up to the present day, (only George Brecht and Ben Vautier fill this category), 2) individuals active since the formation of Fluxus and still active within Fluxus, 3) individuals active independently of Fluxus but presently associated with Fluxus, 4) individuals active within Fluxus since the formation of the collective but having since then detached themselves. (Higgins, Patterson, Paik, Schmit, Williams, Flynt etc.) Some of them have even published own statements confirming their exodus. George Maciunas



**EXPANDED ARTS DIAGRAM**



**FIG. 5** George Maciunas, "Fluxfest Sale" — "Expanded Arts Diagram" (1966): private archive of Ernesto de Sousa and Isabel Alves



**FIG. 6** George Maciunas, “The Chart” (1973): <http://www.kunstundprojekte.de/fluxus2/maciunas.htm>

Today, this diagram is still considered visionary. It anticipates a pre-web of arts, like a pre-digital design: a precursor to the ‘democratic’ web. Maciunas conceived these rhizomatic architectures so as to connect all points in flux: artists, geographies, concepts, philosophies or disciplines. The Brazilian research project “Nomads”<sup>8</sup> made an attempt to transpose this chart effectively to the web. The goal was to create a virtual architecture to “navigate inside” art history.

In this diagram, John Cage was the starting point for everything. As Larry Miller writes (1992, p. 163), “Maciunas says, indeed, that the chart starts with what influenced Cage. Cage is definitely the central figure in the chart.” In fact, he continues, “you could call the whole chart the ‘Travels of John Cage’, just as you could say ‘the Travels of St. Paul,’ you know? Wherever John Cage went he left a little John Cage group; some admit his influence, some do not. But the fact is there,

that those groups formed after his visits. It shows up very clearly on the chart.” (p. 163)

### 1.1.1. Memory as flux

The Fluxus artists believed that their legacy could not be mediated only by history, because history was hegemonic and only narrates mainstream facts. This was why they developed so many concepts around participation, flux, interaction and communication. In addition to the diagrams, they built up a large corpus with the notion of “aesthetic utopia”, in which artistic practices (they believe) would lead to a bigger project: the utopia of communication.

In fact, Robert Filliou, the French Fluxus artist, made the biggest contribution for this conceptualization when he wrote the “multi-book” entitled *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1967), with the collaboration of several other artists such as Joseph Beuys, John Cage and George Brecht. In his book he presents some of the central ideas of Fluxus, calling them “participation mediums”, including “happenings, actions, environments, visual poetry, mixed-media, live-art, concrete music, games,” etc. The overall concept was the “Eternal Network”, the ultimate communicational utopia, which comes with Filliou’s art project entitled *La Fête Permanente* (1963). The conceptual goal was to create a global network of artists in flux and in “permanent celebration”, defying geographical frontiers and all rules.

Moreover, with the aim of recollecting the events and making them commonly known, Fluxus created a lot of new artistic formats and objects that materialized the effervescent commitment to the architectural idea of models, suitcases, boxes and typographical design. As previously mentioned, the techniques were reminiscent of Concretism and Neo-Concretism, but also drew upon the Dadaism and New-Dadaism movements, being based on the ready-made and *les boîtes en valise* of Marcel Duchamp. *Les boîtes en valise* functioned as portable museums: miniatures of the exhibitions were assembled and maintained in little boxes or suitcases.

In Fluxus, these suitcases acquired the denomination of “flux-boxes” or “flux-kits”.

<sup>8</sup> In [http://www.nomads.usp.br/pesquisas/cultura\\_digital/arte\\_em\\_processo/diagrama.htm](http://www.nomads.usp.br/pesquisas/cultura_digital/arte_em_processo/diagrama.htm) (consulted on 2 February 2010 – since disabled)



**FIG. 7** Robert Filliou, “Eternal Network” — Video-frame (1963): YouTube

They configured small ‘concrete’ galleries like the small filers once used in botany, chemistry and medicine to classify materials. In this case, artists assembled the items (micro-art, scores, notations, sketches or “mail-art”, with each artist’s name tagged) from their events.

One of the most famous samples is the *Fluxkit* (1965) assembled by Maciunas, a vinyl-covered suitcase containing objects in various media, graphical scores for events, interactive boxes and games, journals and films. The two central characteristics of these artifacts were their portability and organization.

“Mail-art” likewise appears to be an important feature of Fluxus, for precisely the same reason — to reduce all distances and put things ‘in common’. For example, in Ernesto de Sousa’s archive there was vast mail-art correspondence with the American and French Fluxus movement, namely with George Brecht (1982) and Robert Filliou (1984) respectively.



**FIG. 8** Marcel Duchamp, “Boîte-en-valise” (1935-41): [http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/1999/muse/artist\\_pages/duchamp\\_boite.html](http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/1999/muse/artist_pages/duchamp_boite.html)

**FIG. 9** Marcel Duchamp, “Boîte-en-valise” (1935-41): [http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/1999/muse/artist\\_pages/duchamp\\_boite.html](http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/1999/muse/artist_pages/duchamp_boite.html)





FIG. 10 George Brecht@Ernesto de Sousa, Postal/Mail Art (1982): Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

FIG. 11 Robert Filliou@Ernesto de Sousa, Postal/Mail Art (1984): Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

## 2. Fluxus in Portugal?

Any reflection on Fluxus in Portugal means paying particular attention to the artistic, curatorial, critical and pedagogical action of Ernesto de Sousa (1921-1988), who initiated direct interlocution with “foreign artists” (his expression) such as Robert Filliou, Ben Vautier, Joseph Beuys, Claes Oldenburg, Merce Cunningham, John Cage and Wolf Vostell; and, indirectly (at distance), with Dick Higgins, Ken Friedman or Daniel Spoerri. These were artists once associated with Fluxus. Ernesto de Sousa had an unquestionable role here, in the conceptualization of a “communicational” and “multidisciplinary” art form, characterized by a certain sort of performative and mixed-art events.

Ernesto de Sousa established a direct link to international Fluxus artists. These aspect, of the connections established with international Fluxus artists and Fluxus events, will be the focus of this discussion. He wrote about Fluxus and participated, as curator and as artist, in events directly connected with Fluxus. He, also, interviewed Joseph Beuys and co-organized a sort of events with the German Fluxus artist, Wolf Vostell.

As a curator, teacher, artist and activist, he played a fundamental role in the organization and dissemination of Fluxus ideas. He called himself the “aesthetic operator”. He also advocated a Fluxus-based semantics, which he describes very accurately in his text:

**“Let us say at once that Fluxus, despite this organizational vagueness, is a very precise movement historically, and whose general sense also leaves no room for doubt: to bring art and life closer together; aesthetic activity and other conscious or unconscious actions of man. To make today’s life aesthetic, and to ensure that the arts of action (“performing arts”) are at the root of all training and learning.”<sup>9</sup> (Sousa, 1978)**

He also received the *Fluxfest Sale* publication (1966), which was the first to reproduce Maciunas’ diagram. It is not clear who sent it to him; we presume that it was Ken Friedman. In an interview with the artist Leonel Moura, he mentioned its importance:

**“In 1964 I received from California my first Fluxus document, a map by George Maciunas and some leaflets. I was very curious. Later I became acquainted with the main players in Fluxus — Filliou, Beuys, Ben and Vostell, and in general with the whole anti-art movement, the ‘artiteros’ or ‘anartists’, as someone called them. They appeared to be followers of Dada. It was necessary to militate against art as an elitist form. Fluxus was a movement without partners, without rules, without popes like surrealism; each was Fluxus unto himself. It is defined more as a general attitude, as nothing in particular.”<sup>10</sup> (Moura, 2009)**

Nowadays, this diagram forms part of the “Ernesto de Sousa Posters” collection at the Berardo Museum (Portugal), from which a selection curated by Isabel Alves was recently exhibited: “your body is my body — o teu corpo é o meu corpo” (2015).

### 2.1. Documenta 5: “Itinerary without impositions”

In 1972 Ernesto de Sousa went to Darmstadt, Düsseldorf, for the 100-day *Documenta 5* (Kassel, Germany). There he contacted with several figures who came to define his journey, namely Ben Vautier, Joseph Beuys and Robert Filliou. This experience gave him the sense of a new aesthetic pedagogy, based on the manifest principles of Maciunas:

**“1 — Do not make a profession of your art. 2 — Show that everything is art and that everyone can make artworks. 3 — Concern yourself with insignificant things too, things without institutional value. 4 — Art must be unlimited in quantity, accessible to all and, if possible, manufactured by all.”<sup>11</sup> (Sousa, 1973)**

While there, he also met Harald Szeemann, the acclaimed curator, who organized, besides *Documenta 5*, other very important curatorial

<sup>9</sup> Original quote: “Digamos desde já que Fluxus, apesar daquela vaguidade organizativa, é um movimento bem preciso historicamente, e cujo sentido mais geral também não deixa lugar a dúvidas: aproximar a arte e a vida; a actividade estética e as outras acções conscientes ou inconscientes do homem. Esteticizar a vida corrente, e fazer com que as artes-da-acção (“performing arts”) estejam na base de todo o treino e aprendizagem.”

<sup>10</sup> Original quote “Em 1964 recebi da Califórnia um primeiro documento do Fluxus, um mapa do George Maciunas e uns folhetos. Despertou-me uma enorme curiosidade. Mais tarde tomei conhecimento directo com os principais factores Fluxus, o Filliou, o Beuys, o Ben, o Vostell, e de maneira geral com todo o movimento antiarte, os arteiros ou anartistas, como lhes chamou alguém. Apareciam como os continuadores do dadaísmo. Era preciso militar contra a arte como uma forma elitista. O Fluxus foi um movimento sem sócios, sem regras, sem Papas como o surrealismo, cada um era Fluxus por si próprio. Define-se numa atitude mais geral, não é nada em particular.”

<sup>11</sup> Original quote: “1 — Não fazer profissão da sua arte. 2 — Mostrar que tudo é arte e que toda a gente pode fazer obras de arte. 3 — Ocupar-se mesmo das coisas insignificantes, sem valor institucional. 4 — A arte deve ser ilimitada em quantidade, acessível a todos e, se possível, fabricada por todos.”

exhibitions, namely “When Attitudes Become Form: Live in Your Head” (1969), where he inaugurated an interdisciplinary curatorial action, based on installation, performance and happening, and brought to the epicentre of the European arts world Joseph Beuys (with whom he later collaborated intensively), Bruce Nauman, Joan Jonas and Vito Acconci.

“(…) it was in 1969 that Harald Szeemann organised the famous exhibition “When Attitudes Become Form” at the Kunsthalle in Bern. Both the date and the title coined for this exhibition are symptomatic, for it was then and there that conceptual art was acknowledged for the first time by a major art institution (MoMA was to follow before long with the first Information Show, in 1970), providing a new model for advanced art soon to be emulated and disseminated by most art schools. (Duve, 2009, p. 27)



**FIG. 12** Photo of the encounter between Ernesto de Sousa & Joseph Beuys (1972): Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

While there, Ernesto de Sousa conducted his famous interview with Joseph Beuys — “the Master”, as he called him. This was documented as “O Estado Zero. Entrevista a Joseph Beuys” (28 December 1972).<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Beuys would become the “father figure” (Sousa, 1974) of German Fluxus. He acted as a guide to the philosophical ideas behind Fluxus, namely the notion of “anthroposophy”, a philosophical and mystical doctrine formulated by the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), meaning the “path in search of truth”. Ernesto de Sousa quotes Beuys’ precepts several times, such as “art must be revolution”, “pedagogic”, “intervention/action” and “creativity is the real capital (not money)”.

*Documenta 5* had a remarkable influence on Ernesto de Sousa’s ideas in Portugal. He called it an “itinerário sem imposições”<sup>13</sup> (1973) and “geografia privilegiada”<sup>14</sup> (1973) and reaffirmed the innovative character of Fluxus ideas:

“The importance of the ideas of the Fluxus group in the organization of *Documenta 5* is evident and confessed. Szeemann himself, the director of *Documenta 5*, stated that one of the ‘north’ of the exhibition was Filliou’s idea: “to teach to learn as art”. This accentuates the innovative pedagogical character of the vanguard and the very manifestation of Kassel.”<sup>15</sup> (Sousa, 1973)

The experience of *Documenta 5* galvanized pedagogical, curatorial and critical action, which in turn spurred on the hosts of “multidisciplinary” and “alternative” art procedures in Portugal.

## 2.2. SACOM 2 — a tribute to George Maciunas

As a result of these developments and following the death of George Maciunas (1978), a set of events took place in Portugal. Most of them were performed in the presence of the German Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell, the author of the celebrated ‘concreting’ artworks involving huge automobiles, and one

<sup>12</sup> My translation: “Zero Status. Interview with Joseph Beuys”

<sup>13</sup> My translation: “Itinerary without impositions”

<sup>14</sup> My translation: “Privileged geography”

<sup>15</sup> Original quote: “(…) a importância das ideias do grupo Fluxus na organização da *Documenta 5* é evidente e confessada. O próprio Szeemann, director da *Documenta 5*, declarou que um dos nortes da exposição fora a ideia de Filliou: «ensinar a aprender como arte». Isto acentua o carácter inovadoramente pedagógico da vanguarda e da própria manifestação de Kassel.”

# SACOM 2

7. 4. 79 - 11. 4. 79

**SEMANA DE ARTE CONTEMPORANEO MALPARTIDA DE CACERES MUSEO VOSTELL MALPARTIDA - ESPAÑA**

ORGANIZADORES: MERCEDES Y WOLF VOSTELL  
 COORDINADOR: J. J. LANCHO MORENO  
 INFORMACION: 927/50 87 10  
 SEÑAS: SACOM 2 / MYM - MALPARTIDA DE CACERES - EL LAVADERO

**EL LAVADERO MYM**

**Día 7. 4. 1979**

INAUGURACION  
**5 tarde**  
**Duración: exposición permanente**  
 HORAS DE VISITA:  
 DIAS LABORABLES:  
 DE 10 A 2 Y DE 5 A 8.  
 DIAS FESTIVOS:  
 DE 10 A 2 Y DE 5 A 8.

# FLUXUS

Colección presentada por Gino Di MAGGIO

BRECHT, BEN, CHIARI, FILLIOU, HIGGINS,  
 J. JONES, KAPROW, KNIZAK, KNOWLES, KOEPCKE,  
 KOSUGI, LA MONTE YOUNG, MACIUNAS, N. J. PAIK,  
 PATTERSON, SIMONETTI, SCHYMIT, SPOERRI,  
 VOSTELL, WATTS, E. WILLIAMS, YOKO ONO, ZAJ.

**Teatro Morán**

CALLE ARGENTINA

**Día 8. 4. 1978**

**9 tarde**

# FLUX-CONCIERTO

INTERPRETADO POR:

# BEN

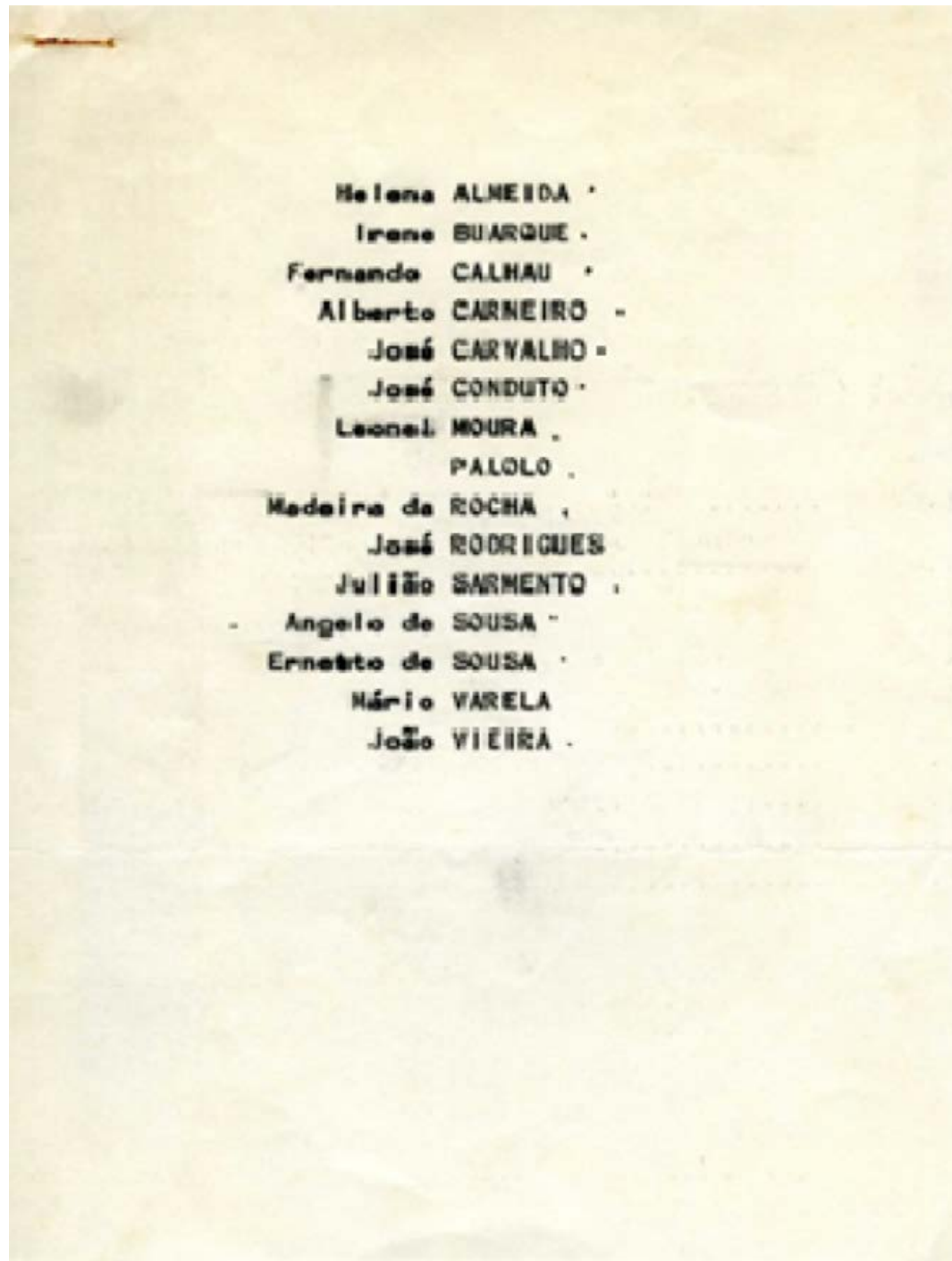
FIG. 13 Flyer of SACOM 2 (1979) — Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/ Isabel Alves



FIG. 14 Slide of Wolf Vostell & Ernesto de Sousa at SACOM 2 (1979) — Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

of the main proponents of the “happening” and the Fluxus movement in Europe (Sousa, 1978), when he came to Portugal to look into the possibility of organizing a major exhibition.

Along with Ernesto de Sousa, he advised on SACOM 2 (1979) a tribute to George Maciunas that took place in Malpartida de Cáceres, Spain. The event was entirely devoted to Fluxus, with both a retrospective and forward-looking spirit. The exhibits, which included material provided by prolific



**FIG. 15** Portuguese participants in the SACOM 2 event — Private collection of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

collectors of Fluxus, such as the Milanese Gino Di Maggio, comprised architectural studies (or figurations) and Fluxus poetry, anthropological environments, experimental cuisine and lost culinary rites, flux-concerts, films, videos, discs, audio-visual magazines, discussions, and so on.

SACOM 2 established a dialogue between Portuguese supporters and the Fluxus collection of Gino Di Maggio, which included works by George Brecht, Ben Vautier, Robert Filliou, Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles, La Monte Young, George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, Bill Patterson, Spoerri, Wolf Vostell, Watts, Emmett Williams, Yoko Ono and ZAJ, held at the Vostell Museum in Malpartida.

The Portuguese figures involved were Helena Almeida, José Barrias, António Barros, Irene Buarque, Fernando Calhau, Alberto Carneiro, José Carvalho, José Conduto, Monteiro Gil, Julião Sarmiento, Ernesto de Sousa, Cerveira Pinto, Túlia Saldanha, João Vieira, Mario Varela and Joana Rosa.

At this same time, efforts were launched to transform “El Lavadero” (the ruined Los Barruecos factory) into the experimental Museo Vostell in Malpartida.

On this occasion, Ernesto de Sousa proclaimed Vostell

“One of the initiators, perhaps the main one, of the practice of happenings in Europe; Fluxus group, which can be considered the centre of transformations, reflective arts-of-action (Filliou, J. Beuys, George Brecht, Ben Vautier, and others have been because of our meetings and studies). Ben: (I envy Beuys and Vostell “(...) Wolf Vostell was one of the initiators of Fluxus as the centre of the reflective transformation of arts-of-action and one of the main initiators of the practice happening in Europe”<sup>16</sup> (Sousa, 1976)

### 2.3. Filliou’s “1,000,011th Anniversary of Art” in Coimbra

Ernesto de Sousa became a close friend and faithful disciple of Robert Filliou. Based on one of Filliou’s ideas (first presented by Filliou at Aix-la-Chapelle, France, in 1973), on 17 January 1974 Ernesto de Sousa organized with the CAPC — Circle of Fine Arts of Coimbra, the “1.000.011º Aniversário da Arte”.<sup>17</sup> In the 1970s and up until 1987, Túlia Saldanha was the driving force behind the CAPC (presiding over it or serving as part of the Board) and she acted as a sounding board, together

<sup>16</sup> Original quote: “Um dos iniciadores, talvez o principal, da prática dos happenings na Europa; Grupo Fluxus, que se pode considerar o centro das transformações, reflexivas das artes-da-acção (Filliou, J. Beuys, George Brecht, Ben Vautier, e outros têm sido razão dos nossos encontros e estudos). Ben: (tenho inveja de Beuys e Vostell». (...) Wolf Vostell foi um dos iniciadores do Fluxus como centro das transformações reflexivas das artes-da-acção e também um dos principais iniciadores da prática do happening na Europa.”

<sup>17</sup> My translation: “1,000,011th Anniversary of Art”.



**FIG. 16** 1.000.011º Aniversário da Arte”, CAPC (1974): Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

with Alberto Carneiro, for Ernesto de Sousa’s innumerable initiatives. Those who collaborated on this event include João Dixo, Armando Azevedo, Albuquerque Mendes, Miranda and Teresa Loff (photographically documented).

#### 2.4. “Alternativa Zero — Tendências Polémicas da Arte Portuguesa”

Ernesto de Sousa’s initiatives finally came to a climax in 1977, with “Alternativa Zero — Tendências Polémicas da Arte Portuguesa”, which took place at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Lisbon. João Fernandes (1997, p. 24) states that the “zero” of the title is referring to Daniel Buren, specifically a text entitled “Ground Zero”, the imposition of formula?

As he describes it, this event epitomizes a “general recognition of the importance of the avant-garde” (1977). The event involved about fifty participants, for example, Alberto Carneiro, Albuquerque Mendes, Álvaro Lapa, Alvess, Ana Hatherly, Ana Vieira, André Gomes, Ângelo de Sousa, António Lagarto & Nigel Coates, António Palolo, António Sena, Armando Azevedo, Artur Varela, Clara Menéres, Constança Capdeville, Da Rocha, E. M. de Melo e Castro, Fernando Calhau, Graça Pereira Coutinho, Helena Almeida, Joana Almeida Rosa, João Brehm, João Freire, João Vieira, Jorge Peixinho, Jorge Pinheiro, José Carvalho, José Conduto, José Rodrigues, Júlio Bragança, Julião Sarmento, Leonel Moura, Lisa Santos Silva, Manuel Casimiro, Mário Varela, Noronha da Costa, Pedro Andrade, Pires Vieira, Robin Fior, Salette Tavares, Sena da Silva, Túlia Saldanha, Victor Belém e Victor Pomar.

The *Alternativa Zero* event was accompanied by three events that are worthy of mention here: a documentary exhibition on the “Pioneers of Modernism in Portugal”<sup>18</sup> about the pioneering of the modernism in Portugal, Almada Negreiros, Eduardo Viana e Santa-Rita Pintor; an exhibition of posters with the theme “The Vanguard and the Media”<sup>19</sup> allusive to various international avant garde events, namely to Fluxus; and, “The Florest” that presented a set of artwork from Albuquerque Mendes, Armando Azevedo e Túlia Saldanha.

<sup>18</sup> Original quote: “Os Pioneiros do Modernismo em Portugal”

<sup>19</sup> Original quote: “A Vanguarda e os Meios de Comunicação”



**FIG. 17** Photo from the launch of “Alternativa Zero”, with Helena de Almeida — Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves



**FIG. 18** Photo of the happening-‘concert’ by Jorge Peixinho in “Alternativa Zero” — Private archive of Ernesto de Sousa/Isabel Alves

## 2.5. Pre-Fluxus

### 2.5.1. Ernesto Melo e Castro: “Art high tech”<sup>20</sup>

To Glusberg (2009, p.136), Fluxus was a kind of Dada of the sixties, because it has incorporated several influences from the early vanguards, the Neo-Concretism, Dada, Surrealism, Futurism, and various disciplines: new music, dance, happening, performance, poetry, aesthetic criticism and theory, video, plastic arts, theater, the first graphic proposals (namely, a set of new publications), etc. Effectively, Fluxus results from a very indebted of the first vanguards and the emerging theories of communication. The pioneering notions of Marchall McLuhan, such as “sensory impact”, “the medium is the message” and “global village” imbued everyday language, becoming also a language close to the arts.

Literature began to dialogue with the plastic art, poetry, music, performance. The text was set free from the metric. The poetic-visual Concretism combined with the emerging exploratory practices provoked the spatialisation of texts, graphic experimentation, the intersection between word and image, between word and object that gave specificities to the experimental poetry movement. This convergence set the route for Brazilian neo-concretist meetings of the late 1950s and the new trends in art, which in their turn — and in the sense proclaimed by Ernesto Melo e Castro — converged in a “high tech art” (1988).

**“In fact, the possible and desirable relations between art and science have developed through successive misunderstandings. In general, artists are wary of science (out of ignorance or prejudice) and scientists tend to call art the sad, aesthetically-sounding babble that some high-tech equipment today produces with ease. But because the question is really serious, it is necessary for scientists being capable of understanding that art is a codification as demanding as science and artists prepared to understand science as a creative process. Both will then see that advanced technology**

<sup>20</sup> “Art high tech” is a concept adapted from Ernesto Melo e Castro, from his book: “A Poética dos Meios e Arte High Tech” (1988)

opens up new and hitherto unsuspected possibilities to creativity and art.”<sup>21</sup> (Melo e Castro, E., 1988, pp. 9-10)

The Portuguese artist for a long time living in Brazil, Ernesto de Melo e Castro was precursor and close friend of Haroldo de Campos<sup>22</sup>, the Brazilian concretist poet. He is responsible for leading us the encounter with the first video-narratives. For example, in his play 3 video grams of the first video-poem *Roda Lume*<sup>23</sup> (1966-86) he fuses the languages of “high art” (or technological) with poetics. It is a monochrome ‘video-poem’ with a duration of 2’43”, which integrates verbal and non-verbal signs in a rhythmic sequence, vocalized by the author.

In his essay publication, Melo e Castro, *Livro de releituras e poiética contemporânea*<sup>24</sup> (2008), explains the direct

relation between Concretism and a “poetic semantic” of the digital. In this sense, the ballast delimits a “Portuguese vanguard” in cross with the inheritance of the movements neo-baroques (century XX) and with the theories that submitted the text to the reinvention and transgression. According to Haroldo de Campos (1977, pp. 28-29), an aesthetic of the transgression generated in the literature came together with the “structural aesthetics” provided by Arthur Dow and the didactic unfolding of the phenollosian presuppositions. States Haroldo de Campos (1977, pp. 28-29) that Arthur Dow began a transformation in taste that developed a broad market for all phases of modern design, from Bauhaus furniture to calligraphic painting, which was the experience of Josef Albers who had lectured at the Bauhaus and later began teaching at Black Mountain College (North Carolina, USA). Black Mountain College was an experimental community of artistic education, to whose body of professors belonged, at the time, the composer John Cage and the poundian line poet Charles Olson. One of Albers’ students were Robert Rauschenberg, a future promoter of Pop Art and the ‘povera’ principles of Fluxus. Haroldo de Campos establishes a relation here, because, as he says: “the synchronous eye sees the rosacea of convergences ...” (Campos, Haroldo de, 1977, p.29). He notes that in Olson’s class in the 1950s, Fenollosa’s essay on ideogram was taught when Cage’s indeterministic pedagogy arose at the same time. It was at this time during the summer course of Black Mountain College in 1952 that the “Untitled” event (above mentioned), conducted by John Cage, was performed along with pianist David Tudor, the composer Jay Watts, the painter Robert Rauschenberg, the dancer Merce Cunningham, and the poets Mary Caroline Richards and Chalés Olsen.

<sup>21</sup> Original quote: “De facto as relações possíveis e desejáveis entre arte e ciência têm-se desenvolvido através de sucessivos equívocos. De um modo geral os artistas desconfiam da ciência (por ignorância ou por preconceito) e os cientistas tendem a chamar arte aos tristes balbucios com aparência estética que alguns equipamentos de alta tecnologia hoje produzem com facilidade. Mas, porque a questão é realmente séria, é necessário que surjam cientistas capazes de entender que a arte é uma codificação tão exigente como a ciência e artistas preparados para compreender a ciência como um processo criativo. Ambos então verificarão que a tecnologia avançada vai abrindo novas e até agora insuspeitadas possibilidades à criatividade e à arte.”

<sup>22</sup> In Brazil, the Noigandres group was founded by Augusto Campos, Décio Pignatari and Haroldo de Campos, who in 1958 published the “Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry” in which they propose to explore the graphic space as a structural agent of the poem. In Europe, Eugen Gomringer and Diter Roth, Pierre Garnier, Henri Chopin, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Bob Cobbing, Don Sylvester Houedard in the United States, Emmet Williams (which inscribed also Fluxus), are among the protagonists of this attitude towards writing to the exploration of graphic possibilities and sound of a new type of language.

<sup>23</sup> This video piece was broadcast on Portuguese Radio and Television in early 1969, in a program of literary dissemination and caused such a scandal that was immediately destroyed by RTP. The author rebuilt it in 1986, but with a different soundtrack, also improvised.

<sup>24</sup> My translation: “Book of Re-Readings and Contemporary Poetics”



**FIG. 19** Ernesto Melo e Castro, *Roda Lume* — Video-frame (1969/1986): Youtube

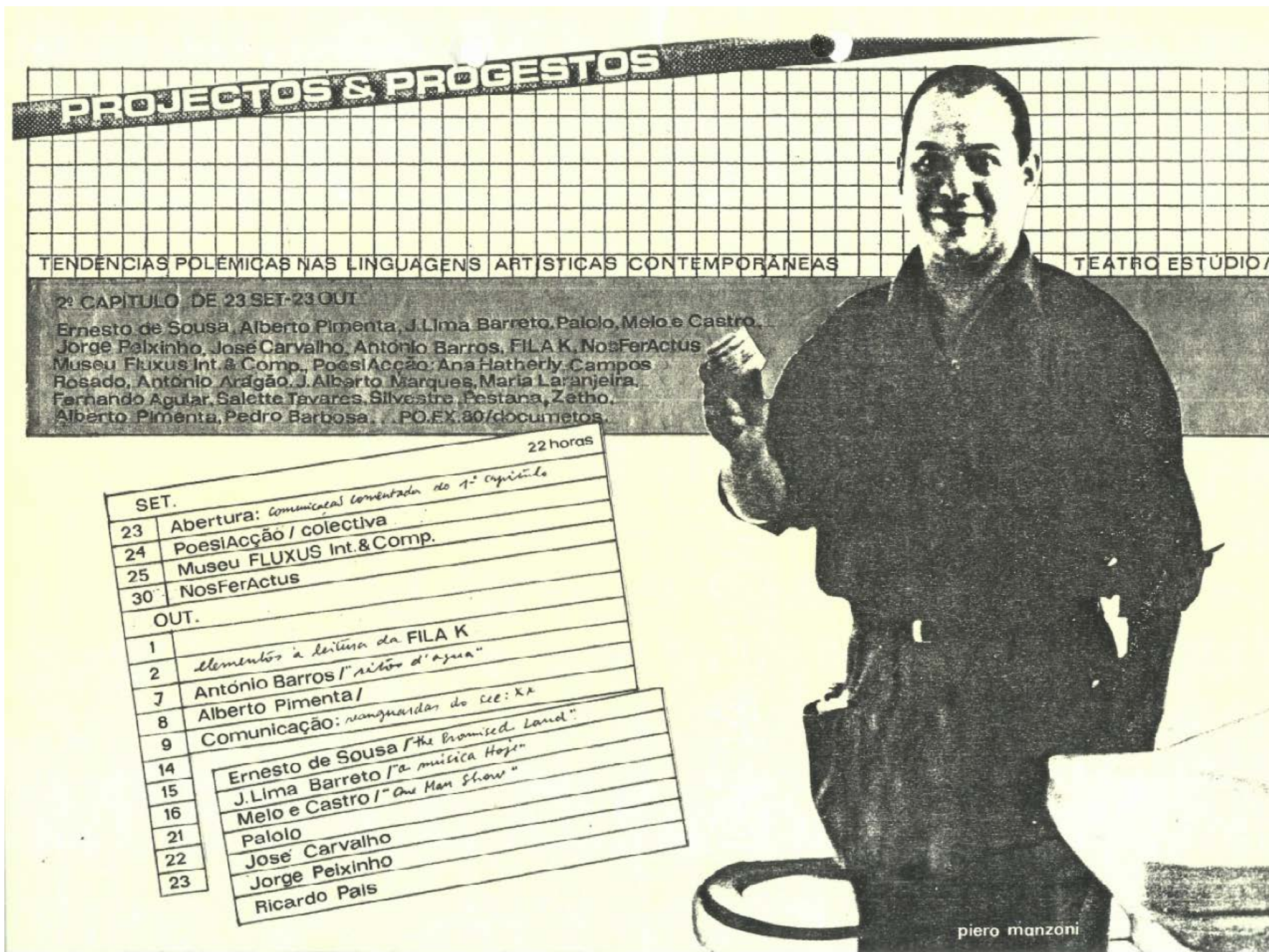


FIG. 20 Draft document from "Projectos&Progestos" (1983) — Private collection of Antnio Barros/Rui rfo

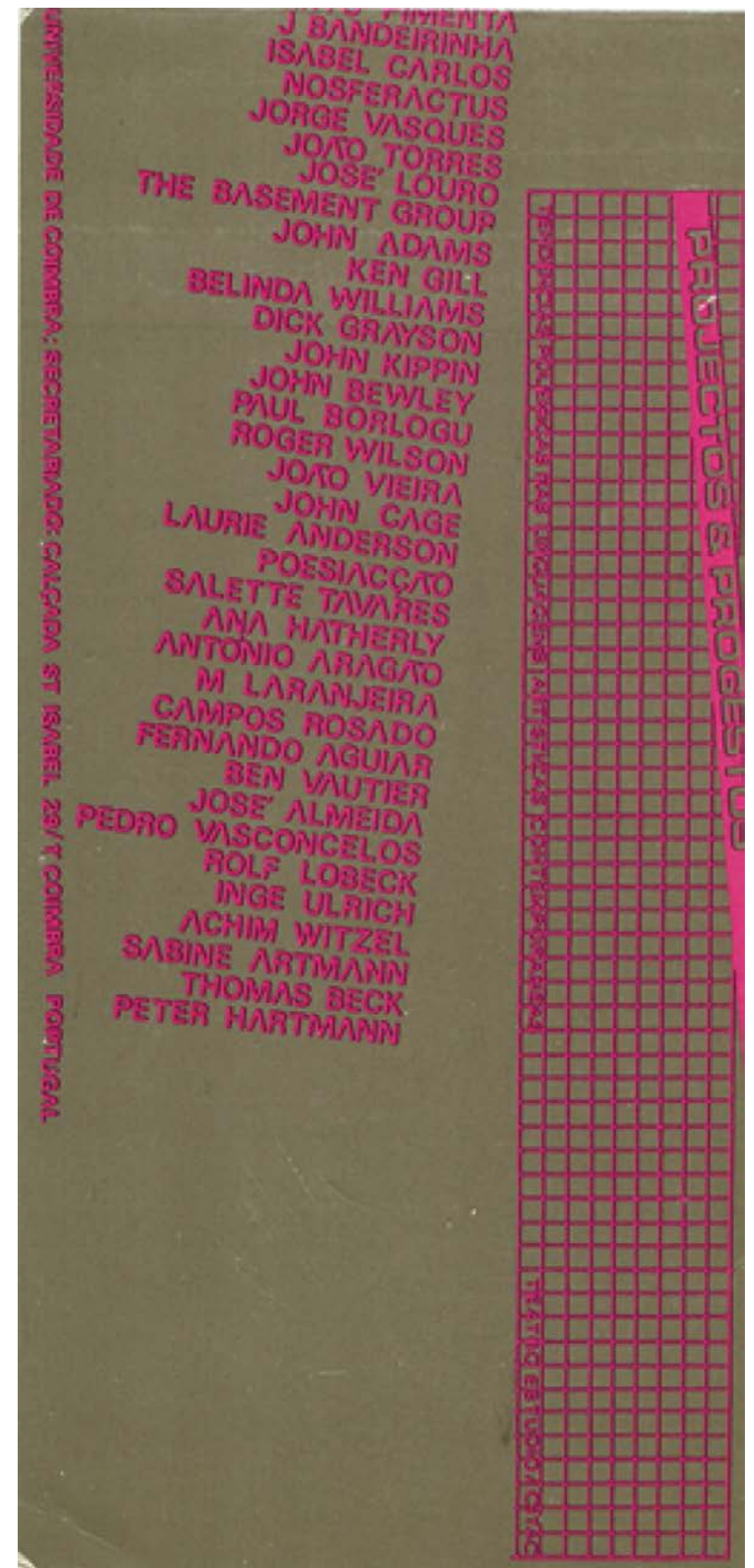


FIG. 21 Flyer for "Projectos&Progestos" (1983) — Private collection of Antnio Barros/Rui rfo

## 2.6. Fluxus after Fluxus

### 2.6.1. António Barros: Projectos & Progestos<sup>25</sup>

Later on, frequent alternative and Fluxus-based events were held in the city of Coimbra, Portugal, namely at the instigation of the Portuguese visual conceptualist António Barros, who was deeply influenced by the first generation of Fluxus — Robert Filliou and Serge III Oldenbourg — and then by the German Fluxus — Wolf Vostell and Joseph Beuys.

António Barros recounts the effervescent artistic complicity that was maintained with Wolf Vostell. As a participant of SACOM 2, he presented the installation *Revolução* (Revolution), that included three text-objects: “Escravos” (Slaves), “Valores” (Values) and the performative intervention “Verdade” (Truth), which represents, in his words: “acto dialogante com o «Concerto Fluxus» sinergizado por Vostell e Juan Hidalgo (fundador do Grupo Zaj), movimento continuador do Indeterminismo de John Cage e David Tudor.”<sup>26</sup>

After SACOM 2, António Barros welcomed Wolf Vostell to the CAPC gallery in Coimbra, where the visual poetry exhibition “Da Angústia e Sarcasmo” was presented, having previously been hosted by the Galeria Difference (Lisbon, 1979). Later, in 1982, he was asked by Vostell to participate in “Vostell 50”, as part of the aesthetic operation “Vostell Fluxus Zug: Das Mobile Museum Vostell: 7 Environments über Liebe, Tod, Arbeit”, held in Leverkusen (Vostell’s birthplace).

In 2012, long after the death of Wolf Vostell in 1998, he went back to the MVM for a meeting with Mercedes Guardado Vostell, Vostell’s wife. There he led the operation-tribute to Vostell, “7 pedras de pensamento para uma revisitação de PreSente\_AuSente”, which currently belongs to the collection of the Museum Serralves Foundation.

Under the directive guidance of Alberto Carneiro, he created the “OIC Office for Creative Interaction” at the CAPC (1979) and then the artistic community “Artitude: 01”. He and Rui Órfão subsequently promoted the symposium “Projectos&Progestos” (1980-83, CITAC Studio Theatre, Coimbra). This event was considered pioneering in Portugal in the dissemination of artists such as James Coleman, Nigel

Rolfe, Grzegorz Sztabinski, Erna Nijman, Peter Trachsel, Ernst Thomas, Julian Maynard Smith, Frank Na, Plassum Harel, Alistair McLennan, Ken Gill, and the groups The Basement and Opera House Station. “Projectos&Progestos” was enunciated as a “total art” project.

In the programme flyer for the event, it is interesting to note that the names of Fluxus artists were mingled with those of Portuguese artists, such as Salette Tavares, Ana Hatherly and João Vieira. This served as a wishlist for the event, as these artists were not actually present.

In an interview conducted on 21 June 2010, António Barros says that Fluxus certainly existed in Portugal; at least, there was a set of organised events at that time that could be seen as directly ‘contaminated’ by the international Fluxus art movement:

**“That there is no history of Contemporary Portuguese Art without José Ernesto de Sousa seems to me to be an awareness today of all those who study history in the temporal arc of the last fifty years, thus expressing the recognition of the artists who, among us, integrated activities organized under Fluxus.”<sup>27</sup>**

### Final remarks

On the crucial question of whether the art produced in Portugal had something of the Fluxus spirit about it, it is possible to conclude that Fluxus did indeed have an impact. In the time period under consideration, which was deeply marked by the Revolution, Fluxus was a revolutionary global art movement. Although, it is clear that this formal ‘contamination’, there was, nevertheless, an understandable fear of classifying alternative Portuguese art as merely an ersatz version of international movements. The idea of Portuguese identity was still on everyone’s minds, and sometimes prevented things from being seen exactly as they were.

<sup>25</sup> For a more complete approach see also the essay: Pina, Sónia (2014) “António Barros: Vulto Limite. Contributos para uma cronografia”. In *Serralves 2009 A Coleção — Textos*. Fundação de Serralves: Porto. p. 92)

<sup>26</sup> Original quote: “acto dialogante com o «Concerto Fluxus» sinergizado por Vostell e Juan Hidalgo (fundador do Grupo Zaj), movimento continuador do Indeterminismo de John Cage e David Tudor” — Interview with António Barros, conducted in 2010.” My translation: “A dialogue with the ‘Concert Fluxus’ synergized by Vostell and Juan Hidalgo (founder of the Zaj Group), a continuation movement of the Indeterminism of John Cage and David Tudor.”

<sup>27</sup> Original quote: “Que não há uma história da Arte Contemporânea Portuguesa sem José Ernesto de Sousa parece-me ser hoje uma consciência de todos quantos se debruçam sobre a História no arco temporal que envolve os últimos cinquenta anos, ficando assim expresso o reconhecimento dos artistas que, entre nós, integraram actividades organizadas no âmbito do Fluxus.”

However, the thought process reflected in this paper took the line that notions of utopia are based on dialogue, mediation, continuous flux of ideas, and on the idea of celebration. Overall, these artists manifested the desire to transcend all barriers, that's why Fluxus was essentially expression of liberty.

The desire of dialogue and openness to the world made Fluxus a movement with inscription not only in the arts world, but also in intermediality studies.

The idea of a democratic space of sharing and meeting without barriers materializes in our lives approximately four decades later in the World Wide Web. What it is nowadays easy to achieve: every artist can be plugged into everything that is happening in the art world, just by being online. Back then, it wasn't anything like that; only the very few could travel to show and share their artwork.

Fluxus was itself a utopia because it was based on ideas of flux, communication, transformation and dialogue. As it was seen as non-art, the goal was to be free from aesthetic norms of the "fine arts" and to create a heterotopic place where all artists could present their artwork outside the usual spaces, as museums or galleries.

The philosophical concepts of Fluxus transcended geographical borders and it is possible to identify traces of it throughout the art world, but not only in the art world. Fluxus only can be defined in an intermedia zone of classification. That's why has been so marginal through time. Nevertheless, today is still defying the attempt to read Fluxus outside from the art world historical perspective. Most of all, is defying to read Fluxus in Portugal, mainly because of the difficulty to gather the information, which is still fragmented and in the hands of the artists and corporations. And, because there are different strains of Fluxus, since it integrated a panoply of distinct artistic areas and geographies. That is the reason why there are as many definitions almost as there are artists, including groups from the USA and Europe, from France, England, Germany, Sweden, Japan, and so on. Nevertheless, all these definitions were, to a certain extent, connected to the utopian idea that the whole world, in its complexity, may be mediated throughout artistic intervention. Likewise,

Portuguese artists embraced this global aesthetic utopia as an act of emancipation and rupture with the past. This paper referred some of them, but is far from explore all the art and artists in the time period focused.

The relevance of Fluxus is not based on its timeliness, but in the impact it had on a new way of thinking in the arts and in the new forms of communication that were emerging in parallel with the late theories of Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), as the way we conceive it today when we are using our laptop.

According to Glusberg (2009, p. 136), Fluxus' current relevance is that it represents a decisive moment of avant-garde art and is marked by militancy in all sectors of artistic creation. In this sense, says the author, "it does not matter that Fluxus is alive or dead. The important task is to discover the myriad ways Fluxus has influenced contemporary art."

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**AFTER APRIL 1974:  
DEMOCRACY,  
COLLECTIVE  
EVENTS AND  
PUBLIC SPACE**

## AFTER APRIL 1974: DEMOCRACY, COLLECTIVE EVENTS AND PUBLIC SPACE

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### ABSTRACT

The key moment in this reflection is that which followed the April 1974 Revolution, which caused some artistic and cultural issues in Portugal. At the same time, the opening up of the country in a political sense was connected to the opening up of public space. In fact, collective artistic events were a constant feature of these years. It was the opening up of the regime in all of its political, social, cultural and artistic dimensions, coupled with a similar movement in the visual arts, particularly performativity, that ushered in some significant collective events, with major implications not only for the period in question but also for the history of Portuguese art in the specific period surrounding the Revolution and the development of the international neo-avant-garde.

**KEYWORDS** DEMOCRATIZATION; PORTUGUESE ART; PERFORMATIVITY;  
COLLECTIVE EVENTS

### RESUMO

O momento que particularmente nos importa nesta reflexão é aquele que se seguiu à Revolução de Abril de 1974, que fez levantar algumas problemáticas artísticas e culturais no Portugal de então. Em simultâneo, a abertura política conecta-se com o movimento de abertura ao espaço público e colectivo. Aliás, os eventos colectivos, também no âmbito das artes plásticas, foram uma constante por estes anos. Na verdade, é como se, além da abertura do regime, com todas as suas implicações políticas, sociais, culturais e artísticas, se pudesse fazer um movimento análogo nas artes visuais, e particularmente na performatividade por estas incorporada, concretizado em alguns eventos colectivos relevantes e implicativos, não apenas do período em causa mas da própria história da arte portuguesa, na sua ligação com o momento específico da Revolução, mas também com o movimento, mais vasto, da neovanguarda internacional.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** DEMOCRATIZATION; PORTUGUESE ART;  
PERFORMATIVITY; COLLECTIVE EVENTS



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

The final years of the corporate regime saw a growing crisis. The political and economic situation, exacerbated by the global oil crisis of 1973, came together with the social crisis in a country that was increasingly closed and opaque. In relation to the visual arts, the 1960s had been an important time, with remarkable dialogue and attention to the international shifts of the time, despite Portugal's status as a clearly peripheral country. This concern with the international scene was primarily based on contact with the outside world through artists who had emigrated, particularly since 1957, with financial assistance from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, as well as on short trips to the foremost centres of art, some specialized foreign magazines, direct or indirect contact of journalists and critics with important events beyond their borders, and a few exhibitions of work by internationally renowned artists in our country.

The first question that concerns us is the evidence of a certain autonomy in the history of visual arts compared with the chronology of political events, which were driven by creative individualities. We lived through a comprehensive historical optimism, in two main phases: early Marcelismo and the April Revolution. Yet for all that, many artists sought to be modern and pursue this modernity, irrespective of geographical space that they occupied or the real limitations of the Portuguese art scene.

In 1974 the military coup that put an end to 48 years of dictatorship and, consequently, to the Constitution of 1933. The anti-democratic, colonialist, isolated and authoritarian regime disintegrated. However, the fundamental political and social changes enacted in this closed and conservative country did not have the definitive role that might have been expected in directly improving the situation of the visual arts. In the aftermath of the Revolution, only the artists who had emigrated for specifically political reasons returned to Portugal, rather than those — the overwhelming majority — who did so for artistic, intellectual, experiential or professional reasons, highlighting the continuing problems of cultural life and the artistic scene in Portugal. In fact, and from an artistic point of

view, change had been enacted, in a scattered fashion, since the 1960, or even 1950s, by individual artists who, regardless of the political and geographical space that they inhabited, set out to be modern. This runs contrary to the belief that the revolutionary period naturally resulted in a new, pioneering approach towards art.

From the point of view of the press, with a few exceptions, Portuguese periodicals did not pay much attention to these issues, although it was a time of freedom of expression. In fact, politics dominated the agenda. In this context, the *Colóquio/Artes* played a unique role in our country. But it is also worth highlighting other relevant publications regarding the reception of artistic matters, such as *Arte/Opinião* (released in 1978), *Opção* (1976-1978) and *Brotéria* (1925-1999), and, between 1973 and 1977, *Revista de Artes Plásticas* (edited by the Alvarez Gallery, Porto).

In taking a look at artistic and museological institutions, it is important to make reference not only to the National Fine Arts Society (SNBA), but also the Portuguese section of the AICA (International Association of Art Critics), which was restructured in 1969. In 1972, it launched the major exhibition *AICA/SNBA* and, in 1981, the *AICA/SEC* prize, the *AICA/MC* (Ministry of Culture). But we must also pay attention to the *Cooperativa Árvore* (Porto), founded in 1963; to the *CAPC* (Circle of Fine Arts of Coimbra), established in 1958; and to the *Ogiva Gallery*, founded in Obidos in 1970. Nonetheless, there was indeed a lack of modern and contemporary art museums in Portugal at that time. The National Museum of Contemporary Art/Chiado Museum, founded in May 1911, underwent a period of closure and only reopened to the public in July 1994. In 1976, however, Porto became home to an important institution — the Contemporary Art Center (CAC), which was in operation between 1976 and 1980 in the *Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis*, under the direction of Fernando Pernes. In the opinion of José Augusto França, this was “(...) the best creation of the regime that followed the 25 April Revolution” (França 1993, 409). The *CAM* (Modern Art Centre/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation), after years of waiting, finally opened in July 1983. This background is indicative of a certain



**FIG. 1** *Painel do 10 de Junho* (pormenor), 1974.  
FOTOGRAFIA DE RUI MÁRIO GONÇALVES.

stagnation that was not immediately or solely resolved by the Revolution.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the necessary democratization of the country was seen as a key source of artistic possibilities. April 25 triggered a seriously militant

attitude among a considerable number of artists, who committed to a culture “in the service of the People” (Chicó 1984, 20-21). It was an era of slogans: “Fascist art is evil to the sight” (Marcelino Vespeira) — a statement made at the event held by the Democratic Movement of Artists on 28 May



**FIG. 2** O Círculo de Artes Plásticas de Coimbra na *Alternativa Zero: Tendências Polémicas na Arte Portuguesa Contemporânea*, 1977. ESPÓLIO ERNESTO DE SOUSA, LISBOA.

1974, in the Palácio Foz; and “Against aggressiveness, we have creativity” and “The aesthetic quality is progressive; mediocrity is reactionary” (Salette Tavares). It was also a time of murals, many of them anonymous and spontaneous, which invaded public space.

Despite the difficulty, or inability, of the government in developing a structural and coherent political culture, campaigns that promoted culture were generally able to involve the government, the armed forces, the National Salvation Army, the general public and artists. Moreover, collective actions in public space were typical of this time, as indicated above. As such, attention was drawn to those that best affirmed the artistic and performative creative processes at this historic moment, bringing political and social issues together with artistic and aesthetic issues, especially in relation to the general movement of the international neo-avant-garde. Some of the most interesting and important examples of artistic output from this time therefore emerged at this crossroads.

One of these initiatives was the panel painting on 10 June 1974, not long after the April Revolution, in an event organised by the Democratic Movement of Artists. Forty-eight artists<sup>1</sup> met at the National Gallery of Modern Art, in Belém, to paint a large panel (4.5m x 24m) divided into 48 squares and spanning three floors, evoking the 48 years of the dictatorship. According to art critic Rui Mário Gonçalves, such actions allowed us to see the language of modern art, between abstractionism and neo-figurativism (Gonçalves 1988, 134), while in the opinion of José Augusto França, we glimpsed an abstract junction between conceptual and neo-realism (França 2000, 63). In the view of Eurico Gonçalves, the panel will not have been less than other in Cuba (Gonçalves 1992, 10). According to Ernesto de Sousa, despite the limited quality of work, the “puppets to the people” were defeated by the “party for the people” (Sousa, 1974, 45), while from the perspective of painter and critic Rocha de Sousa, the greatest wall’s greatest significance was the effective union of those who painted it (Sousa 1975, 34).

The most important point about the work is the revolutionary context and the sense of hope that was at

the root of its realization, over and above any aesthetic considerations that it might involve. The event was also filmed for a live television broadcast, which was interrupted when the organisation “A Comuna” apparently lampooned the Church. Following this episode, Júlio Pomar wrote “Censorship exists” in his square.

In this context of change to the experience of public space, I would like to highlight the collective actions, in a quest for complete freedom of speech and creation, of two important groups of artists: “Grupo Acre” (“An art for everybody” between 1974 and 1977, which included Alfredo Queiroz Ribeiro, Clara Menéres and Joaquim Carvalho Lima) and “Grupo Puzzle” (“Counter-Current”, between 1975 and 1981, including Albuquerque Mendes, Armando Azevedo, Carlos Carreiro, Dario Alves, Graça Morais, Jaime Silva, João Dixo, Pedro Rocha and, later, Fernando Pinto Coelho and Gerardo Burmester). In their own way, both can be seen to possess an innovative visual/performative language that is socially and artistically interventive within the Portuguese context.

On “Grupo Acre” and their actions, Ernesto de Sousa wrote: “Grupo Acre emerged after April 25 as a serene and conscious attitude. (...) The two “actions” carried out by the group so far (floor painting on the Rua do Carmo, Lisbon, and the hanging of a plastic strip from the top of the Clérigos Tower, Porto [“Made by the Grupo Acre”] required collaboration and, in the second case, the participation of accomplices. (...) Grupo Acre is a project, and only projects have consistency” (Sousa 1975, 41). Critic Egídio Álvaro wrote about Grupo Puzzle: “It seems to me that underlying all the Group’s business is a polemical attitude (...) Controversial, because by choosing the difficulty, the counter-current (...) it seems to me that the Grupo Puzzle has a leading position in the field of avant-garde art” (Álvaro 1977, 18-20).

During this period, notable events also included the Encontros Internacionais de Arte [International Art Meetings], mainly promoted by the critic, curator and gallerist Egídio Álvaro and the Alvarez Gallery, and

<sup>1</sup> Alice Jorge, Ana Vieira, Ângelo de Sousa, António Charrua, António Domingues, António Mendes, António Palolo, António Sena, Artur Rosa, Calos Calvet, Costa Pinheiro, David Evans, Eduardo Nery, Emília Nadal, Eurico Gonçalves, Fátima Vaz, Fernando de Azevedo, Guilherme Parente, Helena Almeida, Henrique Manuel, João Abel Manta, João Vieira, Joaquim Lima Carvalho, Jorge Martins, Jorge Pinheiro, Jorge Vieira, José Escada, Júlio Pereira, Júlio Pomar, Justino Alves, Manuel Baptista, Manuel Pires, Marcelino Vespeira, Maria Velez, Menez, Moniz Pereira, Nikias Skapinakis, Nuno San-Payo, Querubim Lapa, René Bertholo, Rogério Ribeiro, Rolando Sá Nogueira, Sérgio Pombo, Teresa Dias Coelho, Teresa Guimarães, Tomás Mateus, Vítor Fortes and Victor Palla.

widely reported in *Revista de Artes Plásticas*, which began in 1974, in Valadares, and continued the following year in Viana do Castelo, in 1976 in Póvoa de Varzim and, in 1977, in Caldas da Rainha. The primary purpose of these events was the meeting of national and foreign artists — Alfredo Queiroz Ribeiro, Alberto Carneiro, Ângelo de Sousa, Carlos Barreira, Espiga Pinto, Fernando Lanhas, João Dixó, Christian Parisot, Pineau, and Serge III Oldenbourg, among others — around colloquia and exhibitions, including on issues such as “art and revolution” and “new trends and cutting edge” (Álvaro et al. 1975, 8-18).

The CAPC (Circle of Fine Arts of Coimbra), founded in 1958, as previously mentioned, was remarkably active in this period. With the aim of promoting contemporary visual arts and raising public awareness, it developed programmes and activities of an experimental, performative and educational nature. This experimental activity fitted, to a large extent, with that of Ernesto de Sousa. The first — or one of the first — points of contact between them occurred at the Ogiva Gallery in Obidos in 1972, as part of the celebrations to mark the second anniversary of the opening of this space. Ernesto de Sousa showed and talked about the images that he had brought from Documenta 5 at Darmstadt, and expressed the opinion that that conference would be “strongly replicated” by elements of the CAPC (Diniz, 2005, 3). As for Ernesto de Sousa, the episode served as the theme for the first text that he wrote about the Coimbra collective: “An intervention-as-the-name-of-Joseph-Beuys that almost went awry. Because this is what happens when you encounter valid interlocutors rather than a passive and masochistic audience that applauds insulting make-believe. The CAPC was present and, with its effective presence, encouraged DIALOGUE, which is more important than so many ex cathedra pedagogies. Perhaps a promising future dialogue” (Sousa 1973, 4).

In fact, it instituted a “fruitful working” space (Nogueira 2005, 169-182) for Ernesto de Sousa, Alberto Carneiro, António Barros, Armando Azevedo, João Dixó, Rui Órfão, Tília Saldanha and others, who carried out important activities and performances, such as *A Floresta* (Porto, Alvarez Gallery, 1973;

Lisbon, National Gallery of Modern Art, 1977), *Homenagem a Josefa de Óbidos* (Óbidos, Ogiva Gallery, 1973), *Minha (Tua, Dele, Nossa, Vossa) Coimbra Deles* (Coimbra, CAPC, 1973), *1 000 011.º Aniversário da Arte e Arte na Rua* (Coimbra, CAPC, 1974), *Semana da Arte (da) na Rua* (Coimbra, CAPC, 1976), *Cores* (Coimbra, Caldas da Rainha, Lisbon, 1977-1978).

In conclusion, the democratization of the country led to a fundamental change, which was not without its problems in the affirmation of art and culture. As such, art came to the street and merged with the public space, in an overarching sense of true performative unity. In fact, implications were not only for the period in question but also for the history of Portuguese art of the Seventies.

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**THE MAP ALSO  
MAKES THE WAY:  
SOME CONSIDERATIONS  
ABOUT THE HISTORY  
OF PERFORMANCE  
IN PORTUGAL**

## THE MAP ALSO MAKES THE WAY: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PERFORMANCE IN PORTUGAL

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### SUMMARY

Assuming that the *live* circumstance tends to be a common denominator of performance art, and one of its fundamental characteristics, it is even more important to anchor its history in the actual works, instead of creating a theoretical body that disregards their existence. Resisting the import of terminology, concepts, methods, procedures and intellectual frames generated by other types of artistic practices is therefore of utmost importance. The same is also true of historiographical models, which are often based on issues external to the works themselves.

This text will address some of the tensions, problems and conclusions found in the course of research about performance art produced in Portugal by a group of artists associated with the visual arts (1970s and 80s) and dance (especially from the 1990s), comparing these different “paths” and their features.

**KEYWORDS** PERFORMANCE ART; DANCE; PORTUGUESE CONTEXT

### RESUMO

Partindo do princípio que a circunstância ao vivo é tendencialmente um denominador comum da Performance, aí residindo uma das suas fundamentais especificidades, importa, ainda mais, ancorar a História produzida nas obras apresentadas, em lugar de criar um corpo teórico que as desconsidera.

É necessário resistir à importação de terminologia, conceitos, métodos, procedimentos e molduras intelectuais geradas a partir de outro tipo de práticas artísticas e modelos historiográficos assentes em questões externas às próprias obras.

Este texto problematizará algumas das tensões, problemáticas e conclusões encontradas ao longo de uma investigação acerca da performance art produzida em Portugal por um conjunto de artistas associados às artes visuais — maioritariamente nas décadas de 70 e 80 — e à Dança, sobretudo a partir dos anos 90, confrontando estas distintas “vias” e suas características.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** ARTE DA PERFORMANCE, DANÇA, CONTEXTO PORTUGUÊS



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

This text — constructed as an overview of a much more detailed investigation, will address some of the tensions, issues and conclusions found in the course of research about performance produced in Portugal by a group of artists associated with the visual arts, mostly in the 1970s and 80s, and dance, especially from the 90s, comparing these different “paths” and their features.

Given that in both cases performance emerged as an alternative to the *status quo* (i.e. deviating from the well-trodden path), I will set out the reasons that lead me to believe that, in the case of Portuguese pioneers, this pathway corresponds to a *turning away* that is marked by reactivity, while, at a later stage, in the case of the authors associated with dance there is a *going towards*, centered on an affirmative dynamic.

I have assumed *live* circumstance as a common denominator of performance, containing one of its fundamental specificities, and that it is therefore all the more necessary to anchor the history produced in the works presented, instead of creating a theoretical body that disregards it. It is necessary to resist the import of terminology, concepts, methods, procedures and intellectual frames generated by other types of artistic practices and historiographical models based on issues that are external to the works themselves. It is pleasing to see this path is being rehearsed, as evidenced by new formats for experimentation, thought and historiography of “live” artworks, often involving partnerships or collaborations between theorists, academics and artists, anchored on acceptance and interest in alternative methods of knowledge production.<sup>1</sup>

When I began the research that would lead to the work entitled *Steps around: Performance versus Dance — A conceptual and artistic setting for the Portuguese context* (BRANDÃO 2016), the central motivation was to get to know a number of pieces from various artists, national and international, that by their characteristics seemed to be Performance.

Due to a number of factors that will not be dissected in the context of this paper, I found much more documentation on the

works of foreign artists. This included detailed descriptions of these events, many of them isolated and witnessed by a small number of people. On the other hand, the ample opportunity to collect information from authors and Portuguese witnesses seemed promising for an attempt to tackle the works in question, which were produced during the 1970s and part of the 1980s, and which I deemed to be Performance.

It proved, however, very difficult to get to know the works addressed (and I spent a long time on the attempt). I participated in long conversations about the ambiances, intentions, relations between the protagonists, the institutions and the market, constantly coming up against obstacles (albeit with some exceptions) to obtaining reports or documents on the work, often justified by the impossibility of “verbalizing the unspeakable” or “betraying the essence of the works”, as referred in a significant number of testimonies.

In fact, when it came to these performances the doors of memory were not open, and neither were personal files, with institutional records being woefully insufficient.

The knowledge deficit of the works that make up this period of Portuguese Performance has led to a constant methodological organization of the information around the figures of Egídio Álvaro and Ernesto de Sousa, something that I also found myself unwillingly doing. Critic of Art, Egídio Álvaro was born in Coimbra, Portugal. He was director of Diagonale / Espace Critique in Paris (80-90), integrating the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). He was indisputably one of the main promoters of Portuguese performance art, being involved in significant initiatives and festivals both in Portugal and abroad (as in Cogolin, Limoges, Nice, St. Quentin en Yvelines, Champy, Kassel, Rennes, Paris or Amsterdam, for example).<sup>2</sup>

Ernesto de Sousa (Lisbon, 1921-1988) was “a prolific multidisciplinary artist and an avid producer of synergies between generations of artists from both the first and the second half of the 20th century. Defending an experimental and free artistic expression, he dedicated himself to the study, promotion and practice

<sup>1</sup> Such as the project *Reacting to Time* (<http://aad-kreactingtotime.blogspot.pt/>) or the cycle *Acreção* (<http://ruadasgaivotas6.pt/acrecao-reenactments-de-performances-portuguesas/>).

<sup>2</sup> Egídio’s work was the subject of a study by the researcher Ana Luísa Barão, author of the “Critic as a Commissioner” [[read.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/8175.pdf](http://read.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/8175.pdf)] or “Performative Heterodoxies” [[web.ua.pt/pdf/actas2009/05\\_Ana\\_Luisa\\_Barão.pdf](http://web.ua.pt/pdf/actas2009/05_Ana_Luisa_Barão.pdf)]

of the arts, as well as to curatorship, critique and essay writing, photography, cinema and theater”.<sup>3</sup>

With their different stances and attitudes, these two figures ultimately acted as binders, because another type of structure, based on geography or typology of works, would have been artificial and unfounded.

In Portugal, performance seems at this point to have been associated with a *decompression* dynamic, that eventually interfered with construction of solid and coherent artistic programs, which has led to an estrangement from the works themselves, giving rise instead to the creation of a discourse on them. This is particularly worrying in the case of transient and undocumented art objects, easily leading to distortion and mythification of a particular period and aspect of Portuguese art.

The revolution on 25 April 1974 appears to be a catalyst for performance art production — as can be deduced from a chronology of Portuguese events on this field (BRANDÃO 2016), probably because it involved a number of conditions that were favoured by the revolutionary environment.

In general, the celebration of freedom led many artists to contest institutional affiliations, the constraints imposed by the market and the conventional procedures and traditional artistic genres.

Generally speaking, the first Portuguese performers seem to have associated freedom with an experimentation anchored in the exploration of the “live” event, as opposed to artistic practices considered obsolete, commercial and old-fashioned, rooted in material production and oriented by the conditions of their marketing.

In many ways, the exercise of freedom ranged from “guerrilla” positions with a clearly political nature, as in the case of the Acre Group,<sup>4</sup> to the interdisciplinary artistic experiences developed by artists associated with the Évoramonte Group, which were often held in private or even took place unexpectedly, as happened with José de Carvalho in Mário Cabrita Gil’s studio.<sup>5</sup>

There is a huge will to affirm art as liberation — even from art itself — and the consequent extravasation of tradition and

the conservatism associated with it, as well as with society in general. As referred by the artist António Barros:

**It is Alloway and Paolozzi that since 1952 appear to propose the study of the relationship between art and reality. From the early 1960s, this state of mind led to the awakening of actions such as those of Yves Klein in France and Gallot in Catalonia, establishing a new reality in which *art is not in the objects but in acts*. The main fact that the *happening* then laid bare was the denunciation of the dictatorial and absolutist character that art had formerly held, dictated by self-appointed masters of inspiration and accepted with reverence by the spectators. It was claimed, therefore, that there was a pressing need to decolonize the audience, giving place to initiative. The *happening* thus emerges in a current of demystification, replacing what art had of hostage language, a set of signs as a direct result of a puritanical civilization, of a culture founded on maintaining the distance with reality, replacing it with another language. This new attitude was immersed in the real, and had group acts, instead of being limited to group signs. As an alternative to working at a distance, artists would get their hands messy, and even their entire bodies (Cirici). (Barros 2006).**

The speech of the pioneers of performance in Portugal often involves the idea of a *total artist*, integrating painting, sculpture, installation, dance, theatre and poetry in their practice, giving rise to frequent use of the term multimedia, as an indicator of a combination of several of these genres. The meaning of artist that follows, in addition to a strong link to the modernist harbinger of blurring of boundaries between art and life, chimes with a liberating and even heroic role, often associated with the exploration of elements linked to various ideas

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.ernestodesousa.com/biography>

<sup>4</sup> The Acre Group, composed of three artists formed by the School of Fine Arts of Porto: Clara Menéres, Queirós Ribeiro and Lima Carvalho, was formed in 1974 and created a series of provocative Actions, challenging institutions in general and those of the artistic milieu in particular.

<sup>5</sup> In 1985, José de Carvalho returned to Portugal after a frustrating experience in the Netherlands and presented the exhibition *Heroes* at Galeria Cómicos, in Lisbon. The director of the gallery, Luís Serpa, established that the invitation would feature a photograph of the artist himself, which led to the last known performance of José de Carvalho. During the photoshoot with Mário Cabrita Gil, designed to capture the image that would feature on the invitation, Carvalho performed a totally unexpected performance, of which the photographer made several spontaneous records. At first, Joseph Carvalho sat, totally naked, on a stool prepared for the purpose, with a hairstyle suggesting two small horns, like a satyr, posing for the picture. At one point he got up and began to move the whole body, “giving a kind of kicks” and turning himself upside down against the cyclorama, next to the wall. He then purposely cut a finger (Cabrita Gil does not remember with what) and began to draw on the cyclorama with his own blood. The images suggest the use of material other than blood, but Gil did not remember. During this unexpected situation, witnessed only by Gil and Gracinda Candeias (Candeias was in the studio to photograph her own works), Gil took photographs, as he did to record the final result: a male portrait, signed and with the inscription ROMAMTICISM [*sic*] (and another word, illegible to the naked eye).

of *Portugueseness*, in both a comic and parodic form, and also through the affirmation and use of its symbols. After this sense of heroism, the artist António Barros posits:

**With the term *artor* we have a more convenient way to describe those for whom the sense of artistic activity has undergone such a complete mutation than those we already consider as artists in the strict sense of the term. Until then (the 60s), aspiring artists usually produced works of art that were part of a well-defined sphere. A ball that connected in some way with the everyday, as the artist was more or less aware of their belonging to a historic moment, a movement of ideas, or a social group. It required such a condition, therefore, to find new ways that exceeded the old opposition between art and life, between the work and the object. As Robert Rauschenberg tells us, “What interests me is what exists between art and life.” Grouping objects with their happenings, Rauschenberg and many other creators spent time creating installations that spanned art and life, building bridges, causing short-circuits, challenging what was possible. That is an artor, the new hero of our time: seeking novel means of intervention and decision-making in the world. He is a man outside the laws and categories, an obscurantist, said John Cage. A true guerrilla of immediate freedom and live sensitivity (J. C. Lambert). An artor seeks to free art from the artistic and liberate everyday objects. (Barros 2006, 109)**

Some artists operate in reference to specific disciplines and artistic environments, bringing issues related to other areas of their artistic practice beyond performance or commenting on the role of critique and institutions.

There is also an appetite for self-didacticism, in the recovery of individual pathways that include artistic expression as an alternative to academic conservatism, favoured by the idea of democratizing access to culture and art. This will to bring art closer to all people was patent in the use of public space and in the appeal to a more direct involvement in sensory and participatory experiences and debates of opinion, which meanwhile disappeared from the work of the few artists who

are still active and that, having won an autonomous space in the artistic context associated with the visual arts, maintains continuous though sparse activity in the field of performance.

The advocacy of democratized art also manifested itself in the promotion of geographically decentralized initiatives such as meetings and festivals, and in the promotion of a communitarian attitude of sharing ideas, meals and works, often described as “party” activities, in direct reference to a celebratory and playful dimension, despite the very limited budgets available.

The first artists to make performance art in our country mostly came from other training areas, and those that still used practices or notions of conveying meaning that were associated with the visual arts are not, first and foremost, performers, as it is not there that their activity as artists is centred.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, in addition to the artists who have since faded into obscurity, a significant number abandoned their artistic career or slowed down their production to the point that it virtually prevented the circulation of new work.

In contact with this last group, I found (during my research) an intense personal conflict about the outcome of these pathways, often attributed to lack of interest, perversity and speculation implied in the art market, the public inability to “understand” and a lack of interest by the art world and its agents, including the artists themselves. The artist and theorist Rui Orfão recalls:

**A language like performance art, although with many years and its story still to be done. It was a widespread phenomenon in the 1970s and early 80s, in the main circuits of a current art; it was also the subject of meetings, debates, theses and the subject of international symposiums, although it received reduced coverage and representation in Portugal. We even used the word “performancefobia” for the attitude among the most orthodox audiences and even among many of the supposedly avant-garde operators. Performance came to lose the dignity that legitimately should have characterized**

<sup>6</sup> I recall that this approach excludes the performers associated with visual poetry and music.

it. The evolution of the pioneers of performance to other interventionist artistic media marked the beginning of the end of this art form — the death of a body thus dying of an unexplained illness” (Rui Orfão apud Perdigão, 1986).

Paradoxically, and before a recent marked academic and in some ways institutional interest in performance and its history in Portugal, I was sometimes confronted with a latent mistrust, as well as a clear will to control the accepted memory associated with this field, a stance that the disclosure of documentation would help to dilute.<sup>7</sup>

Various artists and other participants in the context of early Portuguese performance, with whom I had contact throughout my research, tended to de-dramatize the inconsequence of most careers associated with performance, considering that it is an existing phenomenon in all artistic fields, resulting from lack of conviction, determination, competence or the absence of an aesthetic and artistic programme.

The programmatic context informs aspects such as improvisation, and it would be interesting in the future to ascertain (in the context of each work), to what extent it has been used as a tool and creative strategy, or has been associated with a desire for immediacy, experimentation<sup>8</sup> and adherence to the practices of other international<sup>9</sup> and national artists associated with the avant-garde.

Even initiatives such as meetings, cycles and festivals never had an impact on programmes, as the sole criterion was normally to bring together all Portuguese artists working with performance.

This lack of assertiveness may be linked to the reactivity<sup>10</sup> and politicization of discourse around performance, perpetrated mainly by Egídio Álvaro. With the demise of fervour associated with the Revolution, the protagonists who had forged their pathways route based mainly on that fervour lost the driving force behind their work.

The vast majority of these artists turned out not to internationally inscribe their work, although they benefitted from a particular interest in the post-Revolution scene by some European countries and events, especially in France.

In terms of artistic education, and especially in schools of fine arts, it was found that until very recently performance has tended to exist outside the academic curricula, remaining a marginal and challenging practice and evincing an indifference towards the content provided by the schools. Moreover, the attraction of students to this field, led — especially in FBAUP<sup>11</sup> — to intergenerational contact in the field of performance, resulting from a desire to delve into the background and become more familiar with older artists and practices that had been systematically kept away from taught subjects.

The framework that I have constructed for the early decades of performance in Portugal does indeed have a hypothetical character: a more solid perspective would require a systematic and rigorous survey of works produced by the aforementioned artists and groups. From where I stand, this appears to be the most interesting hub for future research.

The scene that I got to know throughout my research has led me to conclude that this period of performance in Portugal can only be better known if it is addressed through a monographic approach, a thorough investigation that allows the existing documentation and in-person testimonies to reveal the works presented. The pressing nature of this survey and the established existence (then) of a (now) multidisciplinary community, composed of people who are currently scattered throughout the genres of the visual arts, theatre, visual poetry and music, in addition to non-artistic fields, but who attended and participated in several of these events, indicates that it would be useful to form research teams, preferably composed of people cognizant in these areas. Of course, such organization, processing and examination of documents can only happen if those involved, including the artists, disclose their archives.

<sup>7</sup> The transience and lack of documentation often lead to mythification of certain artists or performances. See, for example, what happened with Rudolf Schwarzkogler, to whom has repeatedly been attributed a self-castration during a performance, a rumour propagated by the press (Hughes 1972), and by experts in the field (Glusberg 1979), sometimes even singled out as the cause of his death — while in fact it never happened.

<sup>8</sup> “There was a huge desire to do and that was all that worried us; technical or historical parts did not worry us at all, we did different things to what we had done before “(Fernando Aguiar interviewed by Vânia Rovisco in 2015).

<sup>9</sup> The idea that the performance fits a certain “spirit of time”, being a kind of *fashion* in which contamination was important, is not exclusive to the Portuguese reality. Dan Graham, for example, said: “I did performances because many other artists back then were also doing performances” (Graham, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> “What is the easiest strength to trigger? It is the negative force, it is reaction. It is to react to someone who provokes me. There, I intensify myself [laughs]. But that is poor. It’s easier. Then, one gets dependent on another person, the kind of intensity that goes around has to do with what Nietzsche calls resentments and things like that ... It’s the easiest. The hardest is to be intensified without an obstacle from which to do it. It’s to create. In the first case, we are in the frame of transgression: to transgress: great. But it’s easy to transgress. When transgression becomes really difficult, when it jeopardizes anything, then it is no longer a matter of reaction” (Gil 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto.

The invisibility of the history of early performance contrasts with the impact (in terms of production of a theoretical body) caused by the “New Dance”,<sup>12</sup> whose protagonists, some of them currently producing performance, generally demonstrated ignorance or disinterest regarding the work of Portuguese Performance’s pioneers (MADEIRA 2014). I verified that this distance led to an antipathy in several performers against the “New Dance”, sometimes leading to confusion between this lack of attachment and lack of (in)formation in a broader sense. The artist Fernando Aguiar, for example, states:

**When I organised Youth Week I invited a lot of young people and was very surprised to find that they did not have the slightest idea of what had happened before. They were totally convinced they were inventing performance at that time, in the early 1990s. I was surprised, and in fact offered the catalogues for everyone to see, because I had the idea that when we started, ten years earlier, we had been concerned us with what had existed before and with movements that were in America and elsewhere. But that generation of the 90s totally disregarded what had happened back in Portugal; they had no information about it at all. For them, they had invented performance. I think that was something of the spirit of the New Dance movement. They did not bother to study, to seek information. And they were convinced they were doing something that was being invented at the time. This happened particularly in performance. It always amazed me how so many people, not all of them, were doing that kind of work convinced that they would be doing something 100% new, never bothered with the history of the visual arts or performance. (Fernando Aguiar apud Madeira 2014)**

From the statements of some of the early performers, it seems possible to conclude that, after curiosity and initial interest in the group of young dancers who began to develop work with strong points of contact with what they were doing (transdisciplinary, ephemerality, centrality of the body, hybridity, informality, devaluation of technique), a potential relationship was quickly foiled.

The fact that the work of dancers and choreographers was not in any way anchored in what the first performers did, undermined an expectation of *lineage* and highlighted the refusal of the latter to see the former as a second generation of Portuguese performers, which made a dialogue and collaboration of great potential rather difficult (Wandschneider 1998), confirming what Ernesto de Sousa had identified as a huge waste:

**To combat the isolation of producers, especially from the different aesthetic disciplines. The Portuguese lack of culture is also this: the sect of visual “artists” does not know anything about music and musicians; musicians, anything about literature; writers are illiterate in painting ... There are the people of the theatre and those of cinema who are opposed as enemies, or who simply ignore each other. Not to mention the other divisions, ideological, generational, etc. This is one of the most serious aspects of our spiritual poverty. (Ernesto de Sousa *apud* Freitas and Wandschneider, 1998)**

This lack of communication gradually diminished, largely thanks to artists with links to the field of dance, such as Vera Mantero and João Fiadeiro, who not only produced work *about* artists associated with the visual arts, but also worked *with* them.

The interest of these dancers in the specificities and potential associated with the visual arts — and note that João Fiadeiro is currently developing a branch of his work in real-time composition as a “board” version, where everything develops from the manipulation of objects and plastic materials selected by the participants — has always been considered as part of a framework in which dance is invariably seen as a starting point. For instance, they never strove to clearly frame their pieces (in terms of institutional divulgation), taking advantage of ambiguity in the use of the terms *dance* and *performance*.

Mantero and Fiadeiro are artists who have always kept one foot in Dance, even if in practice they have sometimes radically

<sup>12</sup> The term “New Dance” (“Nova Dança”, in Portuguese), coined by António Pinto Ribeiro in the early 90s, and theorized and systematized by Pinto Ribeiro, Maria José Fazenda and André Lepecki, includes the work of creators like Clara Andermatt, Francisco Camacho, João Fiadeiro, Vera Mantero, Paula Massano, Paulo Ribeiro and Madalena Victorino, among others.

moved away from it, because this framework is an essential part of their work. Moving from one to another sphere raises a number of issues involved in their work, thus giving it meaning.

There is another fundamental aspect: both authors know that dance is a form of knowledge, and their creative processes (although clearly diverse) incorporate this genre, which suggests that they recognize its importance as thought, reflection, speculation and structuring of the elements that interest them at any given time, to be convened as working material. Although it may be little present in the final result, dance is always seen and practised as a creative tool. Any observant and astute dancer sees the body-mind duality promoted by Judeo-Christian culture as obsolete, in that their experience clearly proves otherwise. If, for someone with professional training in dance, the relevance of the body and movement becomes manifest in all dimensions of existence, it is logical that in the case of an artist with this experience, dance is imprinted on her/his way of seeing and relating to the world, including his/her creative process.

After intense training and expertise as dancers, the refusal of this pathway is formulated and enhanced by maintaining the starting point — dance — allowing a confrontation that becomes an integral part of the artistic programme. In fact, Fiadeiro and Mantero reject many aspects developed throughout their training, but this refusal is not merely reactive; it stems from a choice motivated by a strong artistic programme. Moreover, another aspect of that training and practice as dancers remains determinedly present in their work, and in all aspects and stages of the creative process.

The same cannot be said of the pioneers of Portuguese performance. There is also a rejection, but the reactivity is diffuse and related to an *idea* of tradition, not a traditional *practice*.

In Portugal, the US influence — which traditionally sees each dancer as a potential choreographer (Banes 1980) — experienced by New Dance protagonists has contributed to a widespread need to abandon the role of dancer and take over the authorial control of the work. This

influence is not felt through historical or personal accounts, but is experienced by these authors in place, since they travelled abroad for considerable periods of time, making contact with those traditions and practices, which resulted in an expansion of the field that ended up bringing about the transition to performance.

During my research into the performance created by these dancers, my contact with their pieces was of paramount importance. Watching the recordings of the many pieces that Vera Mantero and João Fiadeiro make available to those interested opened up future prospects for research, not least because I have not witnessed them all live and the spaced contact in time generates a very different perspective from a sequential but continuous viewing.

In addition to the intensive and extensive production of thought and discourse by these artists, made available in different ways but, in both cases, publicly,<sup>13</sup> and given their increasingly sound coupling with their artistic production, there is more critical output, especially in academia, about their work, whose nature allows and encourages very different approaches and relates to different areas of knowledge.

In my case, the contact with the work allowed me, for example, to see that the transition to performance did not invalidate the framing of certain pieces as repertoire — quite the opposite. Some works are successively presented, sometimes making very significant changes; others are “taught” to others, passed on to other bodies, even in the case of improvisations. These processes involve decision-making, valuations and procedures that, if thoroughly compared, analyzed and reflected upon, will certainly open up new perspectives and pose new questions, in addition to keeping the works alive.

Ultimately, this research resulted in a strong set of findings. The missing vocabulary needed to address areas that hinder the construction of a reflection on the works certainly stems from several factors, ranging from the difficult place of dance and performance in the collective memory to the scientific gaps in the details of certain phenomena they imply.

<sup>13</sup> Fiadeiro especially online and Mantero online and through constant participation in conversations, discussions and various types of live testimonies.

To move forward, whether imposing themselves by *affirming* (as in dance) or *relating* (as in performance), we must let the works “talk” and insist on “talking” about them.

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**PERFORMANCE  
STORIES IN PORTUGAL:  
STORYTELLING  
AT QUADRUM**

## PERFORMANCE STORIES IN PORTUGAL: STORYTELLING AT QUADRUM

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Interview with Ana Isabel Rodrigues, about Gina Pane's performance (excerpt, in portuguese)



Interview with Gracinda Candeias, about João Vieira's performance (excerpt, in portuguese)



These audio recordings were published previously in the exhibition's catalogue: Alexandra do Carmo "Tudo foi captado (mesmo os movimentos do cabrito)", 24th September 2011 - 22th January 2012, Quadrum Gallery, Lisbon, (Edição Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Direção Municipal de Cultura, Departamento de Património Cultural, Divisão de Galerias e Ateliêrs: ISBN 978-972-8543-20-4)

### ABSTRACT

Quadrum, a Lisbon art gallery, is considered today to have been one of the main sites for experimental art in Portugal between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. Some of the most important performance art works presented in our country took place there, such as Gina Pane's *A Hot Afternoon* (1978) and João Vieira's *Caretos* (1984). Following these experiences, in 2011 at Quadrum, the Portuguese artist Alexandra do Carmo exhibited an audio work based on the testimonies of eyewitnesses to the Quadrum exhibitions and performances of the earlier era. This essay examines the possibilities of documenting performance through oral narrative, looking at the correlations that are possible when human memory is activated, counter-posing a limited archive of photography and video recording. Acknowledging the importance of Walter Benjamin for this debate, we look at contemporary theoretical contributions, in order to build stories of performance art.

**KEYWORDS** DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE; STORYTELLING; QUADRUM GALLERY; GINA PANE; JOÃO VIEIRA; ALEXANDRA DO CARMO

### RESUMO

A Galeria Quadrum é considerada um dos focos da arte experimental em Portugal da segunda metade dos anos 1970 e inícios dos anos 1980, tendo apresentado algumas das mais importantes performances desses anos no nosso país. Foi no seu espaço que tiveram lugar, por exemplo, *A Hot Afternoon* (1978) de Gina Pane ou *Caretos* (1984) de João Vieira. Em 2011 Alexandra do Carmo apresentou na Galeria Quadrum um trabalho que disponibilizava em áudio vários depoimentos que a própria artista recolheu, concedidos por pessoas que frequentaram daquela histórica galeria. Sob a égide do conceito de *storytelling*, e em resposta às limitações afectas ao arquivo composto por registos foto e viográficos, o presente ensaio indaga sobre a possibilidade de se documentar uma performance histórica através de testemunhos orais, examinando as implicações críticas e teóricas que decorrem quando a memória humana é activada.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** DOCUMENTAR PERFORMANCE; STORYTELLING; GALERIA QUADRUM; GINA PANE; JOÃO VIEIRA; ALEXANDRA DO CARMO



*If peasants and seamen were past masters of storytelling, the artisan class was its university. In it was combined the lore of faraway places, such as a much-travelled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as its best reveals itself to natives of a place.*

WALTER BENJAMIN, "The Storyteller" (Benjamin 2006, 363)

*Histories of performance art proper have tended to revolve around a handful of iconic photographs and textual descriptions, or in some cases film or video footage. Until recently, this reliance on the documents and descriptions was rarely put under scrutiny — or exposed for the way in which it paradoxically reduces the celebrated 'live' act to singular (and commodifiable) objects of display and exchange.*

AMELIA JONES, "The Now and the Has Been: Paradoxes of Live Art in History" (Jones 2012a, 16)

## Introduction

Ephemeral artwork exists both at the time of its staging and long after in the memories of spectators and in their testimonies, as well as in material objects, visual media, and text. Since the 2000s, that strategy, employed by institutions, scholars, and artists themselves, ensures that works as an ephemeral, often subversive, embodied act, survive over time and through history.<sup>1</sup> The volume *Perform, Repeat, Record*, recently edited by Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, addresses how the ephemeral moment of live art can be captured and archived (Jones and Heathfield 2012). Jones refers to the tension between the framing, containing nature of institutions and histories, and the disruptive, unruly 'decontaining' that takes place in live art (Jones 2012a, 22). Live art, Jones asserts, disrupts and subverts traditional modes of historicization because it exists at the nexus between "temporality, embodiment and experience" (Jones 2012a, 11) and history, in turn, attempts to stop time by freezing moments within the object/document/archive.<sup>2</sup> Embracing a diverse and unconventional range of responses to the provocation "How does live art get remembered?" (Jones 2012a, 15), Heathfield notes that performance "bears a temporal paradox: it exists both now and then, it leaves and lasts; its tendencies toward disappearance and dematerialization are countered by its capacities to adhere, mark, and trace itself otherwise" (Heathfield 2012, 28). But rather than attempting to arbitrate between a disappearing performance and a remaining one, as fundamentally disappearing or remaining, Heathfield states that such divergent views contribute to transform

<sup>1</sup> Given recent investments in spaces for performance-based work by the Tate Modern gallery (for instance, *Collecting the Performative*, April 2012 — January 2014) and Abramovic's own Institute for the Preservation of Performance Art, it seems that re-performance is not merely a transient strategy adopted by savvy contemporary artists, but a curatorial practice with a long horizon" (CAMP 2014, 167). Notable research projects in this field have been Performance Matters (2010-12; a collaboration between Goldsmiths University of London, the University of Roehampton and the Live Art Development Agency) and Performing Documents: Modelling Creative and Curatorial Engagements with Live Art and Performance Archives (2011-14; based at the University of Bristol). On this subject, we should also mention in Tate Modern gallery, for instance, *Collecting the Performative* (April 2012 — January 2014) and, in Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts's growing archive of performance art (<http://www.mfa.org/programs/series/performance-art>).

<sup>2</sup> " [...] while art history, with its connected institutions and discourses (the art exhibition, art gallery and market, curatorial practice, art criticism), insists on containing the artwork as a discrete and knowable 'object,' a consideration of the performative 'de-contains' the work, reminding us that its meaning and value art contingent" (Jones 2012, 12).

performance into remembered, reiterated, and recorded forms as a matter of course.

Quadrum, a Lisbon art gallery, is considered today to have been one of the main sites for experimental art in Portugal from the second half of the 1970s to the mid-1980s. Some of the most important works of Portuguese performance art of the era were performed here, such as Ana Hatherly's *Rotura* (1977), João Vieira's *Caretos* (1984), and pieces by the impressive Gina Pane or Ulrike Rosenbach, artists belonging to the international avant-garde brought to Portugal by Ernesto de Sousa as part of the series "Ciclo das Artes Performativas" in 1978.

In recent years, Quadrum's archive has been considered an object of research in order to preserve, study and make its content available to the general public.<sup>3</sup> The symposium for which this article was first written is focused on the place (or non-place) of performance within the history of Portuguese art and on the subsequent urgency to fabricate an archive on *Portuguese performance art* (cf. Madeira 2014). It is in this context and in this moment in time that we assert the necessity of reflecting on the tension between document and live memory through the observation of two particular case studies related to the Quadrum archive — the memorable performances of *Caretos* (1984) by João Vieira, and *A Hot Afternoon* (1978) by Gina Pane.

This essay examines the possibilities of documenting performance through oral narrative, looking at the possible correlations when human memory is activated, thus counter-posing a limited archive made up solely of photography and video recording. One case study consists of a contemporary artist: in 2011, the artist Alexandra do Carmo presented an audio work at Quadrum, *Everything Was Captured (even the movements of the little goat)*, comprising reflections of witnesses to the Quadrum exhibitions and performances from the earlier era.

From here, an important question arises: how does storytelling challenge the idea of history as factual, stable, and scientific, detached from the uncertainties of the narrating subject? Subsidiary to the main focal point of research are

the following aspects in relation to performance art: human memory in relation to video and photographic documentation; the different modes and stages of existence of a performance art piece; the artist and spectator as collaborators; the importance of acknowledging the expressiveness of the "practices of look" and their so-called factual descriptions; the relational dimension of performance art; and the necessity of acknowledging its "death", or *transformation*.

We introduce some valuable concepts, such as Adrian Heathfield's notion of the *transformation* that occurs as a result of transmission and Amelia Jones's conceptualization of intersubjectivity, as well as discussing Matthew Reason's ideas on more creative approaches to documentation. Our aim is to discuss the role of storytelling to history making, relating Walter Benjamin's approach to storytelling with contemporary theoretical contributions, building stories within performance art history.

### Documenting as storytelling

In mentioning the acceleration of modern life, Walter Benjamin sees in the rising of the novel and the development of ways of spreading information a new way of communicating. These are the elements responsible for the decay of the ancient mode of passing on memories. According to him, modernity is slowly erasing storytelling, among other genres, from everyday life.

Within the core of performance art lives the intention to recover a direct, corporeal, relational, social, and ritualistic experience — these are its main characteristics, along with un-reproducibility, transgression and the use of the body. This is why some authors mention the performance as a fleeting event, arguing that the ephemeral nature of performance is complemented by a contradictory urge for preservation, in opposition to disappearance, its natural destiny.

In tune with the countercultural drive in which live art/performance art first appeared (in the late 1960s and early 70s), the apologists for and theorists of live art have embraced

<sup>3</sup> See for instance the Arquivo Paralelo blog by Catarina Rosendo and Lúcia Afonso. [http://quadrumarquivoparalelo.blogspot.pt/p/saber-mais\\_2578.html](http://quadrumarquivoparalelo.blogspot.pt/p/saber-mais_2578.html)

a definition of this work that emphasizes its resistance to reproduction and commodification along with its ability to challenge cultural and societal norms. For Peggy Phelan, the only life of performance belongs to the state of being present, and its disappearance is at the heart of its ontology: “Performance’s only life is in the present. [...] To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology” (Phelan 1993, 146). But Philip Auslander’s book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, first published in 1999, caused something of a sensation when he refuted Phelan’s claims. Auslander argued that the idea of liveness was not an ontological condition but was instead historically mediated and dependent upon contextual circumstances. As Irene Müller stated more recently, performance theory has worked against writing about history in recent decades, focusing exclusively on presence and the live experience, and discouraging any kind of documentation: “In the 1990s, the discourse shifted from an ontological to a phenomenological dimension of providing evidence on the premise that what appears in documents can provide realization and knowledge” (Müller 2015, 21). Based on an idea of a post-modern representation, indexibility and also on Derrida’s concept of the supplement, Amelia Jones assumed a dependency on the documentation of photography in order to consider the event. For her, performance would only become a work of art through its documentation, or a cultural product of some kind including body art, and would need to be mediated.<sup>4</sup>

Following Michel Foucault’s assault on the so-called “technologies of truth” used by fascist propaganda in the period between the wars, in *Practices of Looking* Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright articulate modes of seeing with practices of machinery used as instruments of mediation in representational practices. They note that the mechanical record is ideologically associated with scientific truth, but due to the fact that camera instruments of photography, video or film<sup>5</sup> are understood to be trustworthy by viewers, they also demonstrate how partial<sup>6</sup> the camera in fact is. These perspectives question the value of photography as a reliable

document, that is, a definite record of a past event, one serving to prove or illustrate a univocal and established interpretation of reality. Perhaps this is the reason why Hito Steyerl suggests examining what documentary images *express* rather than what they *represent* (Steyerl 2008, 14-15).

We understand the imperative need to deconstruct a structuralist perspective focused on a search for a truth related to an historical event,<sup>7</sup> be it scientific, social or any another quality. Instead, we recognize how crucial it is to assert the potentiality of an oral testimony, one given by an audience member, for example, always assuming the multiplicity of interrelations with social, economical, political or historical aspects of life. Once we dispense with the idea of the idyllic possibility of returning to the chronological moment of the event (as an attempt to reconstruct it) and stop searching for the true meaning of someone’s performance, we start accepting that the time of passing on lived experiences has the value of *transformation*.<sup>8</sup>

According to Amelia Jones, body art provides the possibility of radical engagements, altering the way we think about meaning and subjectivity, both as artists and spectators. This type of artistic manifestation proposes a kind of “artistic object” as a meeting place between reception and production: a *local* for inter-subjectivity where the self/body is placed within the sphere of both aesthetics and politics, confirming in this way what phenomenology and psychoanalysis refer to. The subject is constituted through the relationship with the *other*, always displacing the “locus” of identity elsewhere. Thus, creator and spectator become collaborators with each other in consummate reciprocity (Jones, 1998, 41).

<sup>4</sup> In 1998, Jones had published *Body Art*, an expansion of her arguments in *‘Presence’ in absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation*, where she states: “there is no possibility of an unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product, including body art” (Jones 1997, 11). In his 2006 essay “The Performativity of Performance Documentation”, Philip Auslander notes the performativity of documentation itself, and critically asserts the impossibility of an event somehow ontologically pre-existing its documentation. Documentation, Auslander argues, “it does not simply generate images/statements that describe an autonomous performance [...] it produces an event as performance.” (Auslander 2012).

<sup>5</sup> “While being aware that an object is always richer than its documentation and that documentation is never neutral, never sufficient, nor complete, professional standards are underpinned by a strong belief in written and visual documentation as if evidential, fixing, recording, noting, and holding. And, indeed, generally considered to be more reliable than oral forms of documentation. In short: An artwork’s visual and written documentation as a form of materialized memory is considered invaluable to its perpetuation.” (Saaze, 2015, 55-63).

<sup>6</sup> The world is not simply reflected back to us through systems of representation, but we actually construct the meaning of the material world through these systems. (Cf. Sturken 2009, 3)

<sup>7</sup> To Jacques Derrida the archive comprises “an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement” (Derrida 1995, 57). But, at the same time, we know that for Derrida this fever related to the desire to reveal the truth contained in the indivisible instant is a delusional and phantasmal appeal that signals both the irretrievable dissolution of the object in time and, perhaps more importantly, the urge to construct an apparatus that enables the movement, the flux and flow of desire and thinking.

<sup>8</sup> Heathfield writes that the “multiple lives of performance [...] suggest that one of performance’s most consistent and recurring conditions is transformation. Perhaps, then, one should search less for its ontology and more for its ontogenesis: the many natures of its becoming.” (Heathfield 2012, 32).

Interjecting the Lacanian mirror image theory with the above considerations by Amelia Jones, Elena Cologni articulates a process of interchangeability between artist and audience (Cologni 2006). For her, the post-performatic thus becomes the residue left in an immaterial place, a resonance, most likely impossible to capture with technical apparatus such as a video or photographic camera.<sup>9</sup>

### Case study I — João Vieira

João Vieira's 1984 exhibition "Caretos" at Quadrum consisted of a series of paintings based on the theme of the folkloric masquerade that occurs at Christmas in the village of Torre de Dona Chama (Mirandela), where the artist's mother was born. For the opening, João Vieira brought a donkey into the gallery space while the musicians Janita Salomé and Vitorino played traditional tambourines and other Arab instruments.

In an article entitled "Caretos", beside four photographs recording the different moments of Vieira's performance described above, a detailed description was delivered characterizing the astonishment of the 'madams' and 'alfacinhas' (people of Lisbon) present in the gallery.

**The donkey, with his legs tied, kicked with all the strength he had, while the painter, dressed as a *careto* [a traditional Christmas masquerade], was drawing, painting, eating bread and drinking wine. Like the people of the village, he mixed the profane with the sacred, giving communion to the animal. Blood was dripping on a golden floor.**

**At a corner of the performance room the 'estadulhos' [adornment of the bull cars], and, all over the gallery, the masks — in the paintings, in the audience, perhaps even inside of the narrow minds of the Lisbon residents, astonished by the rawness and the violence of all that.**

**This art practice does not surprise me or shock me. I am a man born in Trás-os-Montes,<sup>10</sup> and have known childhood initiation ceremonies that were stronger and more striking. João Vieira surpassed the experimental scene. Between the**

**champagne of the opening and the upsetting little screening of the madams around, there it was, the *mourama*, and the memories of a marvellous realm that Miguel Torga named Trás-os-Montes (Carneiro 1984, 2-3).**

The journalist and writer Eduardo Guerra Carneiro finishes his description with this information: "Until 3 November, now without a live donkey and without the champagne bubbles, whoever goes to Quadrum at Corucheus can see two recordings — one of the traditional festivities of Trás-os-Montes<sup>11</sup> and the other from the exhibition opening."<sup>12</sup>

This particular work embodies the disparity between what documentation is able to fix and what the memory of an audience is able to retain. With the express intention of sustaining these two operations, a recording of the performance was made available to an audience at exactly the same site as the event.

The problematization of memory versus archive was the subject of a work by Alexandra do Carmo, presented at Quadrum in 2011. Audio was presented, composed of edited interviews and recollections of audience members who remembered the earlier key period of exhibitions and performances from Quadrum's history. Among them, one of the recurrent, and most enthusiastically recalled, features was João Vieira's aforementioned performance.

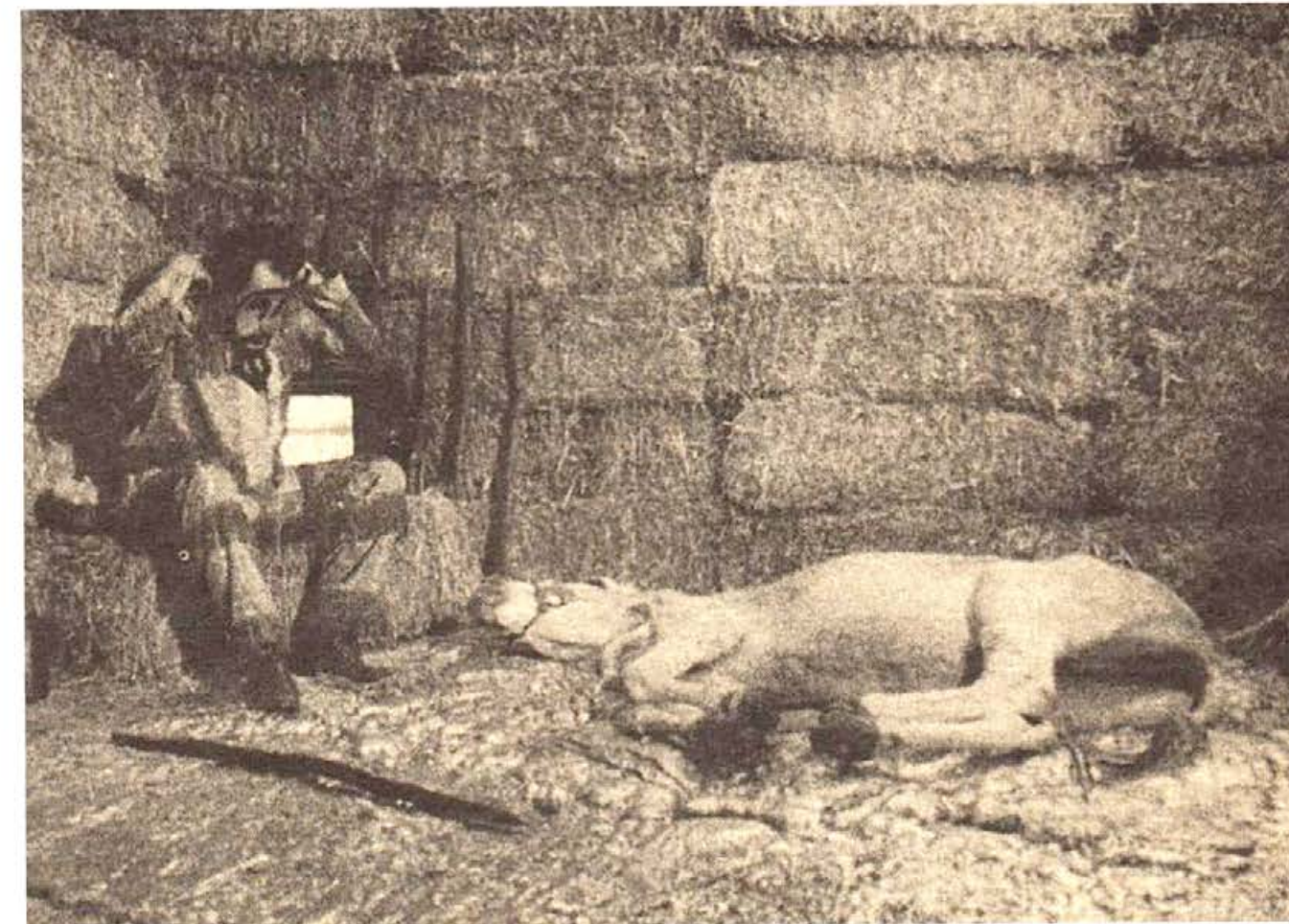
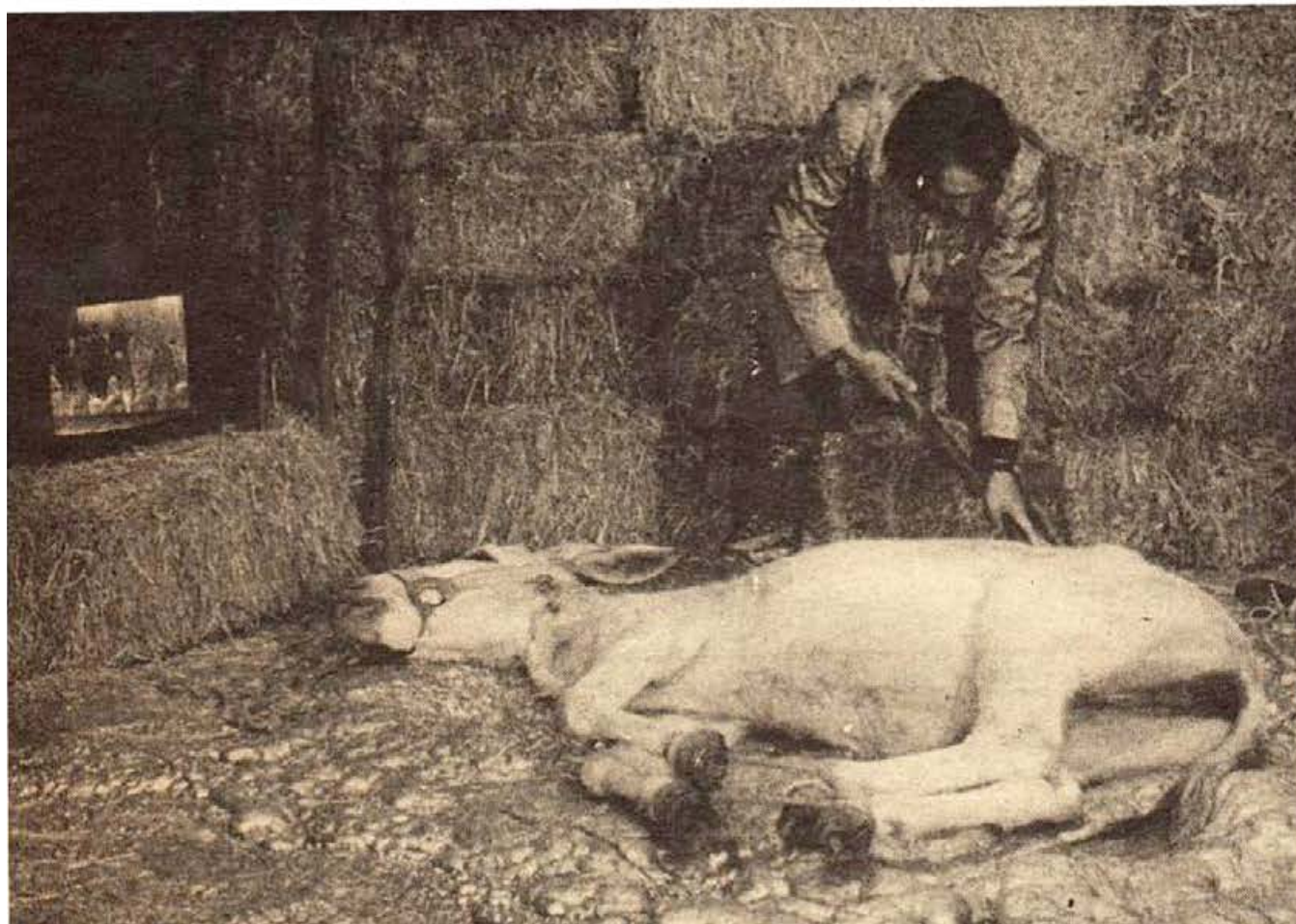
Statement 1 (Female voice) "He had a black and white television where he showed a video of people looking at him, and he was all dressed up, like a villager at one of those *caretos* carnivals. In fact, he created a series of *caretos*. So, he was eating, he pretended to be in the countryside, it was all straw on the floor, with those big bales, the little kid goat was running around loose, it even bleated, baa, baa, baa, and then he ate a piece of cheese. I clearly remember him doing that,

<sup>9</sup> "The live performance can never be captured or transmitted through the archive. A video of a performance is not a performance, though it often comes to replace the performance as a thing in itself (the video is part of the archive; what it represents is part of the repertoire). Embodied memory, because it is live, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it. But that does not mean that performance — as ritualized, formalized, or reiterative behavior — disappears." (Taylor 2003, 20)

<sup>10</sup> Later in the article there is a detailed description of a *Caretos* party at Torre de Dona Chama, starting on the 25 December, and testifying to the violence mentioned by the journalist: "A fire burns all night in the village square. One drinks to exhaustion while eating codfish and sardines. Hidden, groups of boys go to the stables to steal donkeys for a parade the next day, a practice called 'gypsying'. The donkeys will be made ridiculous, become drunk and sometimes even castrated. [p.2] [...] Finally the agricultural party arrives [...] The parade of 'Mourama' enters the church [...] A little child follows the crowd, fancily dressed, who later will be symbolically murdered [...] After the meal, the Moors are persecuted by the hunters protected by the *Caretos*. The symbol of the Moorish prince is burned, and with the doll in flames, the castle is burnt." (Carneiro 1984, 2-3).

<sup>11</sup> The destiny of Manuel Pires video recording was João Vieira's exhibition *Caretos*, at Quadrum gallery, in 1984. It has been available on YouTube since 17 January 2016: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgzoET8YZGE>

<sup>12</sup> Available on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2DN\\_mTNX2M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2DN_mTNX2M)



**FIG 1.** Photographs by Miranda Castile accompanying Eduardo Gerra Carneiro's article "Caretos".

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIRANDA CASTILE ACCOMPANYING EDUARDO GERRA CARNEIRO'S ARTICLE "CARETOS".

dressed up all properly, really dressed up in reds and gold like in Trás-os-Montes, eating a piece of cheese and people looking at him and he didn't say anything! And people were watching and everything was captured, the way people looked, the questioning, the way they talked about what they were seeing, the way they were looking at him, the goat ... Even their movements, everything was being filmed.”

Statement 2 (Female voice): “This exhibition was called ‘Caretos’ and João wanted to put seven bundles of straw in the gallery and a female donkey.

And he puts the donkey in the middle of the paintings, in the middle of the straw, in the middle of this ‘thing’... And with him dressed as a *careto*, with the traditional *careto* outfit. Ah, and there were cowbells, a whole load of other stuff, a female donkey, straw, all sorts of stuff, and he appears all covered in bells next to the donkey, the donkey shifting from side to side [laughter].”

If we based our work on these three testimonials, (including the newspaper article) and did not have access to the photographs and the film of Manuel Pires,<sup>13</sup> we would be reporting three different animals: a donkey, a female donkey and a goat. There is an obvious disparity in terms of the species and the gender of the animal in question.

It should be noted that the first statement refers to the experience of a viewer who watched the performance mediated by video, which means that they could only have been there after the opening day. Therefore, what she saw was mediated by a video recording of the event, presented in the gallery on a television monitor. Here the degree of certainty stated contrasts with her dramatic mistake in terms of the identification of the animal in question.

Although this statement's origin could have been a trick of one's memory, we cannot help thinking that it may have been the result of difficulty in seeing the small monitor.

### Case study II — Gina Pane

Regarding Gina Pane's presence in Portugal, we only have a brochure in Quadrum's archive from her performance

presented at the galley space in April 1978. In it, there is a text in Portuguese and French entitled “Um Humanismo do Corpo” / “humanisme du corps”, originally published in “Art Vivant” in 1973<sup>14</sup> by the art critic Gilbert Gatellier. It contains a description of Pane's major achievements between the 1960s and early 1970s. Many art critical texts were no more than translations of texts already published outside Portugal, and therefore did not reveal the specificity of the works shown in loco. Quadrum's archive contains no photographic record or video recording of this performance. In terms of critical reviews, besides brief news reports replicating information sent by the gallery to the press, there is a newspaper article by Eurico Gonçalves, tracing a long genealogy starting with Surrealism (a historical movement that interested him), which, in his view, leads to contemporary art. This consideration allows him to consider body art, or the “art of corporeal expression” (as he describes it), as something “which symbolically sometimes evokes primitive actions, being pertinent to the contemporary” (Gonçalves 1978).

Gonçalves is well aware of the conceptual and political dimensions and gender issues that run through the French artist's performances: “incarnating a collective unconscious”, writes Gonçalves of the corporeal action presented by Gina Pane at Quadrum, “provoked the commercialization of situations involving general alienation, portraying herself as a woman wanting to break and cross all the physical and mental barriers, through the rupture of traditional, atavistic, passive and submissive feminine behaviour” (Gonçalves 1978).

Despite recognizing the women's liberation aspect in Pane's work, the writing is nevertheless armed with a hermeneutic dimension, which seems to be a conservative view in the light of contemporary gender studies. “The body of the woman segregates liquids as milk, spit and blood, it is sensitive to fire, pain and pleasure, to the thorns, spikes and the scent of roses, appealing to a love of life.

<sup>13</sup> See note 4.

<sup>14</sup> Chroniques de l'Art Vivant no. 41 — July 1973 — Le corps 2 — Les corps étranges — Le temps des idoles (travesties ... 1973 de Chroniques de l'Art Vivant — Aimé Maeght et Jean Clair — Gilles et Christine Larrain — Jean-Christophe Amman sur Urs Lüthi et Luciano Castelli — Jean-François Lyotard sur Lindner — Gilbert Gatellier. URL: <https://www.amazon.fr/Chroniques-lArt-Vivant-travestissement-Texttruction/dp/B00518IHL0>

Assuming her feminine nature and the essence of her vitality, Gina Pane proposes the total liberation of women, beyond the cultural medium (the canvas in painting, the screen in cinema), and materializes it in a mental and physical act. She knows that the nature and behaviour of women diverges from the nature and behaviour of men. The liberation of women will therefore have to be essentially a feminine work, and the liberation of men a masculine one. Understanding and accepting the differences, she acts within her specific field with her woman's body" (Gonçalves 1978).

In February 1978, when the exhibition of Cherif and Silvie Defraoui (entitled "Archetypes et Artifices") took place, Quadrum was praised as being "informative, formative and highly involved" with the arts, with reference to the recent "highly appealing intervention, a fascinating liturgy based on the body by Gina Pane". Despite all these accolades, what was retained in the memory of those who witnessed this performance after 33 years?

Statement 1 (Female voice): "She terrified me, you know? I was scared that she was going to die, spurting blood all over the place, you know what I mean? And God knows what else [...] cut herself to pieces, [...] amputating herself. It was suffocating [...]. But I couldn't leave, I was rooted to the spot. I mean completely mesmerized. And I was left with the images that I can still see today. She was way beyond us, you know? It was a really strange sensation. We weren't watching a performance, we were experiencing the cuts with her, you know what I mean? It was something I've never felt before in my life. It was the most powerful thing I've ever seen."

Statement 2 (Male voice): "[...] She finished by pressing rose thorns into her arm, delineating a line so to speak, which went from her shoulder, or practically her shoulder, down to her wrist. Obviously the thorns wounded her and made her bleed."

Statement 3 (Female voice): "She came in, she put glass, mirrors around the gallery and then, from above, she crashed into the glass. It shattered all over the floor but she didn't cut herself, just a few little scratches. That was her



**FIG. 2** Spectators waiting at Quadrum gallery A Hot Afternoon by Gina Pane, Lisbon (1978)

Espólio Ernesto Sousa; courtesy of Isabel Alves.

PHOTO AVAILABLE ONLINE, AT THE ARQUIVO PARALELO BLOG (BY CATARINA ROSENDO AND LÍGIA AFONSO)

[HTTP://QUADRUMARQUIVOPARALELO.BLOGSPOT.PT/P/SABER-MAIS\\_2578.HTML](http://quadrumarquivoparalelo.blogspot.pt/p/saber-mais_2578.html)

performance [...]. The blood wasn't cleaned up until the end of the month."

Statement 4 (Female voice): "I clearly remember that at the end of the room [...]. The room was an open space and at the end there was some glass where she did her performance. I was a little bit late. I didn't watch the beginning. I just saw her smash the glass with incredible ferocity, without worrying about injuring herself and blood spurting out [...]. That was what was left on the glass."

These four statements refer to the same event, but each one of them clearly reports a different content, both in terms of the intensity and in terms of the level of violence within the act (someone talks about "amputation", while other testimony characterizes it as just a few scratches). In the written press at the time, we can see a complete of any symbolic or metaphoric content. The critical, political and feminist approach was clearly left out of such coverage in favour of the physical and phenomenological dimension — the impact of being in the presence of live self-inflicted cuts and the spurting of blood prevents any hermeneutic reading of the event.

In the existing documentation (a single photograph), one can see only the audience at one end of the gallery and a simple spiral shape on the floor; the artist is not present.

### **"Everything was Captured"**

As articulated above in this paper, based on the two case studies observed, we became aware of how oral testimonies are subjective, unpredictable, incomplete, imprecise, ambivalent, *trans-formative* and in some occasions contradictory (and contradicting). At the same time, they carry valuable information that potentially fills the gaps, allowing new dimensions of research and problematization to open. It is what remains unknown or invisible within the documentation — everything that an investigator armed with conventional archival tools does *not* select as appropriate to his/her database in the name of objective knowledge (cf. Saaze 2015, 62). In this vein, the very title of Alexandra do Carmo's audio work *Everything was Captured* surely merits some critical attention in its ironic

claim to be a more complete document of the performances. Parallels can be drawn between this work and Tim Etchells and Richard Lowdon's 'Notes and Documents of *Emanuelle Enchanted*', quoted by Matthew Reason in "Archive or Memory? The Detritus of Live Performance" (Reason 2003, 82-89). Etchells and Lowdon use material derived from the performance to re-address concerns for excess information and incompleteness (Reason 2003, 87). Rather than speculating upon the 'meaning' of *Emanuelle Enchanted* or recounting the mechanisms by which it operated, this presentation offers an experience analogous to that of a meeting with the event which preceded it. Calling on the 'fragmented/atomized' nature of the performance, this 're-presentation' resists being read as a transparent record, but furthers the work's dissemination through a variety of forms (Reason 2003, 88). 'Notes and Documents' are an archive constructed not by recording the performance, but by attempting to echo the memory of the performance, and in this sense is very much related to *Everything Was Captured (even the movements of the little goat)*. The drawings are precisely the reminiscent materiality of an echo of past memories, and "translating" the audio into a different media (drawing with printed text), where the actual sentences (as in subtitle format) of what people say in the audio recording are visibly present, allows a complexity that builds its own object. It is a process of mutation that leaves the constructed archive not in a fixed, accomplished place but, as Reason writes, in a meeting place between physical remains of the event — the piece in its whole-audio and drawings functions as a process for the viewer to build their own experience, as if in the presence of a performative act. Referring to the first in the series of drawings that occupy the main room, Alexandra do Carmo wrote in her notes: "Start with the drawing of an audience, it could be in the theatre".

Based on Reason's article, one could assume that, as in theatre (the object of research for the author), the recurrent necessity of documenting performance, like the desire to record it, can achieve its most acute expression (and manifest its hope for authority and permanence) in a "live performance archive" (Reason 2003, 85). The performing arts archive



**FIG. 3** Alexandra do Carmo  
Untitled, Drawing series for the project "Everything was Captured (even the movements of the little goat)", 2011.  
30 drawings, 30 x 22 inches each, pencil, coloured pencil and printed text on paper. (Exhibition viewing at the Quadrum Gallery).

represents the officially sanctioned collecting, cataloguing, preserving and consecrating of traces of past performances.

Currently, archive theory insists on the instability and uncertainty of the archive,<sup>15</sup> which *not only documents but builds its object*. This point of view is related to *Practices of Looking*. Reason establishes a comparative relationship between archive and human memory. As such, it is possible to formulate a new conception of archive as detritus — as a meeting place between physical remains of the event rather than accomplishment — valuing the mutation as a reflex that is inherent in the live performatic experience. What sustains Reason’s perspective is the assumption of unpredictability, fluidity, limitedness and memory. Thus, questioning the function of the archive as authoritarian occurrence, defining the criteria and selecting what goes and what stays outside its *corpus*, implicitly leaves out a multiplicity of other remnants, materials and discourses. For the reasons just delineated, Reason refers to the existence of “holes”, everything that, despite being part of the event, was not catalogued. Selecting some information to the detriment of other data will make us question its authenticity, and using the official “proper research” implicit in the archive means excluding speculation or digging into one’s memory (Reason 2003, 85), so that we tend to forget how politically oriented the archive can be, and how documentation can be manipulated.

Adrian Heathfield’s analysis presents us with the recurrence of performance as “a different event”, referring to its nature beyond the domain of form: “as forms take place, are received, and understood in the movement of time, a force that is as Bergson noted, a relentless differentiation of things” (Heathfield 2012, 32). Thus it is the conjugation of form in time that is able to inscribe difference within each re-enactment. Furthermore, the author refers to the relationship of the event to the audience as “inter-subjective and inter-sensorial co-minglings” happening in the community, as mentioned by him as “inherently social”:

**“[...] involving numerous subjectivities, numerous active beings in and of numerous times, diverging and converging**

**in the times of the event of reading. The bodies assembled here, before each other, actually, virtually, sense and communicate in the flux of simultaneously absent and present corporealities.” (Heathfield 2012, 32).**

*Archival art* practices<sup>16</sup> enable the emergence of a creative and playful attitude that can shed light on alternative resources, materials and methodologies that are normally disregarded, integrating the viewer’s capacity to create and invent relations that escape strictly descriptive and documentary practices. More exactly, the viewer will be attracted and superseded by relations and investments drawn through the combination of uncertain and fragmented materials. Alexandra do Carmo’s artistic project in a sense proves the explanatory value of Christopher Bedford’s notion of performance as “viral”: as existing in and through discourse, rather than having some status of originality as “real” (Bedford 2012, 77-87). The importance of bringing these voices together lies in stressing the impossibility of resolving how performance and/or live art *works* in relation to the passage of time. The selection made by the artist — including only a selection of the recordings in the drawings and the presentation mode as an audio timeline on the wall — creates in the viewer the necessary confrontation with past material as a fluid entity interacting with the value of a fictitious re-presentation based on a past performatic experience: the inability to record the ‘real’.

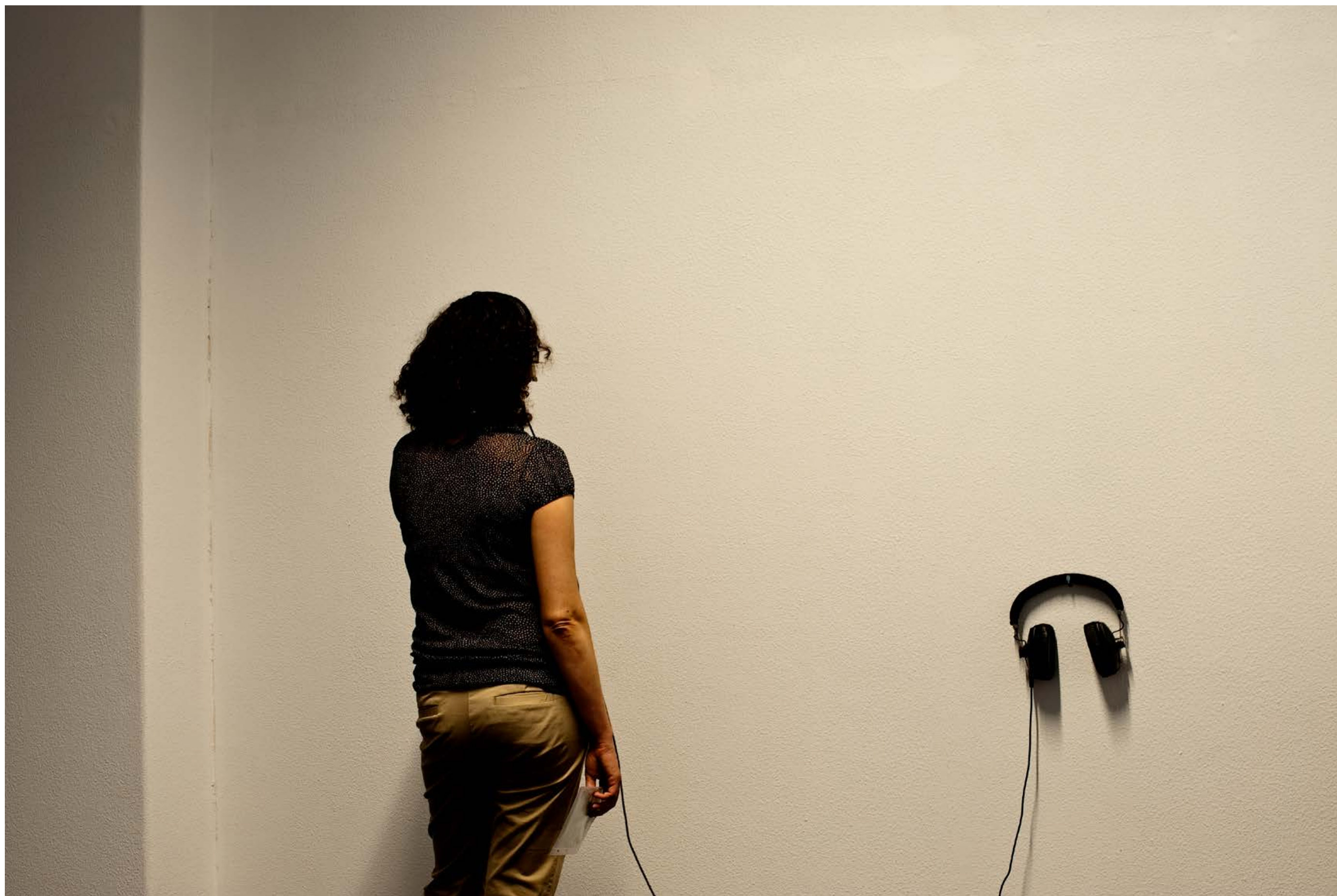
According to Matthew Reason referencing Peter Brook,<sup>17</sup> if there is a voice to be heard, it should be the audience’s voice. That said, there is also a need to understand and integrate the body of the interpreter in this equation, the one who narrates the story.

By referring to storytelling as an artisan form of communication, Walter Benjamin also mentions that this form does not convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a

<sup>15</sup> The archive is therefore not capable of providing objective and transparent access to the past. However, it is also true — as pointed out by many scholars and theorists (Schwartz 2000, 36-40; Yeo 2007, 318; Buchanan 2012, 37; Ketelaar 2002, 9-27) — that positivist assumptions related with “fact-based and truth-oriented notions of objectivity and neutrality”, as stated by Joan Schwartz, still prevail in the conceptualization of the archive in scientific contexts (Schwartz 2000, 37).

<sup>16</sup> In 2004 Hal Foster detected an ‘archival impulse’ in contemporary art which, as he stated, had a ‘distinctive character of its own [...], pervasive enough to be considered a tendency in its own right’. Foster summarizes a variety of artistic approaches, such as the expounding of ‘different audiences to alternative archives of public culture’ (in relation to the art of Hirschhorn), the presentation of the past as a ‘fundamentally heterogeneous and always incomplete’ instance (Tacita Dean), the production of the ‘archive as a spatial unconscious where repressed contents return disruptively’ (Sam Durant), or, finally, the questioning of public archives by private ones as the latter can be ‘seen as perverse orders that aim to disturb the symbolic order at large’ (Gerhard Richter). (cf. Foster 2004, 3-21).

<sup>17</sup> “The only thing that all forms of theatre have in common is the need for an audience. This is more than a truism: in the theatre the audience completes the steps of creation. [...] In the theatre this is modified by the fact that the last lonely look at the completed object is not possible — until an audience is present the object is not complete.” (Brook 1968, 156/7).



**FIG. 4** Alexandra do Carmo  
Audio for the project "Everything was captured (even the movements of the little goat)", 2011. 26 minutes 22 seconds, loop (exhibition viewing at the Quadrum Gallery).

report. “It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.” (Benjamin 2006, 367)

As our focus shifts from the author (producer) to the audience, we are able to consider multiple experiences: personal, sensorial, emotional, aesthetic, affective, relational, phenomenological, hermeneutical and intellectual. This empirical endeavour, as a story carrying the traces of the ‘potter’, involving the physical body of the ‘teller’, convokes what Diana Taylor calls “repertoire”.

**“Repertoire, etymologically a ‘treasure, an inventory,’ also allows for individual agency, referring also to ‘the finder, discoverer,’ and meaning ‘to find out.’ The repertoire requires presence: people participating in production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being a part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects of the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. [...] The repertoire, whether in terms of verbal or nonverbal expression, transmits live, embodied actions. As such, traditions are stored in the body, through various mnemonic methods, and transmitted ‘live’ in the here and now to a live audience.” (Taylor 2003, 20-24)**

From this perspective, we might imagine the archive as a non-linear, non-exclusive, open, unorthodox material, written in such a way that visual and documental elements of any sort can live side by side within it.

No matter what happens in a moment in time, what comes after, the story to be told, whether documentation or re-enactment, can be understood as a remainder, bringing us back in time and simultaneously emerging as a different presence, able to project another form with multiple social effects onto an audience. The richness of the performatic act relies precisely on the acceptance of “losing” a moment to “gain” another. The archive would not be ‘memorabilia’, but rather updated memory.<sup>18</sup>

Following this line of thought, Alexandra do Carmo’s installation at the Quadrum gallery in 2011 materializes the idea that a work of art can be produced as a story, or more accurately a sequence of micro stories, recordings of edited statements to be told to any visitor entering the gallery. It can be an apparatus of the oral transmission of experiences and knowledge, which we consider more valuable than a nostalgic “holding on” to a possible existence of a past event’s essence — a utopia related to the recording as a repository for the performance (Reason 2003, 88). In fact, this contradicts its main potentiality: ephemerality linked to *transformation* as the condition of “living art”, presented live as its name suggests, intended to be experienced together with an audience. At its core an art aiming to act as life itself could only expect an inexorable death, where the possibility of its effects and extensions can only be witnessed by way of traces and reminiscences. And that could only happen by having someone alive and capable of telling us a story about it.

### Conclusion

The question of the importance of oral testimony as a “trace” of performance and its relationship with other documentary materials is an interesting and topical issue that must be attended.<sup>19</sup> After presenting the case studies, rooted in concrete experiences, this paper reflects on the place of storytelling among the documents of a history of performance art. We state that oral history and, to an even greater extent, storytelling challenge the stabilization of factual memory, towards which a certain scientific paradigm history aims, based on a stable and subject-detached objectivity. First-person and subjective accounts based on personal memories and experience necessarily form a map made of divergences; they oblige the art historian either to reject or to deal with

<sup>18</sup> We understand here the concept of updated memory as the memory that transforms itself within a present event, this way updating a previous content into something else. In this context updating means a new usage for an old memory in the present, so the ‘date’ of the past event isn’t being eased, it is rather included in the present date, it is moving ‘up’. It is a memory that is part of the new happening-event, it belonged to an old event, it is the old memory contribution to the present event.

<sup>19</sup> The concept of traces was something Paul Ricoeur reflected a great deal over in both *Time and Narrative* as well as *Memory, History, Forgetting*. “In his notion of historical time, as a connecting bridge between phenomenological time and ordinary time, he sees time as being refigured by historians through reflective instruments, such as calendars, generations, and archives, documents and traces. \*Of these, a trace is accepted as one, only when historians can recognize it as such, by rethinking, re-enacting, and retracing its significance, thus enabling a return to the past (TNIII, 146, 183, 77). Ricoeur identifies 3 types of traces: the physical, material trace, which along with archived documents and the questions of historians constitute the basis of historical knowledge (MHF,177); the affective, the existential that we experience as impressions through encountering traces; and the cerebral, cognitive traces of memory (MHF, 415, 427).” (Munkholt 2016)

the fictional aspects, the emotional imprints and the tricks of perception in his or her own work. Storytelling opens up new dimensions of research where the history is challenged to find space for the instability, creativity, impermanence and emotional charges of human memory. This is a space where history meets memory and needs to take it into account as a collaborator, instead of presenting itself as being an ideal, stable substitute for memory, highlighting the relational and emotional dimension embedded in the scientific process of its making.

Bruno Marques acknowledges financial support from FCT Portugal — Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (RH/BPD/93234/2013).

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EVERYBODY  
HAS TO  
GO TO  
SCHOOL

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SCHOOL

**THE ACARTE  
DIGITAL  
TIMELINE  
1984-1989  
A 'COMMONS TOOL'**

## THE ACARTE DIGITAL TIMELINE 1984-1989 A 'COMMONS TOOL'

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### ABSTRACT

The ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 is a digital interface displaying the activity of the ACARTE department of the Gulbenkian Foundation between 1984 and 1989, under the leadership of its founder and first director, Madalena Perdigão. Created in the context of a PhD research on the cultural transformation that occurred in Portugal after it joined the European Union in the 1980s (a research that was recently granted with Mário Soares Foundation Honorable Mention in Contemporary History 2016), this digital instrument is presented as a 'commons tool', as it allows a close inquiry into these cultural transformations as seen from the vantage point of the first modern art museum to be opened in a country that was at the crossroads of several modernising and contradictory processes.

As a focal point for the avant-garde scene of the 1980s, the ACARTE department not only hosted performance art but also dance, theatre, music, experimental cinema, cartoons and literature, among other genres. The ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 offers a close reading of these activities, paving the way for comparative studies between genres and cross-readings of the activity of some of the artists working in performance art at the time, such as Wolf Vostell, Fernando Aguiar, Marina Abramovic/Ulay, Ulrich Rosenbach, Silvestre Pestana, Carlos Gordilho and Miguel Yeco, Alberto Pimenta and E M de Melo e Castro, among others.

Presenting, on the one hand, the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 as a 'commons tool', and on the other the notion of *curadoria da falta* to describe the action of Madalena Perdigão as Director of ACARTE, I intend to highlight the institutional role of ACARTE as a fundamental device in Portuguese contemporary culture. Moreover, ultimately I suggest looking at its institutional action from neither a public nor a private point of view, but rather from a *common* point of view — discussing common archives and fostering the potential of common institutions.

**KEYWORDS** DIGITAL ARCHIVES, CULTURE COMMONS, GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION, MUSEUMS AND PERFORMANCE, PORTUGAL IN THE 1980S

### RESUMO

A TIMELINE DIGITAL ACARTE 1984-1989 é um interface digital onde é possível ter acesso à actividade do Serviço ACARTE da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian entre 1984 e 1989, tendo sido desenhada e construída no contexto da investigação de Doutoramento *NO ALEPH, para um olhar sobre o Serviço ACARTE da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian entre 1984 e 1989* (Menção Honrosa Prémio Mário Soares 2016). Esta investigação, dupla, composta pelo referido interface digital e pela tese propriamente dita, incide sobre o papel performativo dos Museus de Arte Moderna, centrando-se nas transformações culturais por que Portugal passa após a entrada na União Europeia — e o modo como estas encontram no corpo um terreno particular de expressão.

Neste artigo apresenta-se sucintamente este interface que se defende ser uma 'ferramenta do comum' por, ao abrir o arquivo deste Serviço a estudos futuros, possibilitar um olhar sobre as referidas transformações culturais vistas a partir do lugar privilegiado que é o do primeiro museu de arte moderna num país onde modernidade e pós modernidade se entrecrocaram. Defende-se igualmente a noção de 'Curadoria da Falta' para caracterizar a acção de Madalena Perdigão enquanto Directora deste Serviço, propondo eventualmente um olhar sobre as Instituições a partir de um ponto de vista não do público nem do privado, mas do *comum*.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** ARQUIVOS DIGITAIS, COMUNS NA CULTURA, MUSEU E PERFORMANCE, SERVIÇO ACARTE DA FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN, PORTUGAL ANOS 80



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

The ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 is a digital interface displaying the activity of the ACARTE department of the Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, between 1984 (ten years after the Portuguese Revolution) and 1989 (three years after the country joined the EEC), under the leadership of its founder and first director, Madalena Perdigão.

Created in the context of PhD research on the cultural transformations that occurred in Portugal after it joined the European Union<sup>1</sup>, this digital instrument allows a close inquiry into these cultural transformations, as seen from the vantage point of the first modern art museum opened in a country that was at the crossroads of several modernising and contradictory processes. It is therefore part and parcel of a research process whereby notions of linear temporality are contested, and chronological folding, eccentric chronologies and decentred modernities are proposed.

As a focal point for the avant-garde scene of the 1980s, the ACARTE department not only hosted performance art but also dance, theatre, music, experimental cinema, cartoons and literature, among other genres. The ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 offers a close reading of these activities, paving the way for comparative studies between genres and cross-readings on the activity of some of the artists working in performance art at the time.

Structured in three parts, this article opens with a general presentation of ACARTE, followed by a proposal of the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 as a radical archive and a commons tool, and finishes with a reflection on the 'motor' driving the ACARTE programme, *curadoria da falta*, a curating process based on what is missing in the social, cultural and artistic community at large.

### 1. The Gulbenkian Foundation's ACARTE department

Unlike in a number of European countries after the Second World War, when modern art museums were built as a token of democracy and freedom, in Portugal, due to the Salazar

and Caetano regime, this only happened in the 1980s, on the private initiative of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. As such, the Modern Art Centre (CAM) of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation opened in 1983 and became in practice the first modern art museum in the country, with a collection assembled specifically for the occasion.

Designed as an art centre rather than a museum, the CAM included a multi-purpose hall, an open-air amphitheatre, a temporary exhibition hall and a children's art centre. Activities taking place beyond the museum galleries were the remit of ACARTE, the Gulbenkian Foundation's Department of Artistic Creation and Art Education. This would ensure that the politics of organising cultural activities and the politics of acquiring artworks would be totally independent of one another'.<sup>2</sup>

Several temporalities seem to be at stake: the fulfilled promise of the will to have a modern art museum reaching back to the 1950s and 60s; its location in an architectural space that was characteristic of the 1970s and opened in the 80s; its hosting of the ACARTE Service, which chimed with efforts to create a 'Europe of Culture' in the 1990s; and which could be considered to foreshadow the curatorial swerve towards the discursive and performative trend that emerged in around 2000.

The ACARTE Service can also be seen as the result of two decades of research in education through art and artistic education. Its founder and first director, Madalena Perdigão, created not only the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Choir and Ballet, but also takes credit for the reform of the National Conservatoire in 1971, and for a failed project to revamp national artistic education in 1978. Thus, there is a complex background that ties together the experience in education through art implemented by the Gulbenkian Foundation before the Revolution, the reform of the Conservatoire, the failed restructuring of national artistic education and Perdigão's return to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1984. In this sense, ACARTE's activity in the 1980s continues on from the pedagogical experimentation of the 1960s.

<sup>1</sup> This research was granted with Mário Soares Foundation Honorable Mention in Contemporary History 2016

<sup>2</sup> António Pinto Ribeiro, 79. 2014. 'O ACARTE.' In *CAM 30 ANOS* (Nuno Grande org), 76-110. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

It does not, however, do so exclusively: ACARTE's activities can also be looked at from the point of view of curatorial practices, or, more accurately, as being at the crossroads between emergent curatorial and programming practices, conjoining both.

Perdigão proposed what I would call *curadoria da falta*, given the fact that ACARTE's activity was often based on the need to attend to what is missing (*faz falta*), thus developing a particularly attentive way of moving through aesthetic and political/philosophical proposals usually attributed to different time spans. *Curadoria da falta* means something like 'curating what is lacking'. Literally, *falta* stands for 'lack', but it can also be understood as 'missing' — interdisciplinary efforts that still have to be identified and undertaken. In fact, *curadoria da falta* takes lack as a component of the community, as openness to the other, in the sense that Roberto Esposito describes it,<sup>3</sup> and not as something derogatory, proof of scarcity or backwardness. Through *curadoria da falta*, this department's activity reveals to the different perceptions that its contemporaries had of their own time. As such, ACARTE is a superb case study with regard to chronological folding, eccentric chronologies and decentred modernities.

**'The Portuguese cultural scene was missing a service committed to contemporary culture and/or modern processing of timeless topics, as well as a centre for education through art geared towards children. It was necessary to guarantee that the Modern Art Centre could be more than just a museum in the strict sense, but also a cultural centre.'**

This is a quotation from a bilingual programme aimed at presenting ACARTE to other European institutions,<sup>4</sup> in which Madalena Perdigão explains the reasons for the creation of ACARTE, a service that was directly dependent on the presidency of the foundation, which sought not to adopt 'narrow concepts of hollow nationalism', but rather to 'open up to roaming the country and abroad', devoted to supporting experimentation through 'an incentive for collaboration between artists from different areas, aimed at multidisciplinary

creation.' Between 1984 and 1989 these and many more people worked with ACARTE:

Theatre: O Bando, Fernanda Lapa, Jan Fabre, Jorge Silva Melo, Jorge Listopad, Filipe La Féria, Ricardo Pais, Giorgio Barberio Corsetti, Tadeus Kantor

Dance: Susanne Linke, Rui Horta, Olga Roriz, W. Vandekeybus, Elisa Worm, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Karine Saporta, Pina Bausch, Joseph Nadj, Reinhild Hoffman, Margarida Bettencourt, Vera Mantero, Paula Massano, Clara Andermatt  
Performance art: Wolf Vostell, Fernando Aguiar, Marina Abramovic/Ulay, Ulrich Rosenbach, Silvestre Pestana, Carlos Gordilho and Miguel Yeco

Music: Constança Capdeville/Grupo Colecviva, Jorge Peixinho/Grupo de Música Contemporânea de Lisboa, Carlos Zíngaro, Olga Pratz, Jorge Lima Barreto, Vítor Rua, Maurizio Kagel, Bow Gamelan, Pocket Opera, Derek Bailey/Evan Parker, Touch Monkeys

As well as having a permanently open Children's Art Centre, ACARTE also organised conferences, courses, workshops, a regular spoken news service on the current literature scene and a number of animation cinema courses, produced shows and events, and co-programmed international initiatives like Encontros ACARTE. Several of the initiatives were thematic (either organized by geography ex. 'new brazilian dance', or by evocative sentences ex. 'the return of the tragedy'), grouping together around one topic a number of multidisciplinary events, and often focusing on performance and live presence, in encounters and dialogues, with the body (either in performance, like in theatre, dance and music performances tout court or in direct interaction as in debates and round-tables) almost invariably being the central axis of this service.

In a country coming out of a dictatorship that had lasted almost half a century, a decade after the Revolution and not far off Portugal becoming a member of the EEC, the long-postponed construction of a 'modern'

<sup>3</sup> Roberto Esposito, 'Community, Immunity, Biopolitics' in *E-MISFERICA 10.1 BIO/ZOO* in <http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-misferica-101/esposito> (18/10/2016).

<sup>4</sup> Perdigão, Madalena. 1989. *ACARTE 5 anos*, bilingual brochure, Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

country — a word where different meanings both converge and clash — was at stake.

After the disappearance of its founder, Madalena Perdigão, the ACARTE department went through several changes and eventually closed in 2003.<sup>5</sup> Until very recently, the ACARTE department archives were uncatalogued and untreated, and there was no systematic full-length work on the subject — the research work that forms the basis of this article was the first attempt at it. This research involved an extensive examination of ACARTE's publications, press items, photos and occasionally production and video archives. It also considered a series of oral history interviews of Portuguese and foreign artists, curators, producers, critics and technicians, some of which have already been published.

It is important to highlight that this research began started in the second half of the first decade of the 2000s, a time when several Portuguese cultural institutions were being wound down, among them ACARTE (in 2002), Ballet Gulbenkian (in 2005), the Portuguese Ministry of Culture (in 2011, to be replaced by a Secretary of State, directly dependent on the office of the Prime Minister, Pedro Passos Coelho). Meanwhile, studies on Portuguese culture in the 1980s were almost inexistent. The 'memory landscape' at the time, to quote Enzo Traverso,<sup>6</sup> was therefore far different than the one that we witness today, when cultural approaches to the recent past proliferate in a more rigorous or more nostalgic fashion.

Though extinct, in 2007 ACARTE was an absent presence, and one of the aims of this work was to render it visible and approachable, to find ways of properly getting to know it, providing rigorous data and contextual perspectives. As *what it is* seeks to stand for *what it was and for what could therefore be*, archival and repertoire work seemed all the more urgent.

Uncovering ACARTE could, in fact, help to understand why (or how come) a programme that is central to the 'major' (albeit still under construction) history of performance art and of contemporary art in general, made possible by the support of one of the most important, socially recognized and healthy

foundations in Portugal, can be not only marginalized or almost forgotten, but also be seen as a site of counter-narratives or 'minor' histories.

## 2. The ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989: Radical Archive and a Commons Tool

As a result of a seven year-long research period (organizing, selecting, digitalizing and analyzing each initiative to which specific introductory texts were written) the digital interface ACARTE 1984-1989 is chronologically organized along a timeline and includes both discrete events and thematic initiatives undertaken by the department, gathering together carefully chosen catalogues and photographs, credits for the works, excerpts from the press and extracts of the curatorial and artistic notes of intentions, enabling a comprehensive view of ACARTE's action over the period concerned. In order to facilitate better access to the overall project and contents, introductory and contextual texts were also written. This digital interface allows for an introductory search by year, genre, artist and keyword. With more than 300 uploaded events, it is a valuable research tool on cultural transformations in the 1980s, as well as a fundamental instrument for the study of the performative arts both in Portugal and in the early EEC of the 1980s and 1990s: a study all the more urgent as research on this period of extreme changes in the Portuguese society is still to be done.

Radical archives is a designation given to 'archives of politics and practices considered radical; archives which, according to their shape or function, may be considered radical; moments or contexts within which the archiving act becomes, *in itself*, a radical act, as well as the considerations regarding how archives can act in the present, simultaneously as documents from the past and notes for the future'.<sup>7</sup> The construction and dissemination

<sup>5</sup> The Animation, Artistic Creation and Art Education Service/ACARTE of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was created by decision of the Administration Council in 1984, a year after the opening of the Modern Art Centre (CAM), and the first director was Maria Madalena de Azeredo Perdigão (M.M.A.P), also the author of its programme. ACARTE became a department of the Modern Art Centre in 2000 and ran until 2002, when it was definitively closed by decision of the Administration Board, which considered that its programme had been accomplished. Its directors were: Maria Madalena de Azeredo Perdigão, from 1984 to 1989, who was also responsible for a large part of the 1990 programming; José Sasportes, from June 1990 to 1994; Yvette Centeno, from 1995 to 1999; and Jorge Molder, from 2000 to 2002, the deputy director Mário Carneiro being responsible for the programming. The research work that forms the basis of this article sought to study the first five years of ACARTE, from 1984 to 1989; the period when this service was under the direction of its founder, Madalena Perdigão.

<sup>6</sup> In Enzo Traverso, *O passado, modos de usar : história, memória e política* / Enzo Traverso ; trad. Tiago Avó. — 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. — [ S.l. ] : Unipop, 2012

<sup>7</sup> In *Radical Archives*. 2015. 'About'. <http://www.radicalarchives.net/ra/> and <http://www.hastac.org/opportunities/radical-archives-cfp>

# ACARTE 1984-1989

Serviço de Animação, Criação Artística e Educação pela Arte – ACARTE do Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian Cronologia entre 1984 e 1989, durante a direcção da sua fundadora e 1ª Directora, Maria Madalena de Azeredo Perdigão.



## EXPOSIÇÃO-DIÁLOGO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA

26 de Março – 16 de Junho  
Exposição-Diálogo de Arte Contemporânea, organizada pelo Conselho da Europa e Centro de Arte Moderna. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.

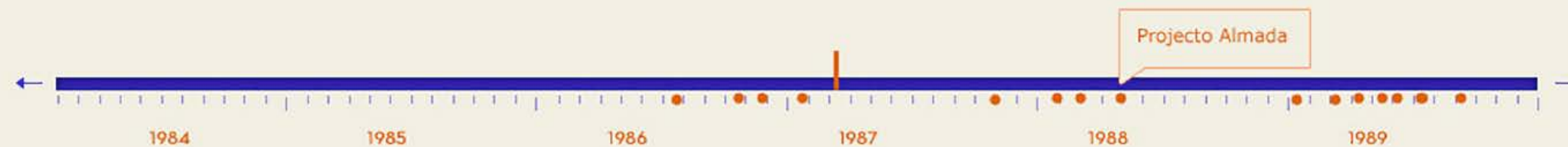
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ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989, main interface.

# ACARTE 1984-1989

Serviço de Animação, Criação Artística e Educação pela Arte - ACARTE do Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian Cronologia entre 1984 e 1989, durante a direcção da sua fundadora e 1ª Directora, Maria Madalena de Azeredo Perdigão.



CAM - FCG ▾ MADALENA PERDIGÃO SERVIÇO ACARTE VÍDEO CRONOLOGIA INICIATIVAS ÁREA ARTISTAS

## EXPOSIÇÃO-DIÁLOGO DE ARTE CONTEMPORÂNEA

VÍDEO DA INICIATIVA ▸ PROGRAMA DA INICIATIVA (PDF) ▸

### TEXTO GERAL

26 de Março - 16 de Junho

Em Março começa também a primeira Exposição-Diálogo sobre Arte Contemporânea na Europa, organizada conjuntamente pelo Conselho da Europa e por aquele que, à data, era considerado "um dos museus de arte moderna mais jovens da Europa", o Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, como nos diz Michael Marschall Von Bieberstein no catálogo da iniciativa.

Esta exposição, como se pode ler na imprensa da época: "Organizada pelo Conselho da Europa, (...) foi elaborada por oito dos principais museus europeus de arte contemporânea, de onde provêm as 200 obras de cerca de 80 artistas que (...) poderão ser vistas nos edifícios da Gulbenkian e do Centro de Arte Moderna. Numa conferência de Imprensa (...) Azeredo Perdigão, classificando-a como um "acontecimento não só nacional, como internacional", frisou ser um "motivo de orgulho" o facto de Portugal ter sido o país escolhido para a realização da exposição. (...) [O]s museus resolveram também apresentar os seus próprios "auto-retratos", descrevendo o seu estatuto, fundos, métodos de trabalho e actividades, os quais poderão ser vistos no piso 01 da Gulbenkian. (Diário de Lisboa, 29-3-1985)

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### TEXTO CURADORES

26 de Março - 16 de Junho

Em Março começa também a primeira Exposição-Diálogo sobre Arte Contemporânea na Europa, organizada conjuntamente pelo Conselho da Europa e por aquele que, à data, era considerado "um dos museus de arte moderna mais jovens da Europa", o Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, como nos diz Michael Marschall Von Bieberstein no catálogo da iniciativa.

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Organização  
SERVIÇO DE ANIMAÇÃO, CRIAÇÃO ARTÍSTICA  
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MARIA MARGARIDA ALVES MARTINS

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LUÍS SILVA

Catálogo  
GABINETE DE DESIGN DO CAM

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#### Jan Fabre

31 Março e 1 de Abril

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3 e 4 de Maio

- Em direcção à zona intermédia  
- Georgina Collection nº19

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11 de Maio

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- Orwell

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#### Colóquio Público

26-28 Março

Temas: 1. Problemática da exposição; 2. A procura da identidade cultural; 3. Arte moderna e depois; 4. Situação da arte moderna em Portugal.

[more info](#)

#### Wolf Vostell

13 de Abril

O jardim das delícias  
(Fluxus-Opera)

[more info](#)

#### Mesa-Redonda

12 de Abril

Tema: as performances em questão

[more info](#)

#### Companhia Jack Hellen Brut

19 e 20 de Abril

Light Copy-  
Illuminations/moderna  
em Portugal.

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#### Carlos Gordilho

26 de Abril

Desencanto do Dia Claro

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#### Carlos Gordilho

27 de Abril

Interior máldito

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# ACARTE 1984-1989

Serviço de Animação, Criação Artística e Educação pela Arte - ACARTE do Centro de Arte Moderna da Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian Cronologia entre 1984 e 1989, durante a direcção da sua fundadora e 1ª Directora, Maria Madalena de Azeredo Perdigão.



CAM - FCG ▾ MADALENA PERDIGÃO SERVIÇO ACARTE VÍDEO CRONOLOGIA INICIATIVAS ÁREA ARTISTAS

## WOLF VOSTELL NA EXPOSIÇÃO-DIÁLOGO

VÍDEO DO EVENTO ▸ PROGRAMA WOLF VOSTELL (PDF) ▸

### CONCERTO FLUXUS

A participação de Wolf Vostell na Exposição-Diálogo deu ocasião a um dos momentos mais polémicos desta iniciativa, a famosa "Guerra das Alfices" segundo Jorge Lima Barreto, um happening em toda a acepção da palavra.) Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute inure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

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### FOTOGRAFIAS \ VÍDEOS DO CONCERTO FLUXUS



### FICHA TÉCNICA CONCERTO FLUXUS

WOLF VOSTELL  
Kleenex (1962)  
New York Times (1963)  
Fandango (1974)  
Homenagem a F. Garcia Lorca (1978)  
Joana a Louca (Homenagem) (1980)  
A Sibéria da Estremadura  
Os Nus e os Mortos (1983)  
(extracto da versão original)

Abril/Abril  
Sexta, 12 às 21.30 horas Friday, 12 at 9.30 p.m.

of radical archives is inseparable from the dissemination of the use of internet 2.0.

A set of acts associated with archivist practices is brought together under this designation. At stake is the drive to produce counter-archives, researching and displaying counter-narratives or minor histories (to use a Deleuzian term<sup>8</sup>). As a set of practices, it is hardly distinguishable from the dissemination of participatory internet and the ways in which the internet itself rethinks (and makes us rethink) the notion of archive and memory as processual and contested practices.

But why would one consider the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 a radical archive, given that the arrangement of events not only follows a classical linear chronology, but also that the displayed documents belong to a private institution?

In terms of the Gulbenkian Foundation's specific history, ACARTE should be seen as the final manifestation of Madalena Perdigão's long-standing efforts in art education in Portugal during the dictatorship, a story that owes a lot to the activities of the Gulbenkian Foundation, in particular to the endeavours of the Centro de Investigação Pedagógica (CIP).<sup>9</sup>

To borrow the aforementioned definitions of radical archives, the act of creating an archive was largely connected to its inexistence, as if the action of Madalena Perdigão's ACARTE, from the perspective of the recent extinction of ACARTE (2003), the Ballet Gulbenkian (2005), the Fine Arts Service (2010) and, later, the Ministry of Culture (2011) had been wrenched apart from the present (using a terminology that I adopt elsewhere),<sup>10</sup> thus being an absent presence — being present as an absence. In its turn, the linear chronology, both an option and a product of a technical limitation, could be related to the need to uncover — over time — a multitude and variety of experiences with different origins, condensed in such a small programming space. It must also allow for inevitable rhythms and inflections, which have a bearing on research into a period when the exuberance of some episodes (such as the ACARTE MEETINGS/New Dance Theatre of Europe) often overshadowed other dimensions and the extreme diversity of ACARTE's heteroclitic activity.

With this gesture, what is at stake is a perspective of the archive as a means of 'acting on the present simultaneously as documents of the past and notes for the future',<sup>11</sup> opening up possibilities for what we are today and will become tomorrow based on what we were yesterday. In the case of the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 this aspect, which is

common to all historical archives, seems all the more vital, as it can help to disclose ways in which an institution can act simultaneously as a forum, making it a radical pedagogy device, and as a foundational place for interdisciplinary practices, as well as for experimental music, performance, dance, theatre, cartoons, literature and cinema.

When choosing this chronological arrangement, the side-by-side placement of events was important, given that they were as diverse as the *Bandas no Anfiteatro* (music bands in the Amphitheatre), *Jornadas de Artes e Letras dos PALOPS* (Art and Letters from African Portuguese-speaking countries) or *Concertos à Hora do Almoço* (lunch hour concerts), which once shared the programming of the same department, united by what I would suggest calling the *curadoria da falta*, a curating process based on what is missing in the social and artistic community.

After all, the construction of this digital interface was about looking at ACARTE as a tool for understanding and producing *today's* world — directed at *today's* subjects, with *today's* technologies, because, as the internet theorist Quinn Norton puts it,<sup>12</sup> we need to take seriously the ways in which the world wide web is changing our language, perception and way of acting and creating worlds. As a radical archive, the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 participates in and contributes to a reflection on our shared past — it is a *commons tool*. The ACARTE digital timeline has analogous goals and aims to participate in a dialogue on common archives or archives of the commons already in place by institutions such as Red de Conceptualismos del Sur<sup>13</sup> or the seminar common archives

<sup>8</sup> *Kafka para uma Literatura Menor*, DELEUZE, GILLES E FELIX GUATTARI, Félix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze, 2003. Lisboa: Assírio & Alvim.

<sup>9</sup> See Ana Bigotte Vieira, *NO ALEPH, on Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's ACARTE department between 1984 and 1989*, Doctoral thesis in Communication Sciences/Communication and the Arts, FCSH, May 2016. Arquimedes da Silva Santos interviewed by Ana Bigotte Vieira in *Mediaçoes*, v. 2 2004, [mediacoes.esse.ips.pt/.../mediacoes.../article/download/85/pdf\\_46](http://mediacoes.esse.ips.pt/.../mediacoes.../article/download/85/pdf_46)

<sup>10</sup> To wrench: 'arrancar' in Portuguese.

<sup>11</sup> In *Radical Archives*. 2015. 'About'. <http://www.radicalarchives.net/ra/> and <http://www.hastac.org/opportunities/radical-archives-cfp>

<sup>12</sup> Norton, Quinn. 2013. 'ACM Web Science talk, as written' in <http://www.quinnnorton.com/said/?p=721>

<sup>13</sup> Red Conceptualismos del Sur is a collective initiative bringing together a set of researchers and artists scattered around various parts of Latin America and Europe, which proposes to establish itself as a platform for common thought and action dealing with contemporary relations between art and politics. It was founded in 2007 by a group of researchers concerned with the need to intervene politically in the neutralisation processes of critical potential of a set of 'conceptual practices' that have taken place in Latin America since the early 1960s. Since its foundation, the network has been involved in a long-term reflection on the uses and politics of archives, working on the organisation and constitution of some of the most important artists' archives in South America. Their latest publications include *Desinventario* (2015) and *Arte y disidencia política: Memorias del Taller 4 Rojo* (2015) in [http://www.internationaleonline.org/people/red\\_conceptualismos\\_del\\_sur](http://www.internationaleonline.org/people/red_conceptualismos_del_sur). For Red Conceptualismos Del Sur see also <https://redcsur.net/declaracion-instituyente/>. For Common Archives and Archives of the commons see <http://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/activities/common-archives>.

held in the Museu Reina Sofia, among others. Through this interface we aim to facilitate access, the use and the construction of multiple and parallel stories — opening up dramaturgical affiliations and artistic influences to multiple becomings, while at the same time paving the way for a better understanding of the present, unlocking some of its possibilities.

### 3. *Curadoria da Falta*

'*Fazia falta*,' ('It was missing') said Madalena Perdigão.

In wondering 'what would be the "thing" the members of a community had in common,' Roberto Esposito (Esposito, 1998)<sup>14</sup> studies the etymology of *communis*, which means 'one who shares a trade, a task, a load'. From there he surmises that *communitas* is 'all the people who stand united not by "property" but precisely by an obligation or a debt, not by an addiction but by a subtraction: by what is missing, an absence, a limit that is perceived as encumbrance or even as a defective existence of the person "affected", as compared to one who is exempt'.

Esposito locates here — in the contrast between *communitas* and *immunitas* — the traditional opposition associated with public and private. If *communis* is one who must perform a task — or even bestow a *grace* — the one who is exempted from doing so is immune, thus remaining *ungrateful* [*outside the grace*]. But the path through the *communitas* etymology 'shows that *munus* that the *communitas* shares is not a property or a possession'. It is not about 'having', but rather 'a debt, a deposit, a gift which must be given, and generating something that is missing, absent, lacking. The individuals of a community are bound by an "obligation" in the sense that we say, "I owe you something," but not [in the sense that we say] "you owe me something".' This means that what is common is not 'characterized by what is proper but rather by what is improper, or more drastically still, by the Other; by stripping property of its negative, be it partial or totally, removing what is specifically personally owned, forcing him to come outside himself, change himself.'

In this proposal, the key area of investigation when it comes to ACARTE is the radical challenge of a notion of identity. When Esposito traces the origin of common back not to property but to a *lack*, he allows us to consider the community productively and continuously: a community that cannot be taken for granted, whose identity must be regularly asserted in competition with other identities.

By guiding her programming along the lines of what I propose to call a *curadoria da falta*, Madalena

Perdigão — and perhaps only she could have done it — made the ACARTE of the 1980s rather than an institution obsessed with building a stable and competitive identity a place that was open to its time and a that marked a time.

*Curadoria da falta* allows for a non-linear reading of the set of tensions triggered by opening a space like this department, which operated in the country's first museum of modern art in the country, curating mostly performative and discursive events. It could be particularly useful in addressing the museum as a place that works simultaneously as an enunciator for society at large and as something that is practised (adapted, cheered on, contested ...) by its members — being open to its time and participating critically in it. To address the museum as a common institution.

By crafting the ACARTE TIMELINE 1984-1989 I hope to create a *commons tool* that will allow for a better understanding of what was at stake in Perdigão's *curadoria da falta*, namely the heteroclitite and diverse ways in which ACARTE marked its time in the 1980s.

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<sup>14</sup> Esposito, Roberto. 2010. *Communitas — The Origin and Destiny of The Community*. California: Stanford University Press.

**THE ARTIST'S  
WITHDRAWAL FROM  
THE ARTWORK:  
THE CASE OF THE  
GOODBYE MAN  
(*SENHOR DO ADEUS*)**

## THE ARTIST'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ARTWORK: THE CASE OF THE GOODBYE MAN (SENHOR DO ADEUS)

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### ABSTRACT

João Manuel Serra (1931-2010) owes his media impact and his pseudonym — the *senhor do adeus* (the “goodbye man”) — to the fact that he spent the last evenings of his life waving to drivers as they passed through the Picoas and Saldanha areas of Lisbon. Many people sought to pay him a posthumous homage by waving to drivers from those places where previously he was most frequently to be found. This paper reflects on the ways in which the goodbye man might be inscribed in the field of the arts and of performance in particular. Such an inscription is in no way self-evident due to the fact that the two fundamental aspects — authorship and work — on which any inscription of this nature should be based are extremely difficult to pin down in this case. The problem can be expressed as follows: the goodbye man is the author of a gesture that is artistic in nature, for otherwise the waving is an artwork without any owner; the wave and its repetition testify to what is an artistic limit gesture, since it is nothing more than an act of politeness, and therefore a political act.

**KEYWORDS** GOODBYE MAN (SENHOR DO ADEUS), LIMIT-ARTIST

### RESUMO

João Manuel Serra (1931-2010) deve o seu mediatismo e pseudónimo — o senhor do adeus — ao facto de ter passado os últimos serões da sua vida a acenar aos condutores que passavam pelas zonas de Picoas e Saldanha em Lisboa. Muitos foram aqueles que o quiseram homenagear postumamente saudando os automobilistas dos lugares onde era frequente encontrá-lo. Este artigo pretende refletir sobre as modalidades de inscrição do senhor do adeus no campo das artes e da performance em particular. Uma inscrição que não se afigura evidente pelo facto dos dois vértices fundamentais — a autoria e a obra — sobre os quais assenta qualquer inscrição dessa natureza serem aqui extremamente vacilantes. A problemática traduz-se nestes termos; o senhor do adeus é autor dum gesto de cariz artístico, caso contrário o aceno é obra sem dono; o aceno e a sua repetição atestam dum gesto artístico limite porque não mais do que polido, logo político.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** SENHOR DO ADEUS, ARTISTA-LIMITE



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

As far as I know, there is no record of the goodbye man ever claiming for himself the authorship of the wave as the fruit of his creative labours. Nor did he show any intention of hiding or disappearing behind his work, because, at first sight, there does not seem to have been any work.

However, there are countless examples of artworks without an author, or artworks behind which their authors either hide or disappear. To begin with, we have the supposed author of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, whose identity was never proved, with it not being known whether Homer, the supposed father of western literature, really existed or whether he himself was a myth created by authors who preferred to remain forever in his shadow. A large part of pre-Socratic thought, which is the very foundation of our way of thinking about the world, is not based on original works, but on quotations: what remains, for example, from the thought of Thales, Heraclitus, Pythagoras or even Diogenes is what we find quoted in works by later authors, namely Plato, who also took it upon himself to bring Socrates to light. The absence of any written traces bearing witness to the authenticity of that pre-Socratic legacy does not in any way detract from the fact that we now consider it today to be unimpeachable. Pseudonyms and heteronyms are other forms of circumventing authorship, camouflaging the true identity of the author with a name that is used as a front. In the case of the heteronym, this front is linked to a false identity. Both embody another *persona*, which, in the case of Fernando Pessoa, amounts to several *personas*. Pessoa is, in fact, a very interesting case, not so much because his various *personas* succeed in filling a void, but rather because they are several “Pessoas” derived from just one “Fernando”. Both the front and the false identity are ways of undermining the tacit principle of attributing just one name to a work without calling into question the principle according to which the author is the authority on the work. The ready-made is yet another attempt to undermine the question of authorship, limiting the author’s intrusion into the work as much as possible. It is an attempt to dispense with the artist, without, however, abdicating from his or her judgement, thus ensuring that the work is, at least, as

Duchamp said, a mental thing (Cabane and Duchamp 1967). And it is based upon this idea that we can think of silence as a ready-made. The hypothesis raised by John Cage is that, in order for there to be silence, there must be a capacity to listen to it amid the sounds that irrevocably populate our intracorporal and extracorporal life. Silence thus arises from our capacity to listen to it. It means withdrawing our ears from what is given to us to hear, which is, basically, a polite refusal to listen to all of the sounds we hear, allowing silence to penetrate into that gap. Cage refers to this process as “active listening”: “active” in the sense in which the possible listening to silence implies activating our capacity of preferring “not to hear” the sounds that are given to us to hear. This capacity for withdrawing our hearing also applies to our sight. Withdrawing our eyes from what we are given to see creates a space for the neutrality of images. Neutrality in the sense that, when we look at them, our eyes see images that neither speak nor are silent, genuinely neutral images that have as much to say as they do to keep quiet about. When we withdraw our eyes in this way, all images say everything and keep quiet about it too; no image speaks in anticipation nor remains silent out of conviction (Mondzain 2007). The eye’s task is therefore limited to welcoming the image in the way that someone welcomes the ripe fruit that falls from the tree by itself. This neutrality of the ear and of the eye, manifested by those who are prepared “not to hear” and “not to see”, can also be found in the creative act. How does this neutrality of the creative act manifest itself? What is the zero degree of the creative act, the highest point of the artist’s withdrawal, the point from which what we are given to see or to hear is manifestly the limit in artistic terms?

The walks that Jean-Jacques Rousseau took when he had already retired from worldly life were not the same as the ones that he took when young, and which resulted in the famous *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. The difference is that the walks taken by the old Rousseau no longer had the responsibility of being a fertile terrain for thought: they were now being taken “in vain”, “for no purpose”, and were therefore the expression of a pure freedom. Walking “for no purpose” means being able to content oneself with immobility — the zero degree of

walking — but also with the contemplation of what is given to us “not to hear” and “not to see” while walking. As far as the creative process is concerned, contemplation and immobility are factors that derive from a particular posture in relation to artistic creation, being part of a polite withdrawal from the work itself, preferring to receive it in a disinterested and charitable way, without anticipating the fruit thereof and without seeking to return the gift should it appear unexpectedly. This means that by displaying the greatest possible contemplative readiness in relation to the work, the creator remains in the purest ignorance in relation to what might come afterwards and is totally ready to welcome and accept this; for artists, the height of ignorance is being the last to know that they are indeed artists, since such knowledge matters little or not at all within the framework of the creative process, where there is no place for either expectation or predictability, and where the only possible wish is to experience life through art, reducing the act of creation to what is most essential in life: the shared presence. As far as the goodbye man is concerned, since there is no doubt that he ever saw himself as an artist or performer, the way in which his presence has been inscribed in the public space and the way in which it has marked it bears witness to the posture of a limit-artist, through which one can discern these very three factors; immobility, contemplation and ignorance.

A motionless presence and an immediate emergence from nothing, a tangential manifestation of a presence until its sudden disappearance, the inscription of the goodbye man in the public space resembles that of a demonstrator whose act of protest involves sitting down peacefully in the middle of the street, although such a place is quintessentially a space where one should be standing and moving between geographical points as determined by a complex network of productive everyday activity. It is also like burning yourself to death in an eminently public sacrifice; the paradox of such an act is that your presence is only noted and made famous through your simultaneous disappearance. The common feature of all these three cases — the sitting demonstrator, those who burn themselves to death and the goodbye man — is the underlying

political premise, based on three different reasons: the public nature of their exhibition, its unproductiveness, and, above all, and most notably in the case of the goodbye man, their politeness. While, at first sight, it may seem like one of the most basic signs of a shared belonging within a linear space-time, and without any sudden shocks, the wave, its repetition and its return gesture subliminally indicate a new time, a new beginning; by awakening and liberating the wave from its inertia, and returning it to the street, the goodbye man unexpectedly and unpredictably points out to us a path to freedom without the shackles of habits, actions and reactions, knowledge and deeds. The wave and its repetition, as well as the fact of its being returned by the car drivers, are the inaugural signs of a new way of looking at the street, with its productive and mortal flows, but also, and above all, a new way of looking at life and its unproductive and immortal flows.

The second factor testifying to the link between the goodbye man and the long line of limit-artists is contemplation. His is a gesture that is as simple and polite as it is magical and spiritualistic, a gesture that is ascetic from the point of view of a polite withdrawal in the face of eloquence and triumphalism as the common hallmarks of the artistic thing, a gesture that does not leave any trace in the sense in which the history of art lives from traces. The wave is the tangential link that connects the goodbye man to the drivers in their shared contemplation of such a basic presence in the world, in this way promoting a type of attention without any particular quality, not concerned with any significant search. Such an absolute neutrality of the gaze as it is possible to have towards what appears. “Full” or “devoid” of interest, the contemplated image tells us nothing: it does not provoke, wound or shock us. Neither absent nor inquiring, the contemplative gaze rests upon the image without looking for it or finding it, not having been invited to do so by the artist. For this reason, the contemplative gaze is one that has neither intention nor hope, so that all that remains for it to do is to *catch* the image like someone picking up something that has fallen to the ground. The contemplative gaze also means being neutral in terms of one’s gaze without actually seeking such a condition; it means being silent in one’s

gaze without seeking to speak, apart from the impulse that speech promotes, or apart from the fact that silence is a latent condition which speech is anticipated. Contemplating is being in the silence that precedes the outbreak of speech; a silence that, as it extends over time, dispenses with speech; if silence is a sign of speech that is about to come, then the silence that extends beyond the advent of speech is the one that renders speech unviable within the context of an altered relationship between the retention (of speech by silence) and the discharge (of the tension associated with the silence prior to speech, anticipating it).

The third and final factor is ignorance. By not acknowledging himself as an artist, by leaving that question in abeyance and limiting his inscription in the public space to a wave, the goodbye man makes a clean slate of any doing and any knowing how to do, preferring instead a “not doing” and a “not knowing how to do”. Such manifest ignorance is the basis for a posture that, while recognising itself as creative, politely refuses to know and to do anything in relation to what the work might be in the future. A limit-artist always counters doing and knowing how to do with “not knowing” and “not knowing how to do”.

The combination of the three factors that we have just looked at — immobility, contemplation and ignorance — results in the definition of the limit-artist, from which we can highlight three fundamental aspects. The first of these is idiocy. The idiot is someone whose presence in the public space is underlined by their unique and unreasonable character (Rosset 2004, Jouannais 2003) without this being synonymous with their exclusion. In fact, the presence of the other people amongst whom the idiot moves is fundamental, since it provides a collective rhythm, from which an *idiorrhythmy* (Barthes 2002) is released. In the case of the goodbye man, this latter condition is produced not so much by the wave, but by its assiduousness, affording it an ironic and politely insubmissive nature. In a similar fashion to Edouard Manet, who in the past made use of painting in order to criticise it “from within”, painting asparagus and prostitutes, the goodbye man turned the wave and its assiduous repetition in the public

space into a way of subverting “from within” both the social context on which politeness is founded and the history of art and performance on which traces are founded. The second aspect is nomadism: what interests us here are the notions of flight and the lines of flight, and above all Gilles Deleuze’s lines of aberrant movement (Lapoujade 2014). By seemingly not causing any shock with normality, the nomadic presence and the wave of the goodbye man appear like a delicate mirage, a slight delirium, a tenuous aberration, imposing a personal logic upon the passing motorists. The goodbye man thus emerges like a flash of lightning in the public space and in the life of those with whom he shared a presence. This flash of lightning is like a flight in the system, perhaps creating flights and lines of flight that spread outside the system, undermining it “from within”. The third and final aspect is dandyism. In the book *Sociologie et anthropologie*, and, more concretely, in the chapter on techniques of the body, Marcel Mauss anticipates Pierre Bourdieu by speaking about the notion of “habitus” as a social factor that determines the gestures of the body which are erroneously assumed to be personal and intransmissible. “I think I can also recognise a girl who has been raised in a convent. In general she will walk with her fists closed,” says Mauss (2003: 368). The conclusion he reaches is that the education of the body is indissociable from convenient gestures that are distinct for each social group. This convenience of the gesture is the key to the body’s taming of the mind. In the mid-nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie imposed itself as the dominant class, turning productivity into the capitalist design of humanity. The techniques of the body adapted to this new reality, with the driving force behind its reorganisation undoubtedly continuing to be the social *status quo*. The dandy appeared on the fringes of bourgeois law and morality, and consequently on the fringes of capitalist material production, claiming to be a producer: not of artefacts, but of behaviours and postures. The figure of the dandy is therefore indissociable from that of the artist who creates gestures, or better who creates the pure gesture, the purity of the gesture rediscovered in the light of a certain disillusion with the world. This disillusionment distinguishes itself not by its affirmative and demanding nature, but rather

by an undeniable passiveness and unproductiveness, without any driving force or will. A topographical presence that leaves no traces, a heraldic gesture that has no owner; the goodbye man was that dandy, whose presence marked out his territory, but yet was atopic, whimsical and vaporous.

By limiting itself to recording artefacts and signatures, the history of art, says Jouannais (2009), has satisfied itself with a chronology of produced objects and an index of names. Left outside this record are artistic phenomena that leave no trace and have no face, many of them invisible and essentially based on an idea, on a gesture, on energy. It is almost always hard to describe, define or even see and hear them. In such a context, the terms “author” or “artist” are insufficient, and not very adept at expressing the disarrangement of the criteria used in defining what is commonly considered or not considered to be an artwork. As Jouannais stresses, it also seems to be equally difficult to use the term “artwork” to name “non-effective entities, non-effective bodies, thus betraying the etymology of the term “artwork” [linked to the notion of the physical work and suffering associated with its execution]” (2009: 32). Having saved himself from the work, tensions and constraints inherent in the act of doing, the deed for which the goodbye man became famous should not, however, be described as an artwork, nor should he be labelled as an artist. A term should be invented that contains in its essence not the doing and the know-how that are peculiar to those artists whose names have been widely honoured by the (western) history of art, but the “not doing” and the “not knowing how to do”, without any formal proof being given or being required, of limit-artists similar to the goodbye man. Jouannais further proposes that, in substituting the idea of an “artwork”, the new term should reflect the nuance that has already been enshrined in the seafarers’ jargon in distinguishing between “quick work” (the part of the hull of a ship below the water) and “dead work” (all of the ship above the water).

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**OUR DREAMS  
DON'T FIT IN YOUR  
BALLOT BOXES**

## OUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN YOUR BALLOT BOXES

### AN ARTIVIST PERFORMANCE IN THREE ACTS

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#### RESUMO

Este artigo teoriza sobre a capacidade das performances artivistas (artísticas/ativistas) subverterem relações de poder incorporando dissensões simbólicas à intervenção no real. Demonstrando que a arte pode empoderar as pessoas e que o corpo é o *medium* mais democrático e universal para o executar, o texto apresenta uma perspetiva autoral sobre a “troika artivista” *OS NOSSOS SONHOS NÃO CABEM NAS VOSSAS URNAS*, um laboratório experimental de livro, videoinstalação e performance (a qual levou à ocupação do MNAC — Museu do Chiado e se expandiu a outros museus), onde as formas artísticas permitiram obter uma voz na esfera pública, constituindo os seus participantes em atores de contestação ao *status quo*. Numa ruptura de limites disciplinares entre arte, política e antropologia, explorou-se o potencial transformador de aproximar a arte à sociedade, em oposição ao dominante enquadramento da arte contemporânea. Do processo de questionamento do sistema das artes chegou-se a um questionamento do próprio lugar do artista.

**KEYWORDS** PERFORMANCE, ARTIVISM, ART, POLITICS, MUSEUM

#### ABSTRACT

This paper theorizes about the capacity of activist (artistic/activist) performances to subvert power relations, incorporating symbolic dissension in intervention in the real. Demonstrating how art can empower people and how the body is the most democratic and universal medium to execute it, the text presents the author's perspective of an “activist troika” called *OUR DREAMS DON'T FIT IN YOUR BALLOT BOXES*. It was an experimental laboratory consisting of a book, a video installation and a performance (which began occupying the MNAC — Chiado Museum and expanded to other museums), where artistic forms allowed obtaining a voice in the public sphere, constituting its participants in contestation actors of the status quo. In a rupture of limits between art, politics and anthropology, it explores the transforming potential of bringing art closer to society, in opposition to the dominant framework of contemporary art. After a process of questioning the art system, it come to question the artist's own place.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** PERFORMANCE, ARTIVISMO, ARTE, POLÍTICA, MUSEU



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T



**FIG. 1** Video still of the videoinstallation *Os Nossos Sonhos Não Cabem nas Vossas Urnas*.

What is outstandingly clear in Pericles' formulations (...) is that the innermost meaning of the acted deed and the spoken word is independent of victory and defeat and must remain untouched by an eventual outcome, by their consequences for better or for worse. (...) action can be judged only by the criterion of greatness because it is in its nature to break through the commonly accepted and reach into the extraordinary, where whatever is true in common and everyday life no longer applies because everything that exists is unique and *sui generis*. (...); as long as the *polis* is there to inspire men to dare the extraordinary, all things are safe, if it perishes, everything is lost. (...) Greatness, therefore, or the specific meaning of each deed, can lie only in the performance itself and neither in its motivation nor its achievement. (Arendt, 2001: 256-257)

Artivism is a form of creative action that establishes an organic link between art and activism, giving shape to an ethical attitude of resistance which subverts the *status quo* in a symbolic yet effective way. Its agents resort to a variety of deconstructive strategies that provide them with a special capacity of communication which is aimed at bringing to light, in a critical way, situations that are perceived as oppressive, unfair, unequal or constituting poor options for public policies. In a non-violent way, its agents voice dissensions that seek to affirm the possibility of ordinary people being able to have a say in the public sphere. To achieve this, they resort to art, playing provocatively with aesthetics and emotions, making use of a variety of idioms (e.g. satirical, poetical, realistic, bizarre, etc.).

Although the use of the term Artivism has rapidly become quite common, there is still relatively little bibliography to back up the concept. It is worth remembering that, as a hybrid neologism, the term starts to gain some visibility with Chela Sandoval and Gisela Latorre's paper on "*Chicano* digital Artivism" in 2008<sup>1</sup>. It was probably about this time that the term started to make its way into North American academic

discourse, even though it had already been circulating before in artistic and activist circles, with lesser visibility and therefore lesser historical impact. The first event to have a significant impact in publicising the term in the media was the film festival (ARTIVIST) that took place in Los Angeles in 2003.

In the Portuguese academic context, the first periodical to highlight this topic was *Cadernos de Arte e Antropologia*, in 2015. In that year's edition (2015, Vol. 4, N° 2), Paulo Raposo, one of the coordinators of the dossier whose title in English would be "Artivism: poetics and political performances in the street and on the web" described the concept as follows: "Its aesthetic and symbolic nature amplifies, appeals to the senses, reflects and questions themes and situations in a specific historical and social context, aiming at change or resistance. *Artivism* can be better and more clearly understood if we think of it as a social cause and a social demand, and, at the same time, as an artistic disruption — namely, because it puts forward alternative scenarios, landscapes and ecologies aiming at fulfilment, participation and artistic creation."<sup>2</sup> In this perspective, Artivism by itself and by its mere existence can be said to be strongly subversive of the prevailing concept of art, which postulates the normativity of "art for art's sake"<sup>3</sup>. This concept, originating in the Romantic movement as a reaction to bourgeois utilitarianism, has since been readily favoured by capitalism in order to depoliticise the transformative power of art in society, subjecting it quietly and without resistance to the very materialistic logic that "art for art's sake" pretended initially to oppose.

However, if activist practice does show signs of sharing some of the Romantics' utopian ideals, it resists being brought to heel by the logics of capitalism. On the contrary, it pretends to transform them. Artivism doesn't shy away from exploring the transformative potential of art and defines itself as "art for action's sake". Being aware of this, action takes on the intrinsic power of the symbolic dimension, and does not confine this dimension to the ideology of uselessness to which it has been reduced by artistic conventions favourable to the *status quo*.

<sup>1</sup> Chela Sandoval & Gisela Latorre. 2008. "Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca's Digital Work with Youth of Color," in *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, Anna Everett (ed.), Cambridge MA: MIT Press. Pp. 81-108.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://cadernosaa.revues.org/909>

<sup>3</sup> A term coined by Benjamin Constant in 1804.



Regardless of the countless possible types of Artivism, the activist exercise *per se* shatters the minorising passivity of an art that shies away from taking stands outside the bounds of what is politically acceptable, or, to put it differently, beyond limits tacitly established by power. Such limits include depriving art of its political dimension, arguing that art needs protection from being exploited as a mere propagandistic tool. But is the immaterial value of art not already being exploited by an ideology — the capitalistic one — in which neoliberal logics work together with individual and corporative interests of the agents that control the art system?

Bearing in mind the dark legacy of totalitarianism, wars and deaths left to us by the 20th century, there is an understandable trauma attached to linking art and politics. However, art and politics have always been related, as the symbolic indubitably influences the real and *vice versa*. As such, art and politics are just as related today as they always have been. Today, at a time which can be defined by the notion of post-truth,<sup>4</sup> things have simply become more subtle, relativistic, complex and concealed. One way of resisting this trend would be to make visible the hidden devices of power. That's exactly what Artivism aims to do. It is counterculture. It defines itself as active art, an art which chooses uneasiness as its field for exploring emotions and intervention as its field for questioning society. It uses scant economic resources to creatively render what could be considered high-minded concepts and ideas.

Artist creations cover a variety of media, from graffiti to installation, drawing (including comics), music and poetry, among others. I chose to focus my work on how the concept can expand to performance and its relation to video. I consider both to be particularly powerful. I literally “embodied the slogan” when, on 4 July 2014, during the opening of my exhibition *Our Dreams Don't Fit In Your Ballot Boxes* at the Chiado Museum, I read out my *Artist Manifesto*:

**We are gathered here in an activist occupation of the National Museum of Contemporary Art — Chiado Museum. We are occupying the museum in defence of it, not against it.**

**This is not theatre, nothing here is staged, and we are certainly not characters, although what we are doing is a great performance. A performance to which, as of now, you are all summoned. Those that support it and those that oppose it [...]**

**By performing this action we can change something in society — or not! — however, in a way it is we ourselves who can be transformed by the example of this action. It is a change that comes from expressing a civic awareness that is more critical, more daring, creative, interventional, felt and free, that does not drain away into institutional norms, or merely voting once every 4 years; instead it intends to drive us into living a political experience with much greater intensity. Living a greater intensity through the emotion of having faith in values in which we firmly believe, and which can be equally inspiring to others. Living a greater intensity through the emotion of a ludic political dramatization. Living a greater intensity through the emotion of sharing with others in the fight for what we consider to be the common good. Living a greater intensity through the emotion of breaking with normative codes, with the excellent reason that we don't submit to unfairness all around us.**

**The greater the emotional intensity of doing something to transform the world around us and, in doing so, transform ourselves, the more, with this activist performance of ours, we can claim that we are really ALIVE. That we are alive beyond the limits of a system that demotivates, that kills the dream and constantly disappoints us with its vices, limitations and flaws. Because we are willing to improve it. Each and every activist performance, by its mere existence, asserts the ideals of democracy in the public sphere. And as long as we, active citizens ready to act beyond the letter of strict norms and rules, are alive, that ideal will not die. Not within us, not in the streets, not in the squares or in the museums that belong to everyone.**

It was all a surprise to the public and to the museum staff. While the opening of the

<sup>4</sup> Post-truth was the Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2016 and it is an increasingly used adjective defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. (...) Rather than simply referring to the time after a specified situation or event — as in *post-war* or *post-match* — the prefix in *post-truth* has a meaning more like ‘belonging to a time in which the specified concept has become unimportant or irrelevant’.” Source: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>

exhibition was in full swing, a member of the public started singing Lopes-Graça's mythical resistance theme "Acordai". Dozens of people followed the singing lady in a parade<sup>5</sup> out of the Statue Garden into the museum hall until they reached the place where Antigone<sup>6</sup> — a character from Greek theatre who symbolises resistance against tyranny — was lying. The public were then invited to throw green peas at her, in order to awaken her sleeping consciousness. When in turn I reached the stairway in the museum hall myself, I started reading my *Artist Manifesto*<sup>7</sup> aloud, while a few people who were in on the plan went about opening a hidden compartment in Antigone's chaise-longue and started to take out cultural activism posters<sup>8</sup> and sleeping bags to camp from within. At that moment, the thrill of occupying the museum reached its peak and the energy lasted all night. Several dozen people took part and the occupation received widespread media coverage on television, radio, newspapers, blogs and social networks. A civic assembly was established in the museum right away to take all decisions and formulate all demands. Sitting in a circle, everyone present participated in intense artistic and political discussion. The performance went on to expand to other spaces and articulated itself into an "activist troika", including a book and a multi-channel video installation.

The video installation consisted of ten videos of ten performances that had previously taken place in public space in Portugal. Bearing Foster's concept of the "artist as an ethnographer" (Foster 1996) in mind, and doing a visual anthropology of the activist performance in Portugal, I established artistic interpretations of anthropological contents to understand artistic interpretations of political contents, following the methodology I had developed in the book that accompanied the performance. The activist performances were projected in a multipolar, intersected and rhizomatic way, functioning together as a whole. There were five listening spots presenting audio records of testimonies of the performers themselves (of whom several were also present at the activist occupation of the museum)<sup>9</sup>. This fragmented and diverse yet unified whole was a metaphor for the "inter-subjectivities"

(Habermas 2010: 351) required in the public sphere, without which the totalitarian ideology prevails and no plurality is possible. Just as counterpower needs to be represented if there is to be a democracy, the images of the video installation were aimed at giving it a certain visibility in the museum as well.

The book was directly related to the video installation, which it reflected and built upon, taking it even further. It took the form of a theoretical essay<sup>10</sup> with the title *Artivism Essay — Video and Performance*, and was the first published study of its kind in Portugal with its analysis of Artivism using national examples. The word "essay" in the title has a double meaning: the book is at once an exposition of an intellectual analysis and a manual for the performance to come. As an intellectual essay, the book is a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon of the activist performances, analysing their practices, the social movements involved and which contexts are more favourable, and giving a summary of the political tradition of the performative arts. As a manual, writing down my ideas for the book allowed me to conceptually prepare a performance that finally went much beyond the walls of the Chiado Museum. It was discussed in the news and by ordinary people in the public sphere, including the cybersphere.

Over the following months, the performance physically extended to other museums. On 17 August 2014, barely a month after the occupation of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, an *Act II* followed at the National Museum of Ancient Art, with a happening of 73 people dressed in black (the number of participants being an evocation of the right to culture expressed in Article 73 of the Portuguese Constitution). The 73 people purchased their entry ticket to the museum

<sup>5</sup> Lyrical singer and activist Ana Maria Pinto, who already featured in an interview in the book launched that night at the museum and in one of the performances of the video installation *Our Dreams Don't Fit In Your Ballot Boxes*.

<sup>6</sup> The Antigone character, dressed in a Grecian costume, was performed by actress Joana Freches Duque, a member of Colectivo Negativo, which collaborated in this performance as co-creator and designed the costumes and the chaise-longue that worked as a Trojan horse, holding the posters and the sleeping bags until required.

<sup>7</sup> The complete *Artist Manifesto* can be found here: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hcz4QByYwYNd\\_b5uQ7dy7JQHD7LQxht9UaNXogshdZp8/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Hcz4QByYwYNd_b5uQ7dy7JQHD7LQxht9UaNXogshdZp8/pub)

<sup>8</sup> There were posters with messages like: LESS TAX MONEY FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, SWAPS AND BANKS; MORE TAX MONEY FOR MUSEUMS, ART AND CULTURE; FREE MUSEUM ACCESS EVERY SUNDAY; + CULTURE = + EDUCATION = + DEMOCRACY, etc. Occupiers at the museum added posters with sentences like: MAY YOUR CHOICES BE THE RESULT OF YOUR DREAMS, NOT YOUR FEARS; 1% OF STATE BUDGET FOR CULTURE; THIS IS A POLITICAL POSTER BECAUSE WE ARE HERE; CULTURE IS NOT A LUXURY, etc.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the video installation and to see the official video of the work of art by the MNAC — Chiado Museum (where there is no reference to the occupation whatsoever, as if it never existed): <http://www.museuartecontemporanea.pt/pt/programacao/os-nossos-sonhos-nao-cabem-nas-vossas-urnas>

<sup>10</sup> The issue was the theme of my master's thesis in Anthropology — Society and Culture at ISCTE-IUL (Supervisor: Professor Paulo Raposo) *Counterpower Representations: Artist Performances in Portuguese Public Space*.

on a Sunday, a day that by political decision was no longer free-access, and at a given time everyone imitated statues and paintings in the museum with their bodies. While composing these genuine *tableaux-vivants* the participants chanted, as a mantra, in many voices and in many tones, volumes and rhythms: “We are art, in front of art, mourning for art, fighting for art”. At that moment, through performance and will, those bodies converted into art. To complete the performance, all of the participants wrote something in the museum’s complaints book, invariably making reference to the right to culture as expressed in Article 73 of the Constitution, until every single available page was full. People expressed their concerns in their own style and language and some even included other complaints, but everyone appealed to the democratisation of the access to culture.

The final instance took place the following month (15 September 2014). *Act III* was about creating a choreography at the Ajuda National Palace, headquarter of culture’s public power in Portugal. It included actors dressed as anthropomorphised pigs in a suit and tie, poetry recited in many voices (plurality was always an important concern in every act) and huge visual compositions created by dozens of black umbrellas forming the euro symbol, a symbol of money and of what it represents at the powerhouse where culture is managed, and which as much fosters, when it does so, as it controls the arts. The shape of the euro (€) was not recognisable at ground level, where everything looked cheerful, chaotic and noisy. The choreography was designed to have the money symbol perceptible only from above. The euro sign was recorded on video from a drone with a camera attached to it which was sent hovering over the grand courtyard of the premises of the secretary of state of culture.

To conclude this description, we could say that the exhibition, with its book and video installation recording a selection of previous activist performances, unfolded in three performative “acts”, which were also activist performances in their own right. Theory and practice, object and subject, video and performance, aesthetics and ethics, art and life:

all intertwined. Each act had its own title but together they formed a whole:

**Act I: Our Dreams Don’t Fit In Your Ballot Boxes**

**Act II: Your Dreams Don’t Fit In Our Ballot Boxes**

**Act III: Ballot Boxes Where Dreams Don’t Fit Die Slowly**

The three acts were recorded on video and are available online.<sup>11</sup> They involved the direct contribution of more than 100 people in total, without whom none of this would have been possible and to whom I am deeply grateful. Lovers of the arts who took up the challenge of fighting for art through art did so because they felt indignant at the fact that the cultural sector, already underfinanced by the government, became one of the public sectors that was most deeply affected by the policies of austerity. People also did it because they could identify with a stand that was an affirmation of counterpower in defence of specific values.

The free and committed way in which such a huge number of participants joined an artistic and political laboratory such as this one, seems to me indicative of the extent of the prevailing mood of deep social discontent in the face of the general crisis, at a time when Portugal was under the strain of general political unrest due to the intervention, between 2011 and 2014, of the so-called Troika (the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission) in the country’s financial policies. The Portuguese government had assumed the debts of the country’s financial system and had been implementing a neo-liberal agenda through austerity that contributed to eroding the welfare state even further. This situation had already triggered several big demonstrations, especially in 2012 and 2013, with a record amount of people marching the streets.

Such protests can be seen as part of the international trend of the Occupy movement (with its anti-plutocrat slogan “We are the 99%”), which slightly preceded them in time and were an inspiration to the social movements in Portugal. Those involved in Occupy would typically take to the streets and hold civic

<sup>11</sup> Act I: <https://vimeo.com/119287387>  
Act II: <https://vimeo.com/120016187>  
Act III: <https://vimeo.com/106980746>

meetings in public space to discuss political issues and look for alternatives to the current models of economics, finance, politics, society and culture. In 2011 they quickly expanded worldwide to 95 cities in 82 countries, in particular in the United States and in Europe (although also in Hong Kong as late as 2014), including the *Acampada do Rossio* (Lisbon, 2011). There I found some of the protagonists of my video installation and book, and invited them to take part in the occupation of the MNAC — Chiado Museum. Their expertise was crucial for realising the civic meeting at the occupied museum, which informed the following statement in my *Artist Manifesto*:

**The space for this performance is the museum, but it draws upon a series of symbolic dimensions from beyond the museum. It brings in things like the occupation of public spaces, the town square, the polis, and makes art of this, in an evocation of the *Acampada do Rossio*, Occupy Wall Street, the Spanish *Acampadas* and all the other Occupy events that not long ago, in many countries, in countless public spaces worldwide, brought back to the public sphere the non-representative direct assembly, the utopia of the everlasting myth of the Greek agora, the matrix of the democratic dream.**

## II

**There is no public space because it is in the hands of a few people whose discourse does nothing more than feed the inertia and the closing upon itself of the structure of the power relations they represent. Places, times, media-related schemes and people form a small static system that works very hard at perpetuating itself. The situation does not appear to be better in other sectors of Portuguese public life. Despite exhibitions, their number and their importance, art has no public space. It is not the extremely rare specialised magazines (...); it is not the published books about art; it is not the few (and suddenly, many) debates that happen in order to build up such a space. People go to exhibitions and shows, they “like it” or they “don’t like it” and go back**

**home, that is to say, back to other concerns. Critique suffers an identical fate (...) Painters, sculptors rarely speak to one another about their art. Art is a private matter. It does not enter life, it does not transform individual existences. It exhibits itself in display cabinets (as for so many years exhibitions, shows, concerts by foreign artists were produced at Gulbenkian’s “display windows”, that presented what was done “abroad” during the dictatorship period). To make one’s mark therefore means to produce the real. It is in the real that a deed makes an impact, because it opens the real to another reality. There is no imaginary inscription and the symbolic inscription (despite what psychoanalysis says) does nothing more than continue the already built reality. When desire does not transform itself, the Event is not born, and no mark is left. (Gil, 2004: 25)**

What I have been saying here, in its quality of participative historiography, is not and could not be impartial. It is the perspective of the artist. However, what is lost in the way of distance and objectivity — no matter how hard I tried to obviate this — is compensated by a direct access to the authorial source that reveals its unmediated testimony, completing and deepening the information provided by the mass media at the time. Considering the events from a personal point of view, I am the one able to clarify the facts, identify the actors of the deeds and the dynamics of power and counterpower at play who gave shape to the performance. These elements are crucial to the understanding of an artistic object which was fundamentally a flux between different stands that were triggered within a museum space (which was later extended to other spaces), a project that was based on a subversive act, namely an invitation to occupy a museum as a form of artistic protest, opening the way for a series of antagonistic performativities, intentional or not, which revealed what Agamben calls apparatuses.

**What defines apparatuses that we have to deal with in the current phase of capitalism is that they no longer act as much through the production of a subject as through the**



**FIG. 3:** Act II — Artist Performance at the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga.

PHOTO: RICARDO CASTELO-BRANCO.

processes of what can be called desubjectification. (...) Contemporary societies therefore present themselves as inert bodies going through massive processes of desubjectification without acknowledging any real subjectification. Hence the eclipse of politics, which used to presuppose the existence of subjects and real identities (...) (Agamben, 2009: 47-49)

One way of breaking the logic of desubjectification in the apparatuses of power, which are by definition dehumanising, would be to make visible their humanity, by naming its agents and exposing the intersubjectivities created by an apparatus whose fate is to never stop, never ceasing to reproduce its power.

The right to look confronts the police, who say to us, “Move on, there’s nothing to see here”. Only there is; we know it, and so do they. (...) This ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer. In turn, the authorizing of authority requires permanent renewal in order to win consent as the “normal” or everyday because it is always already contested. The autonomy claimed by the right to look is thus opposed by the authority of visibility. But the right to look came first, and we should not forget it. (Mirzoeff, 2011: 474)

As an artist, I created conditions for the performance to happen by opening a conceptual space within the museum space, but it was the people who subsequently took a stand for or against the proposed challenge who became the performers of the deed: the occupying crowd (both those who were in on the plan with me and those who joined us spontaneously), the journalists, the institution staff, the police who turned up the morning after, the social media observers with their comments in

favour or against the action, the broadcasters and even those politically in charge of the museums.

The whole debate emerged precisely because the performance subverted the expected institutional guidelines. At the museum, the intervention art was meant to be merely symbolic, contained and innocuous, framed with the sponsoring of the new museum's patron — Sonae — that even privatized part of the National Museum of Contemporary Art's public identity. To be noted that the room where I exhibited was precisely the old Multipurpose Room, that had just been re-baptised as Sonae Room. But then the unexpected happened.

The first artist to exhibit at the newly renamed room subverted the system's logics, with a performance that made the tension between art's transforming potential and the museum's limits its artistic object, making its controlling devices visible. As a matter of fact, when I was asked to show my work in the museum, several months previously, I was not informed that a sponsorship had been arranged and would frame my exhibition. Further, this happened in a museum which not only has a historical lack of autonomy as an institutional space, but had also been included in the dominant neoliberal dynamics, where corporate sponsorship was the adopted solution to suppress the needs of public under budgeting.

Although the managers of the institution claimed at the time that such sponsorship wouldn't limit the museum's choice of exhibition content, the moment the activist performance broke the prevailing rules and gained visibility in the media, I clearly saw fear settling in. They feared that such an act of activist interventionism might displease the patron corporation and that they might lose their financial support. Regardless of whether the sponsor chose to intervene or not, it is the museum managers themselves that retract before the possibility of the corporation providing the sponsorship would take offence. As such, in addition to publicity and significant tax benefits, being a sponsor comes with the very real possibility of conditioning the museum's agenda, not so much for what is accepted, but more for what is subtly left out because of the lurking presence of a sponsor.

Having to depend on a sponsor for funding results in the avoidance of content that might displease the financing corporation, thus creating a tacit institutional framework in which anything that could efficiently challenge the prevailing socio-economic system has no place. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that an important conference about Activism was being organised at the museum at the time, to which I had been invited, but which was cancelled the moment Activism ceased to be merely a fashionable theory and became something lived.

Curiously, *O Público* — a newspaper belonging to the corporation that is the museum's sponsor — did not send any journalist whatsoever while the activist occupation lasted and they were one of the last newspapers to publish what happened, the following day, under pressure from other media, which had been broadcasting and publishing the event since the night before. Furthermore, when it published the news, it had only contacted one of the parts — the director of the museum — writing on 5 July 2014 that it hadn't been possible to reach me (even though it was being broadcasted every hour on the TV news that I had spent the entire night of the 4-5 July at the museum, ready to speak to every journalist who showed up, as many did). Later, a journalist from the same newspaper did cover the *Act II* (the activist performance at the National Museum of Ancient Art) without so much as entering the museum, asking if I knew whether other newspapers were going to publish the story and telling me that no one from the newspaper was permitted to photograph the happening because they did not wish to endanger *Público's* good relationship with the National Museum of Ancient Art. The news was illustrated with a picture of the museum façade instead of showing the act of dissension of the bodies. It was as if they illustrated a play using images of the theatre's façade instead of snaps of the actors' play, or as if they reported a demonstration and showed an empty street. Nothing remains but the impossibility of emotion, of empathy, of affection for the bodies.

A lot could be said about how each individual newspaper, radio station or television channel approached the three-act

project, with their variations and similarities, what they chose to ignore or highlight, but this paper is not the place for a comparative analysis that would require a study of its own, just like the hundreds of comments and shares on Twitter, Facebook and blogs that I noticed. Online, there was a lot of public discussion around the fact that I said that the exhibition had an €8,000 budget and all the professionals involved were paid for their work, except for the artist who created the contents of the exhibition at the museum.<sup>12</sup> In other words, even when there is a reasonable budget, the artist gets no remuneration whatsoever for work that he or she creates for an exhibition at a national museum.

As far as hierarchies are concerned, one should not forget that at the time the director of the Chiado Museum was David Santos (who had previously worked at the Neo-Realism Museum, a municipal museum where he had been placed as a director by a Socialist Party city council), while the secretary of state for culture was Jorge Barreto Xavier (placed by a PSD / CDS-PP government, a right-wing coalition). There had already been a certain amount of conflict between the two of them, which later culminated in Santos's resignation after Barreto Xavier revoked an official decision assigning the collection of contemporary art belonging to the State Department of Culture to the Chiado Museum.<sup>13</sup> Due to the existing tension with his superior, when David Santos ran into the activist performance occupying the museum, he was visibly divided between his political background (which includes a record as art historian, curator and defender of socially engaged art) and his fear that, were he not able to put an end to the occupation, he would be vulnerable to retaliation from a politically opposed government.

Faced with hierarchy and its power, the director chose instead to pressure me into giving up, but my answer was always that as this was a performance of participatory art, any decision had to be taken collectively by the assembly. As a group, we voted in favour of staying for the night. Even though that was also my own goal, on my own I would not have had the strength that the group had and gave me. Additionally, the occupying group, consisting of artists, activists and lay

lovers of art voted through a motion for inviting the museum staff to join in the occupation, as they were already there, and handwritten invitations on paper were made and distributed to the staff. None of them joined us. A technical assistant secretly gave me his support.

Well into the morning, we were told that if we did not leave by the time the museum opened its doors to the public, they would call the police. The museum staff then started to accuse us of not contributing to the democratisation of access to culture, but instead of preventing the public from getting in due to our presence. We answered we would never stop anyone from entering the museum and, furthermore, some of us put forth a proposition that we should remain to form a living installation of protesting bodies that visitors would see as an addition to the exhibition itself. Their next step was to threaten us with calling the police.

Despite the stressful conditions, the assembly worked together to the very end, and now voted to call a press conference for the time the museum was due to open its doors to the public (10.00am). I should add that there were journalists standing at the museum's door and that our behaviour was always peaceful and civilised, which was recognised by everyone. As for the course of action to follow, we voted to select one of the various proposals made by the participants. Some said that we should wait for the police to come and forcibly remove us from the place in front of the press. Some said that our mission had been successfully accomplished (as our original goal had been to occupy the museum all night) and that we should leave willingly, with dignity, after giving the press conference we had called at the museum's door.

The latter option received a majority of votes, so this is what we did. As an artist I created the situation, but then it developed according to the collective action. Thus, the final announcement included the demand that the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic be complied with as regards the promotion

<sup>12</sup> As it can be verified from watching this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWgZCt2QTWM> In response to those declarations, among the many run-of-the-mill favourable and contrary opinions that were voiced at the time, the curator, artist and businessman António Cerveira Pinto wrote against the performance in his blog *O António Maria* (Source: <http://o-antonio-maria.blogspot.pt/2014/07/museu-do-chiado-ocupado-uma-noite-de.html>), and the university professor, lecturer and critic Mário Moura wrote a supportive article in his blog *The Ressabiator* (Source: <https://ressabiator.wordpress.com/2014/07/13/o-estado-da-arte-onde-chegamos/>).

<sup>13</sup> Around that time, a petition with hundreds of signatures raised support for David Santos, counting with prominent figures from the Portuguese art scene. After the Socialist Party entered government in 2016, David Santos was promoted to the position of deputy director of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage by the then minister of culture, João Soares.

of the democratisation of culture by the state, as stated in Article 73. This could be achieved by promoting access to museums by reducing the price of tickets (which had recently been increased as part of the austerity policy, in some cases by more than 75%) and by re-establishing free entry every Sunday (which had been reduced from every Sunday to one Sunday a month, resulting in fewer visitors).

Other demands, at a different level, were that the Ministry of Culture should be restored, that there should be more public financing of the arts, and that a minimum of 1% of the state budget should go to culture, as recommended by UNESCO. Ironically, one of our claims with the *mass media* from the beginning of the night was the demand of a meeting with the Minister of Culture,<sup>14</sup> when the government of the time had eliminated that ministry and such a position simply did not exist. The police itself was kept waiting for about half an hour when they arrived because we told them that we were still drawing up our demands to be presented to a minister they actually thought existed.

At a human level, our permanent assembly stayed sitting throughout the night. People naturally fell asleep, woke up again, sang jazz, practised yoga, wrote posters, went about recording videos, read poetry, tweeted, facebooked, viralised and live-streamed the events online. Some of us kept watch on the lavatories to prevent the museum employees from locking them, as they tried to do, in order to make a long occupation more difficult. Others flirted, made or strengthened friendships.

Shortly after I finished reading the *Artivist Manifesto* out loud at the museum, I opened my book *Artivism Essay – Video and Performance*, published by the museum, and read the following excerpt of the introductory text written by the exhibition's curator, Emília Tavares (including a quote from Fernand Léger), a text called *Words Get Taken By The Wind: An Art Of Compromise*:

**Works like those of Rui Mourão leave open the possibility of resilience to the precepts which the art system expects artists to follow, that they “operate constructive criticisms of the system without threatening the public institutions, the**

**hierarchic classes and other legacies of bourgeois liberalism; that they intervene in culture without seeming aggressive or seriously prepared to fight for political equality”.** (Tavares, 2014: 17)

When my exhibition at the museum was about to end, I informed the board by email that I would not go there to pick up the video installation *Our Dreams Don't Fit In Your Ballot Boxes*, as it was my wish to donate it to the museum. The director replied that the museum was not interested in keeping the work in the collection. To this I replied: “What I made and gave to the museum is done and given”.

I have no idea of what happened to the artwork.



**Art does not receive its reward in heaven; it is one of the things that belong to Caesar.** (Menand, 2005: 1)

The objective of my project was to unify aesthetics and *polis*, the symbolic and the real, art and life. Its opponents, after strong opposition *in loco*, decided to apply another form of power, the power to wipe out memories. Initially, this took the form of the institution's leading people trying to avoid talking to the media. In the long run, it took the form of setting up an official audiovisual narrative where nothing untoward seems to have happened at all.

The institutional video of the exhibition which the MNAC – Chiado Museum put on its website shows the performance until the point at which the audience tries to wake up young princess Antigone by throwing peas at her as she lies sleeping. The images end with Antigone still fast asleep and thus unable to unleash her untamed spirit in support of the activist occupation of the museum.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, according to the institution's public audiovisual narrative, an occupation never happened. Paradoxically, every time someone views the action on the museum's video online,

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy7znEblBIU>

<sup>15</sup> Source: <http://www.museuartecontemporanea.pt/pt/programacao/os-nossos-sonhos-nao-cabem-nas-vossas-urnas>



**FIG. 4:** Act III — Artist Performance at the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda.  
PHOTO: RUI MOURÃO.

the attempted mutilation of the performance is revived, and this mutilation and its viewings have become part of the performative deed itself (since right from the start I called in to the performance, whose object was tension itself, any further action by those who were in favour of the occupation, as well as of those who opposed it). This brings about the following questions: When should a performance of this kind be considered finished if its censure, which has been claimed by the author to be part of the performative action itself, exists in public cyberspace? In the same way, is not this paper itself also a part of the performance?

The project *Our Dreams Don't Fit In Your Ballot Boxes* demonstrated that it is possible to create artistic forms that can give people a say in the public sphere with enough impact to transform their participants into political actors opposing the *status quo*. With our own bodies, our energy, our actions and our dreams we demonstrated that activist performances can operate representations of a subversive nature that function as forms of counterpower. Together, the ten activist performances documented in the video installation and in the book and the three performing acts, where I put into practice everything that I had previously systematised in theory and images, clearly prove that art can effectively empower people and that the only thing you need is your body — and it is the most democratic and universal *medium*, because we all have one.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that all this is produced by the action of the body brings us to the concept of *affection*. This concept, created by Spinoza, has since been widely developed by authors like Deleuze, Guattari and Massumi, and is applied in psychological and philosophical contexts.

**An affection is what? In a first determination, an affection is the following: it's a state of a body insofar as it is subject to the action of another body. What does this mean? "I feel the sun on me," or else "A ray of sunlight falls upon you"; it's an affection of your body. What is an affection of your body? Not the sun, but the action of the sun or the effect of the sun on you. In other words an effect, or the action that one body**

**produces on another, once it's noted that Spinoza, on the basis of reasons from his Physics, does not believe in action at a distance, action always implies a contact, and is even a mixture of bodies. Affectio is a mixture of two bodies, one body which is said to act on another, and the other receives the trace of the first. Every mixture of bodies will be termed an affection. Spinoza infers from this that affectio, being defined as a mixture of bodies, indicates the nature of the modified body, the nature of the affectionate or affected body, the affection indicates the nature of the affected body much more than it does the nature of the affecting body. (Deleuze, 2007: 1)**

**An emotion is a subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. It is crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion. If some have the impression that it has waned, it is because affect is unqualified. As such, it is not ownable or recognizable, and is thus resistant to critique.**

**It is not that there are no philosophical antecedents to draw on. It is just that they are not the usual ones for cultural theory. Spinoza is a formidable philosophical precursor on many of these points: on the difference in nature between affect and emotion; on the irreducibly bodily and autonomic nature of affect; on affect as a suspension of action-reaction circuits and linear temporality in a sink of what might be called "passion," to distinguish it both from passivity and activity; on the equation between affect and effect; on the form/content of conventional discourse as constituting an autonomous or semi-autonomous stratum running counter to the full registering of affect and its affirmation, its positive development, its expression as and for itself. The title of Spinoza's central work suggests**

<sup>16</sup> This art project was pointed out as a case study by the art critic Celso Martins in "A Arte de Ocupar" (The Occupying Art), an article in *Expresso*, in *Ideias & Debates*, the newspaper section for ideas and art debates (published on 12 July 2014).

**a designation for the project of thinking affect: Ethics. (Massumi, 1995: 88-89)**

To try to define it in a few words we could say that *affection* is connected to a body's capacity to affect or be affected by the energy of its actions and attitudes, and the effect this has on emotions. A successful performance of counterpower is precisely one that somehow exerts affection on those present. Collective street demonstrations, the traditional means of making public statements of power, require the participation of the largest possible number of people in order to produce *affection* and thus obtain the legitimacy that will make them representative of the larger number. However, in the typical way of counterpower, the strength of an activist performance in public space is not so much quantitative as it is qualitative. Therefore, the number of participants is less important than their capacity to influence the questioning of society's established relations of power.

**The slogans that so symptomatically echo through these performative acts are transient, art can give them a place in memory, without which no social and political transformation can be started. Art enters life because it always has, it is life that has changed and with it art has changed its own paradigm. (Tavares, 2014: 18)**

The concept of art is a cultural category built through history, which provides a space for many a creation, experience, expression, sensitivity, performativity, knowledge, deconstruction and questioning that would otherwise hardly have found a place in contemporary western societies. However, such a construction is subject to economic, cultural and political dimensions (Melo 2012: 11) that form a subjectivity made up of conventions, tastes and interests that cultural elites define and reproduce according to "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986). Consequently, the "artworld" (Danto 1964: 580) structures and is structured by a series of dynamics, legitimisations, hierarchies and power relations that exploit art according to the interests of the dominant agents in the system

and the interests of the dominant agents in the macro-system where art is inserted and upon which it is dependent.

If we apply McLuhan's theories to the artworld, we see that here, too, "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1964: 7). Art's inherent subjectivity, amplified by the prevailing strong relativism, by the absence of public standards of appreciation and by the generalisation of hermetic and frequently elitist jargon in curatorial discourse, has strengthened the authority of the mediator over the art that is available to the public. A very small group of people in positions of power in cultural institutions, social media and the market control the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that determine for the rest of society the canons of art, the greatest category of so-called high culture.

Against this backdrop, up to what point does the selection of artistic contents in the interior of museums and galleries correspond to interpellations that question the perception of the world and of ourselves? What is the point of having cultural institutions that create conditions for critical reflection if they then throw that positioning towards a contained limit? A limit filtered by dominant economic, political, social and cultural domains that serve interests which are contrary to art's potential to break limits, to find other ways, to dream other worlds. Consequently, what can the objects exhibited in the museums of contemporary art add to our lives, castrated as they are of their transforming power and utopian potential? Is it possible to go beyond the limit imposed by the *status quo*?

The activist troika I created brought home all those questions. It led me not only to look at the world around me, but at myself as well. To assume the same postulates and look at an identity shaped by the very environment I question: the identity of the artist. I started questioning the ontology of my own place in the world. How could I not question the artist that I am, that I was, in a system I criticise, if I am myself its product, formed and legitimised by it? Strangely enough, I started this project with a series of beliefs and I finished it full of doubts.<sup>17</sup> I entered the museum in defence of a system I was subverting and I left

<sup>17</sup> I created a video called *This Voice Is Not My Voice*, as part of the deep personal transformation and the artistic process that started with those doubts. The video is available online: <https://vimeo.com/172826349>


it subverting my place in that system. I entered as an artist and left as a person.

To conclude, if one is to be subtly tamed back into order or subtly excluded by the limits of the environment and the interests of those in control, the question is: what kind of place can a creator have in the mediation of the art he produces? There is the option of cooperative inclusion in art's power system, accepting its limitations and hierarchies in the perspective of gaining visibility, recognition, status and financial compensation (rewards that are accessible only to the very few). Another option is to be within the system but trying to criticize it and change it from the inside, in a permanent game of tensions with, ideally, more conquests than concessions. Another would be to stay outside the system, disowning it outright in complete independence, giving up any of the advantages that integration can offer. Or yet the option of being outside the system, searching for potentially better systems that render the dominant one obsolete.

Obviously, such options need not be mutually exclusive, and are not closed, mandatory or immutable. The only certainty is that choices are not easy and they are fundamentally made between interests and values. They happen between Earth's gravity and the beauty of the horizon.

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**THE “PERFORMATIVE”  
AND “SPECULATIVE”  
HISTORY OF  
PORTUGUESE  
PERFORMANCE ART**

## THE “PERFORMATIVE” AND “SPECULATIVE” HISTORY OF PORTUGUESE PERFORMANCE ART

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*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly).  
Video still (0’13”). Video available at:  
[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=eghPc-w85f8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8)

### ABSTRACT

The “History” of Portuguese performance art, an artistic genre that has only been named as such since the 1960s, is still a work in progress and has only recently become part of Portuguese art history.

Beyond fragmentary theoretical contributions, which are focused mainly on particular artists who were generally better known for their less performative artistic practices (poetry, painting, sculpture), this history in process has been carried out either through “musealization” (exhibitions, retrospectives etc.) or by means of a *new* interest from *new generations* of Portuguese artists and researchers into the genre.

Several questions arise when we attempt a more comprehensive analysis of this history. They involve difficulties of prioritizing agents and works, unavailability of sources, market strategies on the part of cultural intermediaries (programmers, curators, commissioners, critics). These are just some of the issues in the discussion of a subject that seems, in its current stage, to be “performative” and “speculative” in character.

**KEYWORDS** PORTUGUESE PERFORMANCE ART; REENACTMENT; ARCHIVE; SOCIAL PERFORMANCE, PERFORMATIVE HISTORY; REPERFORMANCE

### RESUMO

A “História” da *arte da performance* portuguesa, género artístico que começou a ser assim nomeado a partir da década de 1960, encontra-se em processo de construção e só recentemente tem vindo a ser inscrita na História de Arte Portuguesa. Para além de contributos teóricos fragmentários e focados essencialmente no percurso de artistas singulares que, de modo geral, acabaram por ser mais conhecidos pelas suas práticas artísticas menos performáticas (poesia, pintura, escultura), esta “história em processo” tem-se vindo a construir e a ganhar visibilidade, quer por via de algumas exposições retrospectivas que têm apresentado alguns artistas e registos deste género artístico, quer por via de um retomado interesse por parte de novas gerações de artistas performers e de investigadores deste género. Várias questões se colocam a uma análise mais aprofundada e abrangente desta história que passam por dificuldades de hierarquização dos seus agentes e obras, indisponibilização das fontes, estratégias de mercado por parte de intermediários culturais (programadores, curadores, comissários, críticos), entre outras questões que ajudarão a problematizar esta história que parece caracterizar-se no seu estágio atual por um carácter “performativo” e “especulativo”.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** ARTE DA PERFORMANCE PORTUGUESA; REENACTMENT; ARQUIVO; PERFORMANCE SOCIAL, HISTÓRIA PERFORMATIVA; REPERFORMANCE



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

### 1. History-without history or a "performative" and "speculative" History?

The history of Portuguese performance, an artistic genre that only acquired this name in the 1960s, is not yet complete. This statement, which could be applied to all "art history", in the sense that there are no "completed" art histories, is particularly appropriate here because these practices in Portugal have not been transmitted as art to later generations either in the field of the arts or in academia. We can note, however, that this statement is not new. Ernesto de Sousa, one of the participants in this particular history, both as a creator questioning the concepts or as a mediator up to the 1980s, commented as follows on the "vanguards" of the time, which included Portuguese performance art:

**"the history of modern Portuguese culture is (still) a history without history, with no real internal evolution, without continuity. (...) The history of the avant-garde in Portugal is the history of an absence where asceticism and the senselessly heroic are mixed with an inevitable epigonism, and the rest — in the best cases — are of no importance. Following its logical meanderings is to collect the parts (only parts are possible) of a huge future patience" (Sousa 1998b, 134-135).**

The question that we can ask today is why was this history of Portuguese performance art, that has recently begun to be composed through contributions from several disciplines in Portugal (such as Art History, Anthropology, Sociology, Communication Sciences, etc.), so invisible, especially during the 1990s and the early 21st century? Why was it unknown even to many artists and cultural programmers whose work took international performance art into account?

It is a particularly relevant question in the current contemporary context, in which anyone interested in this history of Portuguese performance can access records of significant events within what may have been this "history" by, for example, doing a simple search on the internet. The digital file of PO.EX., created in 2005, or blogs such as "to



perform", created in 2008, are examples, among many others, of spaces where this can be done, and there are numerous videos and photographs available on multiple platforms accessible via the internet. A simple experiment would be to search YouTube for the excerpt from the performance *rotura* by Ana Hatherly (and filmed by Jorge Molder) in the Quadrum Gallery in 1977<sup>1</sup>, where we can see the performer ripping large sheets of white paper "stretched" vertically in space, as well as some of the setting and audience.

This expansion of the register and accessibility of a file (although more factual

*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (0'16"). Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

than informed) has been accompanied by the amplification of the concept of *performance*, which, having been frequently used since the 1960s has come to include several conflicting meanings, as well as a greater centrality in both its social and artistic dimension.

In fact, the concept of social performance laid its first genuinely systematic theoretical foundations in late 1950s' sociology with Erving Goffman's book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Later, in anthropology, Victor Turner introduced the dimension of performance and performativity through his analysis of rituals, especially in his book *Antropology of Performance* (1987), an analytical process later shared by the theorist and performer Richard Schechner, who would create "Performance Studies". This generated a progressive expansion of a conceptual process that continues today and has led more recent authors, such as Heilbrunn, to rate performance as the "new ideology of contemporary society" (Heilbrunn 2004a, 6). Other authors, such as Peter Burke (2005) and Jeffrey Alexander (2006), have advocated the need for an epistemological turning away from history and sociology towards performativity.

Similarly, this expansion of the concept with regard to its artistic dimension has been amplified not only by theory, but also by the emergence of Performance Studies as mentioned above, which addressed this concept's social aspect as much as its artistic one through a renewed interest in performance as an artistic practice and a means of expression and intervention, even incorporating re-enactment practices. Other factors that have contributed to the expansion of the concept are a renaming of practices (Goldberg 2001) that predate the stabilization of the term ("Futurism and Surrealism performances", etc.), and even to a significant presence of performance in all artistic and social spheres, from the most institutional to the most alternative, including political demonstrations.

This intense amplification of the concept has highlighted the fact that there is a history of Portuguese performance art, established as an alternative art world, where several projects and festivals have been set up, and where a number of national and international artists have performed. However,



*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (0'35").  
Video available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

this history is unique in presenting itself with the status of the artistic genre that it proposes to historicize, as an ephemeral performance that leaves us rare and scattered records and testimonies that have been progressively "collected" over the last two decades by new generations of researchers and programmers, curators or commissioners, as predicted by Ernesto de Sousa. In this sense, it is the history of performance that emerges as a performative history: it is under construction from the various fragments being reconstituted, recomposing an art history that, as it currently stands, is presented as being as factual as speculative.

## 2. Two cycles of performance art: new values?

To answer the question of why the history of this genre has been so hidden in Portugal, we need to analyze the development of the history of international performance. Taking the landscape of performance art in the United States as a reference (Golberg 2001), we can consider the relationship between the two cycles of performance art. The first is the cycle of avant-garde performance emerging from the modernist and avant-gard movements, from Futurism to Dadaism, in the early twentieth century, and stabilizing between the 60s and 80s, in *performance art*, along with *happening*, *situationism*, *fluxus*, etc. The other is the current cycle of performance that includes *re-enactments*, and which has been established through the visibility of an historical archive.

This visibility now manifesting itself, especially in the "live monumentalization" of the precursors of *performance art* from the 60s to the 80s, has its framework in the construction of an expanding archive. A case in point is that of Marina Abramović. This artist has been *re-performing pieces of performance avant-garde*, both her own work and the *performances* of other artists,<sup>2</sup> in museums such Tate Modern (2011), MoMA (2010) and the Guggenheim (2005). This expanding archive is produced by:

- > the academy and critics, inside or within the limits of so-called *Performance Studies*;
- > a more factual divulgation, in which the internet has also played an important role;
- > the development of retrospective exhibitions and their catalogues, e.g. the *DADA* exhibition (Pompidou, 2006) and *FUTURISM* (Tate Modern, 2009), where manifestos and some documents about the first performances were presented covering, more specifically, examples of *performance* up to the 80s. There was also the *A Theatre without Theatre* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona in 2007, later co-produced by the Berardo Collection Museum in Portugal, between 2007 and 2008.

All these dimensions of visibility have an archive value, and preserve a memory. This is through the selection and

systematization of the elements and artists to be preserved, which have an exposure and marketing value.

This process of integration into the art market, in particular through an intentional live *re-exhibition* by their precursors, may appear similar to the normal process of integrating all the movements of outsider art (as analyzed by Zolberg and Cherbo in *Outsider Art*, 1997). However, it was translated into ontological questioning by the avant-garde artists, extending the process initiated in the 80s, by the *transavantgarde*, from the mixture and recycling of referents to the repetition of *performances*.

The stage for *reperformance* (Taylor 2016, 189) is the museum itself and its framework is repetition (as opposed to notions of originality and ephemerality, set out by avant-garde *performance*), which gives this *performance* both visibility, theatricality and status as a spectacle. Through repetition, the *reperformance* gains an accurate formula, where effectiveness dilutes innovation, transgression and risk, since the script is known and its effects are somehow expected, even when the context and the audiences are different. This is a process that Richard Schechner calls a "conservative avant-garde"<sup>3</sup>, in the sense of a conservative and preserved avant-garde sustained by the recycling and recovery of the existing archive.

Paradoxically, while the discourse and practice of avant-garde *performance* have been based on a reflexive, "anti-spectacle" critique, the value of *reperformance* seems to be measured by the same criteria as those that some authors have called the "new performative ideology" (Heilbrunn 2004a, 6) of contemporary society. The effectiveness, visibility and spectacularity that exist in business, sports and conventional performative art models (Dubet 2004, Durand 2004, Heilbrunn, 2004b) are reflected by the Western formula that proclaims: *I am a performer and I will present, visibly, the effect of my performances*.

<sup>2</sup> Like Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Gina Pane, Joseph Beuys, Valie Export. According to the artist, in an interview on 18 Jan 2003 to Hannah Bernstein in New York (see [http://www.eca.usp.br/salapreta/PDF03/SP03\\_012.pdf](http://www.eca.usp.br/salapreta/PDF03/SP03_012.pdf)) reenactment at the museum serves her to "call into question again the whole idea of performance, repetition, recovering a work. To question whether we have the right to repeat the performance or not; how can we interpret someone else's work? It really is a historical question and I think I have the right to do that because I come from this generation. And this generation has been completely mystified; there are so many works that you hear are a totally different world compared to the stories told to explain them to become something else. And I want to remake them in some way, to see what the effects are."

<sup>3</sup> Paper presented in *Konstanzer Meisterklasse* about *Performativity*, on 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2011.

What intentionally tried to be off the market and out of the museum in *performance avant-garde* has now become an icon of the contemporary art market and can be measured by its social visibility in *re-performance*.

### 3. Performance art as a social dynamic

What may be interesting to discuss from this analysis of the history of international performance art is how this archive value, which can be expressed both in terms of market and history, can be thought of when repositioned in another performance art production site, as in the Portuguese experience.

In Portugal, there is no visible archive of performance art, though there is a fragmented and diffuse process occasionally mentioned in retrospective exhibitions of individual artists, usually better known for their artistic works (poems, paintings, etc.) than their performing practice.

However, there was indeed a history of performance art in Portugal between the 60s and 80s. It was developed by many artists in individual performances or in festivals (held in various regions of the country and outside Portugal) in a cycle that seemed to end, paradoxically, when the art market started up in the late 80s and the performers began to develop art market activities such as painting, poetry and sculpture.

Highlights in this process were a retrospective of *Arte Visual* (Visual Art) of Ana Hatherly's work, at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1992; *Poesia Gráfica* (Graphical Poetry) by Sallette Tavares at the Casa Fernando Pessoa in 1995 and the return of *Alternative Zero*, 20 years after the first edition in 1997, at the Casa de Serralves. In music, there was the reinterpretation of Jorge Peixinho themes by pianist Francisco José Monteiro at Belem Cultural Center (2006); and Melo and Castro's "rising again" (in his own words), with a retrospective exhibition *O Caminho do Leve* (*The Way of Light*) (2006), with new works and performances at the Serralves Museum. The exhibition-performance *ABECE* by João Vieira in the Pavilhão Centro de Portugal in Coimbra (2006) came from the same "resuscitation" perspective as



*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (0'40").  
Video available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

the Perve Gallery exhibition on Portuguese Surrealism (2006). Mário Cesariny attended the opening and wrote his famous phrase on a wall: *Ama como a estrada começa ...* (*Love like a road begins ...*). This same gallery also hosted a retrospective of the work of Alberto Pimenta in 2014. To this list, one can add the international initiatives on Performance (2006) that took place at both Culturgest and Serralves, as well as the ongoing project of PO.EX CD-ROM, or the current Casa das Artes in Coimbra, which has carried out an important role in disseminating Portuguese performance art produced between the 1960s and 80s.



*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (0'50").  
Video available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

Even the previously mentioned *A Theatre without Theatre* exhibition, which sought to bring Portuguese performance art into international history, was a very partial and incomplete list, merely reiterating some of the most visible and recognized pioneers, such as Santa Rita Pintor, Almada Negreiros and, from a later generation, Ernesto de Sousa. The exhibition failed to represent the collective expression of Portuguese performance from the 60s to 80s (see Blistène et al 2008). The same was found in the *Off the Wall* exhibition, presented in 2013 at the Serralves Foundation, which aimed to display the centrality of the body in art, and where Portuguese

performance was, once again, a minor feature. Even in the exhibitions that were an exception to this, such as *Anos 70, Atravessar Fronteiras* [70s, *Crossing Borders*], presented in 2010 at the Gulbenkian Foundation, or in the *Alternativa Zero* retrospective exhibition, also presented at Serralves in 1997, 20 years after the original, this fragmentary presence remains. It did so in the first because the visibility of the artistic events were subjected to a temporal reading of the 70s and diluted in a series of other activities that did not fit within the performance genre. In the second case, it was because it proved itself to be one of the major initiatives of the Portuguese avant-garde, without showing the transgressive framework that supported it.

This was highlighted by Ana Hatherly, when asked about the return of *Perspectiva: Alternativa Zero* to Serralves:

**“There are certain things that cannot be repeated. (...) *Alternativa Zero* was a highly subversive thing and there was no subversion in that Palace, in a house so tidy, so beautiful ..., resulting in a certain contradiction (...). What people have now is a pale image of what the other was, as well as the subversive action that the other had but this one now does not. What I see with some astonishment is that people still have some difficulty in understanding what it is. It follows that we need to shake these things up. Because the evolution of mentalities is slow” (Hatherly in Fernandes and Carbone, 2000).**

It is important to note that the same artist in her introduction to the *POEMOGRAFIAS* anthology in 1984 stated that, in her view, the Portuguese visual poetry movement, which in many ways communed with performance art (being developed by the same artists, such as Ana Hatherly and Melo e Castro, among others), was not yet in a position to go to down in “History”, i.e. the “Museum”. Firstly, this was

because it “had not yet been built” and, secondly, because “its relevance was still great” and it played an undeniably major role in Portugal at the time (Hatherly 1985).

However, the truth is that 20 years after the *Alternativa Zero* (1977), its return in *Perspectiva: Alternativa Zero* (1997) (Perspective: Alternative Zero) was justified by the then Director of the Serralves Museum, João Fernandes, with the same aims underlined by Ernesto de Sousa: perspective and prospective. The possibility of maintaining these same aims 20 years later was necessarily based on an academic (and museum) system that failed to consolidate an informed theoretical and empirical *corpus* that could spread the history of these events. This may justify the maintenance of artistic creation, especially during the 1990s, with pretensions towards research and experimentation starting from “zero” without, however, it seeming necessary to know what came before “zero”, or other practitioners, or existing artistic works that resembled them.

Let us remember that Mário Cesariny, referring to the first more performative art forms produced at the Café Hermínius, considered them ignorant of art history, particularly in relation to the Surrealist movement and Dadaism:

**“what did all those young people who appeared at the Café Hermínius in the 40s know of Surrealism and Dada? Absolutely nothing” (Quoted by Tchen 2001: 66).**

Ana Hatherly also recognized this historical ignorance when she began to research the Baroque period and realized that some contemporary processes were based on similar conceptual construction processes to those practised in that period. She stated that:

**“But what’s interesting about this is that we were working like them without having seen them. The biggest shock of my life was when I published those variations on Camoes’ Leonor, and realised that there were texts that were the same as those already written in the Middle Ages, except that I had never seen them. But the others were handwritten, while**



*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (0'55").  
Video available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

**mine were in typography” (Hatherly quoted by Fernandes and Corbone 2000).**

Ernesto de Sousa was interested in this subject a little for, as has been stressed, it justified the importance of the Portuguese avant-garde itself:

**“Did Ana Hatherly know that a year after publishing her structural alphabet (1967), Etiemble presented in a paper (only published in 73) a vocabulary proposal very similar to hers? That before the symbolically ripped up posters of**

*Alternativa Zero*, there had been a school of poster rippers? That Fontana had ripped up a thousand canvases before her performance at Quadrum? No matter. On the contrary, her case is — I repeat — exemplary (in a bad science fiction film tempting Eve tells the exemplary astronaut ‘They told me that you are a paradigm of virtue, and I’ve never met a paradigm’). Well, that’s it, Ana is a paradigm. And let’s say from the outset that those comparisons (like many done in the genre: the artists imitate the international avant-garde) are, in general, superficial and provincial. Because, well, the walls of Lisbon are the walls of Lisbon. And not just the delaceratedhopefilledwalls of April or May or ... that were also already there as well as the site where they disappeared daily” (1998: 206).

However, this movement has become invisible in Portuguese art history. Indeed, both New Dance in Portugal (in the 1980s), and the renewed performance (in 2000s) arose in response to international rather than national references (and even without the knowledge of the latter’s existence). This process was shown by Fernando Aguiar who, coming from performance, organised a single-street festival in the 90s called *Urban Action* to bring together these two artistic generations. This also revealed that the new generation of performing artists working in New Dance did not see themselves as linked to any national artistic platform and were completely ignorant of the history and precursors of performance art in Portugal:

“When I set up Youth Week, I invited a lot of young people and I was very surprised because they didn’t have the slightest idea of what had happened before. (...) They were convinced that they were inventing Performance at that moment, in the early 90s” (interview with Fernando Aguiar in Madeira 2007, 293).

This situation continued even after Aguiar’s event, as witnessed by Rita Castro Neves, who organized the Live Art Festival—Brrr in Porto in 2001 and 2002. She spoke of how “empty” she felt when she arrived in Portugal after having

curated a performance festival in Finland. This “emptiness” was reflected in her programmatic choices, justified as “more conservative” because it felt like they were inaugurating (and *fertilizing*) new artistic territory in Portugal:

“As there hasn’t been anything in Portugal like the *Brrr Festival* (...), well, there are performing arts festivals, but there it is, they are about the performing arts not performance art, aren’t they? The *Brrr Festival*, therefore, is a little “traditional” (...). The initial idea was therefore to put on a festival to show that performance is less touched on than other areas. It explores other areas, but it is still a performance (...) more about *live art*.” (Interview with Rita Castro Neves in Madeira 2007, 296).

The history of Portuguese performance art is not complete, but is rather still under construction (or recollection as predicted by Ernesto de Sousa). It does not even have a museum,<sup>4</sup> although many museums have held major shows by artists who practise it. Nevertheless, the genre existed, its first manifestations being included in futuristic and Surrealist exhibitions.<sup>5</sup> It re-emerged during the 1960s and continued up until the late 1990s, with a few sporadic creations since, performance with more Pop features, such as the groups *Homeostética* (*Homeoaesthetic*) and *Felizes da Fé* (*Happy in the Faith*) (Madeira 2012, 2015). It has recently been given a new lease of life in Portugal through the emergence of several alternative spaces exhibiting performance.<sup>6</sup> An example of this is *A Sala* (The Room), which began in the living room of Susana Chiocca and Anthony Lago’s home. From 2006, the

<sup>4</sup> This factor mentioned above by Ana Hatherly had also been pointed out by Ernesto de Sousa in a text on *Alternativa Zero*, where he referred to the absence of a modern art museum in Portugal: a situation that contributed, in his opinion, to the isolation or invisibility of the experimental arts in Portugal (Sousa 1998).

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the performing initiatives of Almada Negreiros that we can highlight, among others, at the Futurist Conference, we can also find some performative events in Surrealist exhibitions. An example of this is the exhibition held at Casa Repe in Lisbon in 1940, which sought to convey an unofficial vision of Portuguese art during the period of the “Portuguese World exhibition” and where António Pedro played with colourful balloons and quoted from the exhibition catalogue. Similarly, at the first exhibition of the “Surrealist Group of Lisbon” held in 1949 at Antonio Pedro and Antonio Dacosta’s atelier at N° 25 Travessa da Trindade, performance was again present. The climb to the exhibition site was included, as happened with the occupation of spaces by the international surrealists, as part of an action intended to startle, “people arrived with a completely exhausted air and found us dancing with an old articulated mannequin. And as we maliciously ignored them, ranting about all that effort, they cursed ‘such great aberrations’, and left even more breathless, sometimes slipping on the dimly lit steep stairs” (quoted by Tchen idem: 161).

<sup>6</sup> *Caldeira213*, *PÊSSEGOspráSEMANA*, *Artmosferas*, *Salão Olímpico*, *Apêndice*, *Mad Woman in the Attic*, *Uma Certa Falta de Coerência*, *A Sala*, the *Festival Trama*, *Colab*, *Faladura in the old ANCA* (now TECA), *Circular Festival Vila do Conde* (since 2005), *Mostra desNorte* (Mosteiro de São Bento da Vitória), *Fábrica dos Movimentos*, *O Espaço Mira* and *Mira Fórum*. 2010 saw the start of *Ciclo Epipiderme* (Braço de Prata), *Festival Line-Up Action* (Festival Internacional de Arte da Performance, Coimbra) CAPC in Coimbra 2010, the *Empty Cube*, *Ciclo Word of Mouth* FBAUP Porto, an event in Casa Com (Porto 2012), *Festival InShadow* — Festival Internacional de Vídeo, *Performance e Tecnologias*, as well as *Espaço Land*, organized by Miguel Moreira, in Lisbon, *Festival Imergência* (2011), *LineupAction* (Festival Internacional de Arte da Performance, Coimbra) 2010, the *And. Lab* de João Fiadeiro. More recently, there were more informal presentation in bars, such as *Clube Ferroviário* or galleries for specific trends such as the *Galeria Boavista* (in Lisbon). Some of these events were in, for example, *The Festival Silêncio*, *The Old School*. More institutional spaces such as Culturgest, Teatro Maria Matos, the São Luís Theatre, the Berardo Museum, the Serralves Museum and the Gulbenkian Foundation, are now also hosting some performance artists.

artists decided to share it with all those from various artistic disciplines and generations wanting to present performance, a process that also opened the way to re-enactment, a good example being that of António Olaio who, in 2008, described his presentation in that space:

**"Pictures are not movies 1984–2008, a performance version I did in La Corunã, Galicia, in 2006, and that I may possibly repeat in 2008, 2009 ... or 2020 ... like my performances in the 80s, has the tendency to go in the opposite direction to the cult of the ephemeral nature of performance, the appreciation of the unrepeatability of experience. Moreover, in fact, those first performances where I was dancing without leaving the same place remain as an underlying presence in all my work as an artist" (Antonio Olaio).<sup>7</sup>**

This re-enactment process has become increasingly common in Portugal. An initiative put on by Espaço Mira (the space for "more institutional" performance shows, which replaced *A Sala*), in December 2014, saw, along with new proposals, the revisiting of performances held in Portugal since the 80s. The impact of this "new return" to artistic performance in Portugal seems, however, to have remained minor in spite of the visibility of this early history of the Portuguese performance.

#### **4. What made this history of Portuguese Performance so invisible?**

I will present some hypotheses that can justify this "history without history":

- 1.** The fact that performative practices are ephemeral, episodic and provocative, in addition to the lack of recording. Some performative events were talked about by futurists and surrealists but there are others of which there is no record;
- 2.** A favorable national context for the invisibility and clandestinity of experimental art, which is the result of

a long, 50-year dictatorship, as well as the emergence, after the Democratic Revolution of 1974, of an alternative power that supported conservative art movements, especially realism. This restricted circulation and expansion of experimental artistic practices was often judged as "non-art" by many of the agents of the art world. There are numerous testimonies by these creators, who report on pieces being badly received by the public and critics: there are even reports of oral and physical assaults on performers;<sup>8</sup>

**3.** A structured art market that was late in consolidating (in the mid 80s), which led to performance festivals only taking place on the initiative of the artists, without support from the state or large private art institutions. *Alternativa Zero* in 1977 and the *Festival Performance-art* at Acarte in 1986 were exceptions;

**5.** The absence of a structured dissemination through an academic or museological system that did not reflect the more experimental Portuguese artistic situation, moulding itself to better suit an international art history. What should be highlighted here is the non-inclusion of these records in the curricula, for example, of the School of Fine Arts and the theatre and film schools.

**6.** A later "resurgent musealization" of Portuguese art performance in the 90s. This facet emerged more as one process, among others, which at first was regarded for its display of artistic singularities. It was only later, in the transition to the 2000s, that it began to account for its collective expression without, however, having been able to reproduce the period's interactive context transgression, and bringing a new status of rarity and luxury and less of transgression — as mentioned by Ana Hatherly when talking about the retrospective of *Alternativa Zero* in Porto in 1997.

**7.** An absence of a true transdisciplinary transversality in art in Portugal, the result of a certain closure in artistic disciplines, which prevails even though its agents are engaged in more experimental and

<sup>7</sup> <http://asala-antonioolaio.blogspot.com/publicado>. Posted on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

<sup>8</sup> In an interview with Maria João Fernandes and Carla Carbone Ana Hatherly states that: "They said that we were not artists, poets or anything. We were just playing around like a bunch of fools. They even threatened to beat Melo e Castro up!" (Fernandes and Carbone 2000).

transdisciplinary practices. *Alternativa Zero*, through Ernesto de Sousa, was an attempt to rupture this panorama;

**8.** The discontinuity of experimental artistic practice between generations (resulting from the absence of a Portuguese historical archive and reference models on performance);

**9.** Finally, the dispersion of the *performance art* "archive", which is now being sold at auctions and dispersed among different art collectors.

This process has led to the performance model in Portugal being, and continuing to be, essentially the international model (Roms and Edwards, 2013), and that has generated neither an archive, nor referential (and intergenerational) Portuguese models and, more importantly, has not allowed the realization of the social reflexivity effect that this art features, and the role it has played in Portuguese social change.

### **5. A Portuguese performance art based on the social performance of the Portuguese.**

This invisibility and silencing of history is created by a certain lack of collective memory, or in the words of José Gil of "no inscription", which he explains by a lack of public space where the issues of Portuguese collective identity can be reflected on deeply (Gil 2005, 24-34). Paradoxically, this seems to have become a theme running through some of the Portuguese art projects that include performance art at their core and seek reflectively to question social reality by focusing on counter-memory historical processes, or processes that seek to recover "suppressed stories that are located in particular ways, with some being easier to access than others" (Foster 1999, 197).

To some degree, by triggering such counter-memory processes, these artists seek to show that the dominant discourses of history reveal only a specific history that, as mentioned by Michel Foucault in his essay "The Historical a priori and the Archive" (1969), involves "a form of dispersion in

time, a succession mode, stability or reactivation" (1969, 27). This particular story of the dominant discourse is produced by determining the

**"conditions under which it may be employed, of imposing a certain number of rules upon those individuals who employ it, thus denying access to everyone else. This amounts to a rarefaction among speaking subjects: none may enter into discourse on a specific subject unless he has satisfied certain conditions or if he is not, from the outset, qualified to do so. More exactly, not all areas of discourse are equally open and penetrable; some are forbidden territory (*differentiated and differentiating*) while others are virtually open to the winds and stand, without any prior restrictions, open to all" (Foucault 1997, 28-29).**

To critically analyze this speech is to put into practice this author's "reversal principle", or to attempt to distinguish the forms of exclusion, limitation and appropriation (...) show how they are formed, in answer to which needs, how they are modified and displaced, which constraints they have effectively exercised, to what extent they have been worked on" (*idem*, 44-45).

In the last two decades, several artistic projects have emerged in Portugal in various disciplinary areas, which have sought to question Portuguese history, dealing with themes such as dictatorship, the Revolution, the Colonial War or the return of the colonists. These projects have the particularity of being produced, for the most part, not by the generation that participated in these historical processes but by later ones, the "post-memory" generation, as it has been called (Hirsh 2012). These projects make use of archival memories, photographic records and videos, collecting documentary or oral evidence, which often combine and cross over into performance. This has produced a relationship between performativity and historical memory, making a reconnection between social performance and artistic performance. Examples, among others, are the theatre work of Joana Craveiro and André Amalio, but also other artists such as Manuel Botelho, Filipa César, Vasco

Araújo, Angela Ferreira, Paulo Mendes, Susana Mendes Silva and Hugo Canoilas, among others, who, in the first person or even using performers, reconstruct, recreate, re-imagine a performed history juxtaposing factual and fictional elements.

This is the case with projects by Paulo Mendes, who has questioned the erasure of the memory of the Fascist regime and the figure of its dictator, Salazar, and even the existence of a Portuguese revolution in 1974, in a project series called *Did April 25 exist?* (1997) and *S de Saudade* (2007) in which the artist himself has also performatized the figure of Salazar. But it is also the case of projects like *People without a title* (2010), by Hugo Canoilas, in which pieces of a mural clandestinely dotted the streets of Lisbon (consisting of phrases referring to the various constraints put upon the people) that the artist had created for a Portuguese Museum (EDP Foundation). In this piece, the market value produced for the museum is replaced in the public space by a reflexive value, where each piece becomes a message that anyone can take home.

These art forms appear to be based more on recurring themes in Portuguese historical imagery, such as the dilution of memory or the practice of a discrete or semi-clandestine resistance, than on the historical archive of Portuguese *performance art* (contrary to what has happened, for example, to American performance art). The connection between the two cycles of *performance art* in Portugal only appears to be made through a kind of repertoire of social crisis, which is now returning.

These processes of *performance*, whether international or Portuguese, seem to indicate a need to rethink artistic *performance* as a social dynamic and social field. The reason for this is that the boundaries created during the autonomization of *performance art* as an *art world* — based on the distinction between *performance art* and *performing arts*, *performing art* and *social performance*, *performance* and theatricality, *performance* and spectacle, ephemerality and reproducibility, art process and art work, narrative and indeterminacy — seem, in a contemporary context of “structural hybridization” (Pieterse 2001), to be collapsing, confusing art even more with social dynamics.



*Rotura*, 1979 (created by Ana Hatherly). Video still (1'35").  
Video available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eghPc-w85f8>

The History of Portuguese Performance art, like a performance itself, thus gains “performative” traits, not only because it is constructed from subjective truths composed of fragmentary records of works and testimonies by their agents, but also because some of these artists are performing approaches to Portuguese history, from various artistic disciplines. They are building a philosophical and / or speculative historical approach, in the sense of “a self-conscious history, produced by authors at pains to justify their particular units of reference, their narrative organization of historical materials” (Fain 1970, 233). This “reorganization” makes the

intergenerational transmission of these histories possible for them, producing interrelations between different times and textualities, by mixing factual instances and subjective imagery. In short, the history of Portuguese performance art is a "performance" generated in a complex dynamic where the histories of an artistic genre are performatively (and creatively) fused with the social histories of the Portuguese, based on the debris of memories that have been transmitted from the past and those that will be transmitted to the future.

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**MONTAGE AS  
CURATORIAL  
PRACTICE: ARTISTIC  
PERFORMANCE  
AS AN OBJECT  
OF EXHIBITION**

## MONTAGE AS CURATORIAL PRACTICE: ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE AS AN OBJECT OF EXHIBITION

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### ABSTRACT

The main goal of this paper is to set out critical analysis on curatorship through a new conceptual gaze that it is external to this practice, such as the montage concept (Didi-Huberman, 2002), and to determine a theoretical line that links this concept to the performing arts as a museological object. In the first part, I present Malraux's and Warburg's works as examples for applying the montage concept to the study and proposal of curatorial ideas. This will be relevant to linking concepts as staged/ exhibited temporalities, displacement (space and time) or the exhibition as an anachronistic device. In the second part, I present two case studies that can be analyzed as examples in which the curatorial montage works as a performance of memories. These are, firstly, *Museum as Performance*, a curatorial programme at the Serralves Museum, which first took place, on 19 and 20 September 2015, and, secondly, the artistic project by Vânia Rovisco entitled *Re-Acting to time: Portuguese in performance art*, which has been held since 2014 as a workshop and a performance on the recovery of Portuguese performers and their memories.

**KEYWORDS** ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE, MUSEUMS, MONTAGE, CURATORSHIP, MEMORIES

### RESUMO

Este artigo pretende delinear uma análise crítica acerca da curadoria através do conceito de "montage" (Didi-Huberman 2002) e definir uma linha teórica que relacione esse conceito às artes performativas enquanto objecto museológico. Numa primeira parte, apresentam-se os trabalhos de Andre Malraux e de Aby Warburg como exemplos de como o conceito de "montage" poderá estar presente na concepção de propostas curatoriais. É também relevante a ligação deste conceito com a presença de diversas temporalidades 'em cena' nesta tipologia de exposições, articulando esta reflexão com os conceitos de exposição como dispositivo anacrónico e de "displacement" (espacial e temporal). Ao longo da segunda parte, introduzem-se dois casos de estudo que poderão ser analisados enquanto exemplos nos quais a "montage" curatorial se apresenta como uma performance de memórias. Estes são o Museu como Performance, um programa curatorial do Museu Serralves que decorreu, na sua primeira edição, entre 19 e 20 de Setembro de 2015 e o projecto artístico da autoria de Vânia Rovisco, *Re-Acting to Time: Portugueses na Performance Arte* que tem desenvolvido, desde 2014, a recuperação de performances, performers e das suas memórias através da realização de workshops nos quais estas passam por um processo de transmissão.

**PALAVRAS-PASSE** ARTES PERFORMATIVAS, MUSEUS, "MONTAGE", CURADORIA, MEMÓRIAS



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

## PART 1: MONTAGE<sup>1</sup> AS A CHOICE AND PERSPECTIVE: BETWEEN WARBURGIAN ATLAS AND THE IMAGINARY MUSEUM

1924. Hamburg. In his library, Aby Warburg starts his *Atlas Mnemosyne*. Five years later he dies, leaving an unfinished work — “a work that we can always recover, change or even restart” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, 58).<sup>2</sup> Documentation shows several black panels with images that are supposed to be a cartographic representation of his mental map and its effect on the conception of occidental civilization. Didi-Huberman states that “L’Atlas Mnemosyne is somehow an avant-garde object. It is not a rupture with the past, but it does break with the way in which the past is considered. Warburg’s rupture is to think about time as a montage of its heterogeneous elements” (Didi-Huberman, 2002, 482),<sup>3</sup> or, as stated by Victor Silva, “If there exists a Warburgian historical conception, in our time it means a montage of images and knowledge, where the contradictions and ambivalences of time complete a kind of an essential anachronism as a condition for the “renaissance” of history, art and culture” (Silva, 2003, 35).<sup>4</sup> *Atlas Mnemosyne*’s set of images, reproduced through photography, was not only a cartography but also a montage, a process made of choices, selections, deconstructions, disassembly and re-assembly.

1965. Paris. André Malraux publishes the revised version of *Voices of Silence*, which became the *Imaginary Museum*. Malraux questions the place of the artwork within the museum, an institution that marks the 19th and 20th centuries due to its capacity for legitimizing art, and thus becomes the only way that the public can contemplate it: “The museum imposes a discussion about the representations of the world that have been brought together within it, questioning what it is, exactly, that brings them together” (Malraux, 1965, 12).<sup>5</sup>

Above all, the author challenges us to construct our own museum, an imaginary museum, where we could choose our artworks and the way that we would like to contemplate them: “Summon, in one’s imagination, all the masterpieces” (Malraux, 1965, 13).<sup>6</sup> As we might have seen, not all the artworks have a place in the museum, so the only way to join them is in an

imaginary place, a place Malraux classifies as questioning, and not as a statement. This perspective promotes abstract thought, but it is also a montage, revealing choices, new relations, new fragments and lines of interpretation. Photographic reproduction, as it appears in Warburg’s works, is a way to promote the independence of these new relationships and “in-betweens”, fostering the creation of new and revolutionary interpretations.

Although their context is different, both Warburg and Malraux propose a new way of seeing and understanding not only art, but also its meaning within western and human cultures and consciences. These proposals take the curatorial idea of art exhibition/ display (private or public) as their starting point, from which interpretations are made, mainly through the memories present in the objects and works. As such, montage may be an interrelative resource of historical, cultural and institutional narratives: “To re-read the world: to relate all the distinct fragments in a different way, re-distribute its divulgation, the means of guiding or interpreting it, as well as respecting, reassembling it without its impoverishment” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, 59).<sup>7</sup>

### Curatorial montage and temporalities

#### a) Montage and Memory

Returning to Warburg, *Atlas Mnemosyne* supposedly aimed to invoke this cartography, but it also tried to promote an exercise of dialogues, relations and links between fragments and memory pieces. Mnemosyne was a Greek goddess, mother of the nine muses, which represent the starting point of artistic creation: Calliope (epic poetry), Erato (romantic poetry), Euterpe (music), Melponemi (tragedy), Terpsichore (dance), Thalia (comedy), Ourania (science and erudition), Polymnia (hymns), and lastly, for the preservation of the memory and oblivion,

<sup>1</sup> The concept of montage in the sense of G. Didi-Huberman arises as a methodological practice whose knowledge is constructed from several perspectives (including distant in time and space) and as a practice, itself, dielectric. It is focused on the analysis of the image and the visual culture, in which the author defends that it imposes us a position. You can know more about this concept in these works: *Quand les images prennent position (L’Œil de l’histoire, 1)*, Paris, Minuit, 2009; *Remontages du temps subi (L’Œil de l’histoire, 2)*, Paris, Minuit, 2010 ou *Atlas ou le gai savoir inquiet (L’Œil de l’Histoire, 3)*, Paris, Minuit, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

<sup>5</sup> Translated by the author from Portuguese version of the original.

<sup>6</sup> Translated by the author from Portuguese version of the original.

<sup>7</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

Clio (history). Each of the photographic reproductions that are exhibited in the black panels of the Warburg library recalls one of these muses: “Warburg’s research focused on memory. It is in memory, Mnemosyne, that the two poles between which Warburg inserts artistic creation are created: firstly, quiet contemplation, or Apollonian; secondly, orgiastic ecstasy, or Dionysian” (Warnke, 2010, 138).<sup>8</sup>

After this, there is an almost ontological proximity between the process of montage, from the Warburgian perspective, and the very nature of memory, as a fragmentary process and as an event. Didi-Huberman states: “Memory comes from an assembling and reassembling process (montage): it deals with the heterogeneous elements (information) and finds failures in the historical continuity (intervals) so as to create links between them: it interprets — and it works with — the interval of the field” (Didi-Huberman, 1998, 10).<sup>9</sup>

From this perspective, the concepts of *circulations* (links) and *intervalles* (in-between spaces), as well as the relationship between the montage process and memory process, introduce another notion: the idea of experiencing time as movement, both individual and subjective, a dance among meanings. In this case, we may assume that Warburg certainly comes up not only as an author who guides the whole curatorial montage process, but also as a choreographer of this act or gesture in movement.

How are these processes presented in an exhibition space? What is the role of these distinct temporalities, and how can they be related to this montage and memory process?

### b) Temporal unities in coexistence

This is the point at which the object of this essay emerges: the curatorial context in which performing art practices become a museological object. In general, and in relation to the concepts of montage and memory, arts have been a way to structure, organize, select and display historical narratives, tendencies and styles as well as cultural and collective memories. What is the space and temporal place of the exhibition? Is the exhibition a space, or can it also be a temporal conjunction? It is possible to assume that, independent of

different gazes or perspectives, there is a common element that connects performing arts and exhibitions, such that both emerge from the junction between space(s) and time(s)?

In the specific case of performing arts, curatorial contexts and their material and immaterial components as exhibition objects, we might even notice multiple and coexistent temporalities.

The curatorial approach to displaying performing arts tries to engage with events that take place in several moments. These events include the moment of the artistic performance, of its reception when it is presented, of the subsequent production and later conservation of its fragments, of the timings of the records made and, lastly, of thinking about the moment in which all these elements will form part of the memories of the visitors. Moreover, the nature of the exhibition, which normally lasts for a long period and often consists of a permanent and static display, is in strong contrast to the duration of the performance, its ephemeral nature, its circumscription and its openness to external factors, such as the presence of an audience.

In his most recent book, Hal Foster makes explicit reference to this variety and multiplicity of temporal unities in presence, not only in the artworks of contemporary creation, but also in their curatorial context: “(...) Any artwork holds together various times of production and reception, not only as we confront it in the present of our own experience, but also as other moments are inscribed in the work as it passes through history” (Foster, 2015, 140).

Throughout this implicit idea of coexistence, the image of something in constant movement and circulation emerges — “the movement conceived as both object and method, as syntagma and paradigm, as characteristic of works of art and even as a marker of knowledge that purports not to say anything” (Didi-Huberman, 1998, 10).<sup>10</sup> We then return to Didi-Huberman’s perspective about montage, whereby it is also considered a process of movement. This examination of curatorial practice in performing arts should be analyzed within this context.

<sup>8</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

<sup>9</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

<sup>10</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

Warburg's concept echoes these perspectives though the notions of disassembly and re-assembly of works through their fragments, remains, memories and reproductions. Regarding this process and its action in temporal discontinuity, Didi-Huberman suggests that "montage — at least in the sense that interests us here — is not the artificial creation of a temporal continuity based on discontinued 'plans' arranged in sequences. It is, instead, a way of visually unfolding the discontinuities of time at work throughout its whole history" (Didi-Huberman, 2002, 47).<sup>11</sup>

When theatre and dance museums acquire collections or objects, they tend to disassemble the material specimens: each object from theatre or dance works is separated and is part of different collections within the institution. In addition to being dismembered, these works are decontextualized, exhibited as distinct objects and subjects. Again, if we have to refer to the time in which they are presented, this will be an anachronistic challenge: its temporality, where different temporal units coexist, will be intangible and indefinable. Ultimately, we might say that each of these pieces can be found inside an atemporal dome.

Moreover, the process of incorporation in contemporary art museums, principally of performance-based art, involves an extensive description of the work and its creative process as well as instructions from the artist and the documentation for the work, including photos, videos, or even objects. This documentation can be later used to display these works in the context of the curatorial programming through *re-enactments*. Hal Foster raises a very pertinent point in relation to this process: "Not quite live, not quite dead, these reenactments have introduced a zombie time into these institutions. Sometimes this hybrid temporality, neither present nor past, takes on a gray tonality, not unlike that of the old photographs on which the reenactments are often based, and like these photos the events seem both real and unreal, documentary and fictive" (Foster, 2015, 127). This hybrid temporality in the context of contemporary art museums poses a new question: what is the meaning of *contemporaneity* in artistic practice and in its own temporality?

This curatorial approach creates several problems for the chronological line that often steers the itinerary of the exhibition. To which time or temporality should we allocate these exhibitions? As they emerge as platforms upon which different temporalities take place, exhibitions themselves become anachronistic devices.

### Anachrony and displacement

Anachrony. Etymologically, it means something that it is against time or against its time, depending on the context in which it is mentioned. Regarding performing arts exhibitions, the co-existence of antagonistic elements, objects, works or questions introduces the notion of an anachronistic dimension to the realms of curatorship and art.

In this context, it is important to introduce the idea of displacement. The displacement process is one of the main notions that Andre Malraux presents in *Imaginary Museum*. It concerns the musealization process in which the object loses its original function, becoming an artwork inside a museum. Malraux considers that the museum is always a place of discussion, arguing that each object is affected by time, by its reception by visitors and by the setting of the exhibition space (illumination, display, dialogue with other objects, etc.).

These processes are invariably related to the artwork's own authenticity and to the effect that the museum place exerts, in its multiple meanings. This takes us to the Benjaminian concept of "aura" — "a strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be" (Benjamin, 2006, 23) — as well as to the exhibition value: "Art history might be seen as the working out of a tension between two polarities within the artwork itself, its course being determined by shifts in the balance between the two. These two poles are the artwork's cult value and its exhibition value (...) Just as the work of art in prehistoric times, through the exclusive emphasis placed on its cult value, became first and foremost an instrument of magic which only later came to be recognized as work of art, so today, through the exclusive emphasis placed on its exhibition

<sup>11</sup> Translated by the author from the original.

value, the work of art became a construct [Gebilde] with quite new functions” (Benjamin, 2006, 25). Malraux, on the other hand, admits that the museum is not responsible for the loss of each object’s soul, instead providing each object with new one (Malraux, 1965, 173).

Going back to the performing arts, it is important to ask when and how they lost their aura. If artistic practices are submitted to a process of displacement and disassembling when they are in the museum, how could they be transmitted or exhibited? And where does the objectual component lies? Does it reside in the scene? In the text? Or in the critics after the presentation?

## **PART 2: MEMORY GAMES: TWO PROPOSALS OF MONTAGE OF TIMES AND ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE MEMORIES**

The next two projects are relevant to this discussion and reflection on curatorial practice in the transmission and exhibition of artworks, with a focus on performance art. In both examples, memory is in the centre of the programming or artistic aims, and they present themselves as a starting point and a resource for a perspective in which the methodological practice of montage should be analyzed.

They show two different perspectives, one institutional and another as part of an artist-driven process, in which memory processes related to performing arts are re-activated.

### **— *Museu Como Performance*<sup>12</sup>, Serralves Museum, 19-20 September 2015**

At first sight, and due to its name, the curatorial programme *Museum as Performance* could be considered to be a practical approach to the aforementioned practices. However, could a museum and this curatorial project be a montage device? Or is this merely a challenge to its institutional structures? Or perhaps an unachievable desire?

*Museum as Performance*, which was held at the Serralves Museum on 19 and 20 September 2015, was a collective curatorial programme by the Museum’s curators, Cristina

Grande, Ricardo Nicolau and Pedro Rocha. As part of this programme, artists used not only the museum space for their works, but also the library, atrium and gardens. This was the first instance of the relationship between performance and museum being questioned. The programme brought different national and international artists to Serralves, and even artistic collectives who are engaged with performance art or use performance as their main resource for artistic creation. The museum asked these artists to rethink the relationship between a contemporary art museum and performance as an artistic practice, while questioning how the museum can secure its collection, documentation, preservation, authenticity, display or even its presentation to the audience. Some works, such as *Exile* by Anastasia Ax and Lars Siltberg, tackle these questions as central themes. This work highlights the destruction and deconstruction process of ephemeral and historical or artistic narratives, while using the montage concept as a resource for reconstructing the tatters of performance, and act that is both political and artistic. Some artists presented the body in the exhibition space (New Noveta, *Chvalia Abutak Amethyst*, or Vivo&Loreto Martinez Troncoso, *Ao Vivo*), while others focused on the relationship between performance and visual art (Laria Hassabi, *Solo* [2009]), or between time and repetition (Kovács/O’Doherty, *Increments* or Alex Cechetti, *Walking Backwards*).

Nevertheless, this programme aimed to recover a programmatic, curatorial and artistic memory related to the founding moments of the Museum and its historical affinity with the practice of performance. The Serralves Museum intended *Museum as Performance* to become a resource for recovering such memories, while using contemporary creations to invoke these memories, which would be not only spatial or institutional in nature, but also bodily, including visitors’ memories and even those of the museum staff. In a way, some of these stances and objectives have now been reversed, as this programme presents its these as a contemporary issue while trying to recover an artistic practice from the 90s, and to legitimate the gesture of incorporation of these works within museum collections. This curatorial project can be seen as a subtle way to reflect how

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.serralves.pt/pt/actividades/o-museu-como-performance/>

memories of other programmings and their times and places can return to the daily life experience of an institution. This purpose is based on the connection of these fragments, which permit different interpretations of the artworks presented in each edition, while also making it possible to problematize the Serralves Museum's contemporaneity through proposals for artistic creation. In this way, I recognize a methodological practice of open montage in this curatorial programme, even if this is not conscious. This programme provokes a discussion and, at the same time, it makes manifest this memory game which it is its main prop.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that the Serralves Museum is looking for its place in the international arena, not only through dialogue between national and international artists, but also through the parallels between this programme and those of institutions such as the Tate Modern (London) or the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), in which performance has been gaining prominence and audience numbers are increasing. Through this programme, the Serralves Museum is consolidating its place as a point of reference in the visual arts panorama, and becomes a pioneer as a performance museum, or as a museum that exhibits performance artworks. As such, the museum is fueled by the critical gaze that these artists turn upon the institution.

This curatorial and programming process of incorporation and legitimation of memories and artistic practices transforms artistic performance into one of the more desirable types of contemporary art. Regarding this transformation, Hal Foster states that “[t]he institutionalization of performance is also evident in the creation of new curatorships and biennials. This can be seen negatively as the recuperation of alternative practices or positively as the recovery of lost events, yet this does not explain the sudden embrace of live events in institutions otherwise dedicated to inanimate art (...) Today, it seems, there is not enough present to go around: for reasons that are obvious in a hyper-mediated age, it is in great demand too, as is anything that feels presence. (...) What is staged is less a historical performance than an image of that performance; the performance appears as a simulation, one destined to

produce more images for circulation in the media” (Foster, 2015, 128-129).

Hal Foster emphasizes, in this context, the first idea of the Didi-Huberman concept of montage, arguing that in visual culture in which performance is also an image, its institutionalization and incorporation in the museum collections take away its transgressive characteristic and social criticism component. This image is not integrated into any dimension of time — Foster defines it as “zombie time” — and is used, as I have mentioned before, to accomplish the strategies of the institution and follow the international trend towards the museum as experience.

This curatorial project is, perhaps, an “in-between” place. Although it has political, economic and cultural lines to follow, with certain artistic creations presented as a result, it gives the visitor and spectator the opportunity to discover them through their own gaze and these performances become the starting point for the problematization of the institution.

— *Re-acting to time: the Portuguese in performance, Vânia Rovisco/AADK Portugal*<sup>13</sup>

Vânia Rovisco's *Re-acting to time: the Portuguese in performance art* launched in 2014 with a workshop and public presentation at Arpad Szenes — Vieira da Silva House Museum. During 2015, fifty years after “the first official Portuguese happening”, called *Concerto e Audição Pictórica* and held at the *Divulgação* gallery, there were several “Transmission” workshops held in different places around the country and in Spain, in which Vânia Rovisco and the participants tried to recover some Portuguese performances, such as *Il Faut Danser Portugal*<sup>14</sup> by António Olaio (1984) and *Identificación*<sup>15</sup> by Manoel Barbosa (1975).

Some relevant concepts emerge from its theoretical framework, such as “transmission”, “actualization” and “body-archive”. “Transmission” was assumed as a creative process, i.e. Vânia Rovisco presents herself as

<sup>13</sup> For more information about this project, see its official website: AADK Portugal. *Re-Acting to Time, About* [consult. 5 April 2016] <http://www.aadkportugal.com/reacting-to-time-en/about/>

<sup>14</sup> Performance by António Olaio, presented in 1985 at the *Art et Revolution* exhibition at the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris. António Olaio holds a palette of colours in each hand while dancing, semi-naked, always in the same place and with repetitive movements. He appears with a painted face and glasses.

<sup>15</sup> As stated by Marçal 2017, “The artwork consisted of two parts. Outside the festival's building, the artist walked around in circles, producing a spiral with his movement, which started from the centre and continued onto the edges of the space. During the movement, he carried two tins of acrylic cobalt paint. Once the walk was over, the artist poured the paint from one tin to the other, repeating that action at least five times. After the last pouring, the artist walked into the festival

a bridge between the creator's/performer's memories and the participants, who do not need to have any dance experience or education. Over the course of a week, Vânia Rovisco transmits these memories through movement and corporeal gestuality. This transmission is enacted from the author's body to the bodies of the participants in the workshop, embodying both their contemporaneity and memories of the creator. These memories are not only about the performance work, but also about the process in which creator is involved. Moreover, the bodies of the participants are not the same as those of the 1970s or 80s; they now have gestures or sensitivities that make them bodies of the present. The choreographer Vânia Rovisco does not inscribe any specific dance language into the bodies of participants, which are exclusively shaped by the transmission of memories.

"Actualization" is the notion that follows the "transmission" process. In this context, Vânia Rovisco aims to recover these memories from the "original source" of these performances in order to actualize rather than re-perform them. She wants to actualize these memories in contemporary bodies, both of new performers and of members of the audience. The official website, *Re-acting to time: the Portuguese in performance art*, wants to update the specific bodily memory of those early experiments, from accessing the source of that information to updating it, communicating it directly and presenting it publicly.

Through these two processes (transmission and actualization) we may set the structure to enact a body-archive in two ways: on the one hand, in a research *corpus*, in its etymological origin from the Latin, meaning a set of archived memories that are transferred into knowledge, and, on the other hand, a corporeal archive, in which memories are archived through bodily action, movement and transmission. As stated by André Lepecki (2010) the body emerges as an archive of memories, not only of the recovered ones but also the ones that are created; in this context, the body is a resource and an important tool in this transmission process, which is developed from body to body and not through a technological record.

*Re-acting to time* opens up many possibilities, as it contradicts the institutional gaze that surrounds these processes in the transmission of performing arts. It embraces the artist and the curator inside a montage process, not only through its disassembling and reassembling senses, but as a process of recovering and interrelating perspectives.

### Final considerations

These two case studies are not comparable to the Warburg project with its black panels that mirrored an art history in fragments, nor would they reflect what Malraux would put in his imaginary museum, but they contain elements that bring them closer, from a 21st-century perspective, to the concepts they both developed (as previously explained in this paper) of making curatorial space or artistic space, places where memories, criticism and questions emerge.

Although we cannot structure the analysis of these case studies in the purist sense of the concept of montage itself, I think they are both approaches, albeit unconscious, to this concept in several senses. In a general sense, both are presented as works and unfinished perspectives under construction, and I would again highlight Didi-Huberman's own words: "A work that we can always recover, change or even restart" (Didi-Huberman, 2009, 58). On the other hand, both allow the problematization of their own objects, whether curatorial or artistic, as Malraux mentioned in the conception of the Imaginary Museum.

Finally, but no less relevant, this analysis chimes with Didi-Huberman's concept of montage as something in movement. Those who had the opportunity to see and participate in the Serralves programme could experience a kind of dance between different spaces and different times, performed precisely between the harmonious meeting of the institution and the artistic proposals, as well as at the end of the whole cycle. As such, they could freely establish the relations and connections

building, followed by the audience. The second part of the performance started as he passed through the door. It consisted of four performers, two male and two female, walking in a straight line while performing mechanical gestures. These performers followed a very rigorous score prepared by the artist, which was aimed at recreating an atmosphere of oppression and aggression, as performed by the male performers, followed, in the last moments of the performance, by the cathartic expression of liberation by the female performers. This catharsis was embodied through a disruption in time and space—where before there was silence at the end of the performance the violence of crashing mirrors echoed around the room. This motif of violent liberation, which stood in sharp contrast with the pacifist liberation from the then Portuguese regime, is a direct consequence of the artist's participation in the colonial war, which ended with the restoration of free speech".

that each performance established with the rest and with the questions that the museum put to them. Like Warburg's black panels, the connections between the fragments were also established throughout the experience. In the case of Vânia Rovisco's project, in addition to the very meaning of the movement implicit in artistic creation, choreography assumes a mediatory role that allows the transmission of the original author's memories and its passage to the bodily experience of who participated in the workshop process and also to the audience's critique. In a more visible way than in the first, the memories are presented as an element in continuous movement, a constant interpretation of each fragment and a multiplicity of experiences of this movement by each agent of the process, including Vânia Rovisco herself.

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**rites of passage:  
a conservator's  
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## RITES OF PASSAGE: A CONSERVATOR'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE INCORPORATION OF PERFORMANCE ARTWORKS INTO MUSEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Despite the growing interest in performance artworks, museums worldwide still show some reservations when it comes to incorporating such works into their collections. This paper aims to explore the conservation challenges that these works present for museums.

Through the analysis of the relevant literature, the practices and theories surrounding the conservation of performance-based artworks are contextualized and examined. Notions of the conservation of performance artworks are reassessed in the light of ideas relating to archives and repertoires (Taylor 2008), which can be considered essential to the study of these works. By combining reflections about performance art acquisition and performance art conservation, a new conceptual framework based on an expanded view of conservation, which regards preservation as a process that includes presentation strategies, is proposed. In order to illustrate this examination, two case studies are presented as examples: *sexyMF* (2006) by Ana Borralho and João Galante (f. 2002, Lisbon) and *Ad Verbum* (2010), by Vasco Araújo (b. 1975, Lisbon).

**KEYWORDS** PERFORMANCE ART, MUSEUMS, CONSERVATION, INCORPORATION, DOCUMENTATION

### RESUMO

Apesar do interesse recente na aquisição de obras de arte da performance, a incorporação destas obras em coleções museológicas ainda é uma prática relativamente rara. Este artigo procura refletir sobre os desafios que estas obras apresentam à sua preservação, nomeadamente em coleções museológicas. Neste sentido, através da análise de bibliografia relevante, práticas e teorias da conservação de obras de arte de natureza performativa são contextualizadas e examinadas. A conservação destas obras é reconsiderada de forma a espelhar a dicotomia entre arquivo e repertório (Taylor 2008), que é considerada essencial para a arte da performance. Desta forma, repensa-se a conservação e incorporação destas obras a partir uma visão expandida da conservação, considerando que estratégias de apresentação podem promover a conservação efetiva destas obras. Para ilustrar esta reflexão, apresentam-se exemplos de dois casos de estudo: *sexyMF* (2006), de Ana Borralho and João Galante (f. 2002, Lisboa) e *Ad Verbum* (2010), de Vasco Araújo (n. 1975, Lisboa).

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE** ARTE DA PERFORMANCE, MUSEUS, CONSERVAÇÃO, INCORPORAÇÃO, DOCUMENTAÇÃO



*Because rites of passage are essentially about change, there can be no exact way or absolute method for creating them. Rather, opportunities exist for embracing that which is locally true and for healing that which has been torn individually and collectively.*

(Meade 1996, xxiv)

Despite performance art's originary stance against art commodification and institutionalization performance artworks are slowly finding their way into museum collections. From the Museum of Modern Art, in New York, which launched a curatorial department dedicated to Media and Performance Art, focused on the exhibition and preservation of *time-based media*,<sup>1</sup> to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, which recently devoted a full year to the presentation of several performances by the artist Tino Sehgal,<sup>2</sup> amongst other efforts by a number of museums worldwide, the presence of performance-based works inside the museum sphere has been growing, challenging museum procedures and long-accepted notions about this art genre. But in which ways do art museums have to change in order to accommodate this new art form inside their collections? What are the *rites of passage* that these works undergo in their transition to the museum space?

This paper aims to reflect upon these questions, especially regarding the conservation of such works. In this context, two case studies from the Portuguese scene are presented as examples: *sexyMF* (2006) by Ana Borralho and João Galante (f. 2002, Lisbon) and *Ad Verbum* (2010) by Vasco Araújo (b. 1975, Lisbon).

### 1. Performance art and conservation

Performance is an art genre that appeared in the 1960s as a reaction against the art market, commodification and capitalism (Goldberg 2001). It “has been considered as a way of bringing to life the many formal and conceptual ideas on which the making of art is based” and at the same time, “has become a catch-all for live presentations of all kinds” (Bishop 2012). Generally speaking, performance artworks can be defined as unrepeatable events, specific in time and space, which remain only in the memories of those who experienced them and/or in documents, ultimately becoming a trace of past experience.

Performance art's early stance against commodification led to the opposition between this art form and its perpetuation in time (Phelan 1993, 146). The main feature of the antithetical dichotomy between performance art and conservation (or preservation, or documentation)<sup>3</sup> consists of the different bonds that these concepts have with time. If conservation's ultimate goal is to preserve cultural heritage for the future, performance art exists only in the present, is untraceable, and “becomes itself through disappearance” (Phelan 1993, 146). If documentation aims to

<sup>1</sup> For more information, please consult <https://www.moma.org/explore/collection/departments/media>

<sup>2</sup> The curatorial program called “A Year At The Stedelijk: Tino Sehgal”, and held at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam between 1 January and 31 December 2015, included the presentation of 16 *constructed* situations, which occurred in several spaces of the museum. For more information, please consult: <http://www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/a-year-at-the-stedelijk-tino-sehgal>.

<sup>3</sup> In performance studies and conservation literature these terms are used interchangeably.

record, preserve and store the intangible (and tangible) features of an artwork in its multiple representations, performance art is non-representable and non-describable by any means of language.

This clear opposition is one of the reasons why it is only now that museums are opening their doors and collecting these works (Wheeler 2003). At the same time, as museum incorporation policies change, questions about the preservation of these works are starting to emerge.

### 1.1. On conservation

In recent years, the notion of conservation as an object-oriented discipline has been reviewed by several authors, including the conservator Salvador Muñoz Viñas, who argued in his *Contemporary Theory of Conservation* (2004, Routledge) that the emphasis in conservation has changed from objects to subjects and that “objectivism in conservation is replaced by certain forms of subjectivism” (Muñoz Viñas 2004: 147). Many authors (Macedo 2008, among others), considering the trend of art dematerialization as a growing reality, also suggest that modern preservation needs to focus on the artwork’s intangible features, inasmuch as the core of the artist’s intention lies on them, rather than on materiality. Moreover, several research projects working on the preservation of performance-based artworks have emerged. Amongst other efforts, namely in the museum community, some projects held in cooperation with Tate Galleries are worth exploring: “Performance and Performativity” (2011-2012), “Collecting the Performative: A research network examining emerging practice for collecting and conserving performance-based art” (2012-2014), and “Performance at Tate: Collecting, Archiving and Sharing Performance and the Performative” (2014-ongoing). Similarly, in The Netherlands, academic projects such as “New Strategies in the Conservation of Contemporary Art” (2009-2015) and “New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art” (NACCA) (2015-ongoing) were seminal for the development of this subject within the field of conservation. In Portugal, although there has been a growing

awareness of the conservation of contemporary art, such as installations and multimedia works, there have been no visible efforts regarding the preservation of Portuguese performance art, with the exception of some scattered academic studies on art history (Metello 2007, Brandão 2016), cultural studies, and sociology or anthropology (Madeira 2007, for example).

Documenting Portuguese performance-based artworks from the 1960s is becoming an increasingly difficult task as memories of the events fade away, and due to the fact that there was no tradition of documentation among the artistic community. Artists from the 1980s onwards, on the other hand, tend to produce their own documentation, as documentation resources are democratized and the importance of documenting these ephemeral works has been made visible through the years. This difference nourishes the discussion about the purpose of documenting these works and the roles of the *actants* — agents or actors that may change an artwork’s trajectory (Saaze 2013, Vall *et al* 2011) — involved in the documentation process. After all, documentation can comprise several documents, produced by several different people inside and outside the art institution, in different media, and for different purposes (including loans, conservation, exhibitions, among others).

Relevant literature often offers retrospective remarks about the documentation process while trying to solve some problems. Those remarks (even if retrospective) are, however, rare,<sup>4</sup> as much of the relevant literature focuses on the results of documentation, and the documented works are usually material works with some performative elements. As such, the study and development of strategies for preserving performance-based artworks is still at an early stage. At the same time, this is also happening because only now are museums collecting such works, so that the significance of this debate is becoming increasingly pertinent.

<sup>4</sup> In conservation literature very few papers discuss the documentation process of performance-based artworks. Relevant literature is usually focused on the documentation of selected case studies or on discussing documentation techniques, such as artists’ interviews (Beerens *et al* 2012), or even documentation frameworks or projects. More recently, some publications, such as those by Vivian van Saaze (2009, 2013) and Annet Dekker *et al* (2010), were dedicated to reflecting upon the documentation process. The special issue of *Revista de História da Arte, Performing Documentation in the Conservation of Contemporary Art* (Lisbon: 2015; available online at: <http://revistaharte.fcsh.unl.pt/rhaw4/RHAW4.pdf>) is one of these publications. In this case, some authors rethink the documentation process of performance-based artworks (for example Gordon, 2015; Nogueira and Marçal 2015; Saaze 2015; Stigter 2015; and Vall 2015), while making some remarks on problems with documenting performance-based artworks inside art institutions (Barbuto 2015; Müller 2015; Nogueira and Marçal 2015; and Saaze 2015).

## 1.2. Collecting performance art and rethinking the role of museums in their preservation: documentation and re-enactments

Indeed, the issue surrounding performance art documentation, its re-enactments and its place in art institutions first emerged with the growing interest in performance preservation that occurred in the mid-1990s. There were several aspects associated with this newly identified issue. First, a strong nostalgic response to performances held in the 1960s emerged, leading to a “process of historicization” of these works. The idea that these works were presented with a clear intent against commodification and in favour of an absolute ephemerality led to their resurrection into “art history” and their re-performance “as a generational legacy” (Chalmers 2008). The relationship between art institutions and performance art shifted as they started to contribute towards the historicization of this genre (Chalmers 2008). One example of the important contribution made by institutions is the exhibition “Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object”, held in 1998 (Schimmel *et al* 1998). A consequence of this growing tendency for the acceptance of performance art inside the museum space was the occurrence of multiple performance presentations and re-enactments of past events held since then. Laurensen and Saaze explain that, however, performance art only started being collected by museums and related institutions in the 2000s. According to these authors, until that time, collecting performance artworks meant acquiring their material remains, instead of ensuring the possibility of their re-performance (Laurensen and Saaze 2014). This happened “first due to the attachment of the museum, the market and conservation practice to the material object, and second, the perception of performance as being conceptually bound to the live ephemeral event” (Laurensen and Saaze 2014: 27-28). Even with a growing number of performance artworks being acquired by institutions, there are still some problems with their incorporation, as re-enactments are often seen as appropriations<sup>5</sup> or as institutional devices lacking authenticity,<sup>6</sup> while documentation is often considered a lacunar process that cannot truly capture the event.

But what is the solution? Should performance works be only shown outside art institutions?

In general, the main difference between performance documentation and re-enactments is that while performance documents share the temporal context with the event (although they can also be produced afterwards), re-enactments occur after the original event. At the same time, while performance documents are mediators of the work, re-enactments, specially produced by people other than the artist, are based on these documents or on testimonies, which are already mediated: re-enactments can be considered a product of mediation of documents. The temporal distance between re-enactments and the original event can be problematic considering that the embodied knowledge of the performance (that is, the practice, the movement of the performance, the intrinsic knowledge of the performance — not only of the performer but also of the audience and, for example, conservators) is likely to be diluted with time. As stated by Sydney Briggs, Associate Registrar at MoMA (quoted by Saaze 2015: 61), referring to re-enactments of Tino Sehgal’s *constructed situations*, if “a dancer works less, if you cannot actually dance and repeat a choreography, you will forget it”. This echoes the words of art historian Amelia Jones, who states that re-enactments can be considered “an activity that preserves heritage through ritualized behavior”, adding fruitful contributions to history as long as they are not based on a premise of “retrievable original meaning and artistic intentionality” (Jones 2012, 16).

However, if documents exist as material remains of the performance artwork, from photos or videos, to narratives, descriptions, technical and legal documents, re-enactments can be considered immaterial representations of the work — neither documents nor re-enactments aim at being the “real thing”, or even at being vehicles of a fixed “truth”. Both media share the inherent subjectivity that the

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the documentation of Marina Abramović’s *Seven Easy Pieces*, a work where the artist re-enacted five works by other artists, for example, R. Blackson considers it as a possible act of appropriation that could ultimately jeopardize the authenticity of the re-enacted works. He states that it challenged and reassigned “the authorial agency of the (re) performed works”, and that the artist “has taken steps to potentially eclipse the works she re-enacted in *Seven Easy Pieces* by meticulously documenting each of her performances” (Blackson 2007, 39).

<sup>6</sup> In the field of performance studies, performance art authenticity is strongly connected with its ontology. The main problem is that performance art ontology is still clearly undefined, with several authors arguing different (and valid) perspectives. For more information about this subject please consult Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield (eds.), *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (Bristol: Intellect Lda. 2012); Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye and Michael Shanks (eds.), *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, performance and the persistence of being* (New York: Routledge 2012); Gundhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (eds.), *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2013); and Matthew Reason, *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN 2006).

process of producing documentation entails; however, when producing narratives in a written form, oral testimonies, or even re-enactments, subjective constructions of memory and language take place. In 1997, Amelia Jones, regarding the study of historical performances through those documents and narratives, explained that “while the experience of viewing a photograph and reading a text is clearly different from that of sitting in a small room watching an artist perform, neither has a privileged relationship to the historical “truth” of the performance” (Jones 1997, 11).

In her first statement, Jones thus regards the analysis of performance documents (or traces) as an experience that is not absent of “historical truth”. If that is true for narratives produced via these documents, can it also be true for performance re-enactments based on documents? According to the philosopher Adrian Heathfield, the answer is yes. This author proposes that the association of authenticity with the original event, with the mediated event, or any other mediated trace of the event, has no relevance considering the “recursive condition of all events of interpretation” (Heathfield 2012, 31). According to this author, the recursive condition of interpretation, which is drawn from Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, implies that performance can only be constructed through its discursive practices. In other words, performance art is not necessarily coupled with the original event, but is a rhizomatic and “viral” (Bedford 2012, 85) phenomenon, with several manifestations. If this thought is acknowledged in the context of performance documentation and re-enactment (with each and every document or event being a (lacunar) manifestation of a given work), it is possible to assume that documentation produced with a conservation purpose is also part of the work’s biography — in this case, not as an instantiation<sup>7</sup> of a given work, but as a subjective and interpretative discursive practice which might potentiate other interpretations and preservation strategies. In this context, the main problem with documentation lies in the focus that is clearly given to performance materialities, which dissolves the embodied practice of performance art, or what the philosopher Diana Taylor calls *the repertoire*. This dichotomy

between *archive* and *repertoire*<sup>8</sup> (Taylor 2003) is essential in the preservation of performance-based artworks. According to this author, some problems emerge when the repertoire (being rituals, acts of language, or performance art) is materialized into any archival form: it goes against the nature of these works and ignores the knowledge that is only transmitted through the corporealization of practices (Taylor 2008, 97). But how can documentation practices, which are clearly focused on the archive, recall the embodied knowledge essential to performance artworks? And how can the acknowledgement of this dichotomy aid the transition of performance artworks into the museum space?

## 2. Beyond the archive: conserving two portuguese performance-based artworks

In order to allow these works to thrive both as archival remains and as corporeal practices, preservation strategies need to be analyzed. Among these strategies, ways of handling documentation need to be reassessed, and the intention behind these documentation practices needs to become visible.

In the context of this research, two Portuguese performance-based artworks were documented. The documentation was produced in order to promote the works’ future reinterpretation or re-enactment. This means that it was not produced to be presented instead of the performance artworks, but to historicize them, to value them, and to improve the possibility of their (re-) presentation.

This was not an uncontroversial option. As explained before, there are several and divergent perspectives on the documentation and re-enactment of performance artworks. Besides Peggy Phelan’s opposition to performance documentation, many other authors presented convincing arguments in favour of and against performance documentation and representation. Moreover, these perspectives tend to change with the typology of the performance work in hand,

<sup>7</sup> In the field of conservation, this term was coined by Pip Laurenson (2006).

<sup>8</sup> According to the author, “[t]he repertoire (...) enacts embodied memory-performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing — in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-reproducible knowledge (...). The repertoire requires presence — people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there’, being a part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning” (Taylor 2003, 20).



**FIG. 1:** *Ad Verbum*, 2010 (created by Vasco Araújo). Panoramic view. Courtesy of the artist.

namely in the case of works which are close to what Claire Bishop calls “delegated performances” (Bishop 2012), a category in which the work *sexyMF* by Ana Borralho and João Galante can be found.

### 2.1. *sexyMF*, Ana Borralho and João Galante, 2006

*sexyMF* (2006) is an example of a delegated socially-engaging performance artwork, as it is performed by participants chosen through a workshop developed with the local community. When the workshop ends, they select a variable number of participants to be performers in a public showing of *sexyMF*. In this work, performers are naked, their genitals exposed, and their faces are characterized in order to represent a different sex. Men have their faces characterized as women, and women as men. This hybrid subject interacts with members of the audience who are seated in front of a particular performer. Each participant has a pair of headphones that plays romantic music, which changes depending on the place in which you are sitting. Spectators have a direct influence on their own experience by choosing the performer to establish

that relationship and by determining how long it will last. While an intimate relationship between performer and participant slowly unfolds, other participants watch the interaction. These participants are either waiting for their turn or just watching. After the performance, videos and photos circulate on the web, either uploaded by participants, by the artists, or even by the gallery.

Although this piece is not executed by the artists, but by performers chosen in the workshop, the artists provide guidelines to workshop participants, allowing them to enact a persona of their own creation, which inspires fictional or sometimes even real<sup>9</sup> relationships with participants through rituals of flirtation and mutual gaze. In order to allow the creation of different characters, each performer participates in the decision about the music playing through the headphones.

Although the workshop is clearly important for the work’s execution, as people from different backgrounds are called into the process of making art, the artists showed some flexibility in that regard. Indeed, there was one situation where the artists participated

<sup>9</sup> Ana Borralho and João Galante, interviewed by Hélia Marçal (Espaço Alcantara, Lisbon, 25 May, 2015).



**FIG. 2:** *Ad Verbum*, 2010 (created by Vasco Araújo). Detailed view. Courtesy of the artist.

actively in the performance and another occasion where performers were not chosen through a workshop, as they had performed in previous events.<sup>10</sup> This flexibility and the fact that different performers are used to execute the piece gives it a set of circumstances that, on its own, could facilitate the passage of the artwork to a museum collection (meaning the acquisition of the artwork documentation, including essential instructions on the development of the workshops and the re-enactment rights). There is, however, a risk that the variability of this piece (which comes from the workshop and consists of the execution of a performance in different cultural contexts) may be lost in the *passage*. On the other hand, recognizing this as an essential characteristic of the artwork promotes a search for proper solutions that allow that variability to survive in

future presentations. The documentation produced in order to preserve this work for future generations, for example, would need to encompass not only the performance of the work, but also the planning, production and execution of (more than one) workshop. In this case the conservator, working as an ethnographer and as a documentary film director, would act as an observer-participant and document the workshop itself as part of the artistic process. On the other hand, the conservator could participate in the workshop and, perhaps, in the performance itself, documenting the work in a process of autoethnography (Stigter 2016).

Another important characteristic of this work lies in the way in which these artists engage with their local community, which is called to participate in the workshop and then in the public performance event. Participants' interaction with the work, either by direct engagement with the performers, by behaving like *voyeurs* during the flirtation, or even by wandering around the exhibition space, is a key feature of the work that needs to be visible in future instantiations of *sexyMF*. This is also the case with *Ad Verbum*, created by the Portuguese visual artist Vasco Araújo, which, like *sexyMF*, promotes an intentional relationship between artwork, place, performance and the local community.

## 2.2. *Ad Verbum*, Vasco Araújo, 2010

*Ad Verbum*, created by the artist Vasco Araújo, can be considered a hybrid work, floating somewhere between installation, performance and public art (see Figures 1-3). Araújo has been gaining recognition on the Portuguese contemporary art scene for the last decade. He works with a wide variety of different media, from text, objects or sculptural elements to video, photography, installation and performance. In this case, *Ad Verbum* was produced as part of a collective exhibition in Lisbon's prominent nightclub Lux Frágil, and it consisted of several illustrations and sentences painted with ultraviolet paint on the club's dancefloor. The artist carefully executed the work, from outlining all sentences and illustrations to asking several people to handwrite them in

<sup>10</sup> Ana Borralho and João Galante, interviewed by Hélia Marçal (Espaço Alcantara, Lisbon, 25 May, 2015).



By considering an expanded vision of conservation, one that considers that conserving cultural heritage means to conserve its materialities along with its immaterialities (including its cultural significance and the social-political context of production, among other aspects), it is possible to foresee an institutional future to performance works. By bringing together the production of an extensive and flexible archive with the knowledge acquisition commonly understood as repertoire (as for the production of technical documentation, or the active participation in the creation and presentation of these performance artworks), an expanded vision of conservation articulates a (sometimes contradictory and always lacunar) strategy that joins documentation to presentation for the effective preservation of these works. In other words, by introducing the museum team to performance processes, together with the documentation produced by conservators, new forms of collective memory emerge.

More than ever, conservation practices must be considered a process of negotiation between the subversive context of creation of these works and their normative institutionalization. In the same manner, an expanded vision of conservation promotes better communication with artists. Usually resistant to the notion of conserving their works, artists will be invited to participate more actively in the conservation process (that is, beyond the artist's interview), by transmitting the repertoire, making them more aware of this vision, which acknowledges change and variability as an essential part of performance works.

Finally, back to the issue introduced in the beginning of this essay, *rites of passage* of performance works to the museum sphere are essentially about change: change in the works, change in their trajectory (or biography), but also, change in museum conservation procedures, and change in their presentation strategies. The question, thus, should not be so much about the *rites of passage* that performance works undergo in order to enter museum collections, but more about the changes that institutions need to accommodate in order to incorporate these works.

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# REVIEWS

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## **CHRONOPHOBIA: ON TIME IN THE ARTS OF THE 1960S** **BY PAMELA LEE**

### **Fear of Time**

**T**ime plays a central role in most of the art of the sixties. Often “accelerated, anticipatory and repetitive”, in this book, time is not seen as merely an aesthetic feature of the period, but a fixture and a structural reference for both artists and critics.

Pamela Lee’s study identifies this experience of time, started in the sixties, as *chronophobia* — an experience of uncertainty and anxiety about time. Lee defends the thesis that this obsession with time is a consequence of technological change and of a surge in popular culture.

The author starts from analysing how the new technologies have influenced the arts. The book’s long introduction looks at the Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA) 1971 art program called “Art and Technology” in comparison to Marcuse’s critique of post-war technocracy. The LACMA Art and Technology program was dedicated to bringing industry together with artists in order to create a creative synergy. The idea was to involve thirty-seven corporations and seventy-eight artists, inviting the artists to a twelve-week

artistic residency in leading corporations in California. Referring to Herbert Marcuse’s writings such as “One Dimensional Man” and “Eros and Civilization”, Lee analyses how the LACMA program considers technological rationality to be an aesthetic tendency. As she intimates, “It is, as we shall see, an unwitting testament to the late sixties technocratic mind-set.” (p.10) In the first chapter «Presentness is Grace», the author discusses Michael Fried’s essay “Art and Objecthood” articulating Fried’s aesthetics and the ethical concept of “presentness” in relation to the experience of duration and endlessness promoted by minimalist art. Since for Fried eternal is ahistorical, Lee compares the author’s arguments with the philosopher Stanley Cavell’s writings on cinema and Rosalind Krauss’ discussion of medium in order to open up a different perspective on Friedian temporality.

Chapter II, «Study for an End of the World,» named after a Jean Tinguely series of works, the author focuses on kinetic art. She uses as example artists such as Lygia Clack, Pol Bury and David Medalla. She focuses on works, whose aesthetics have as their central preoccupation the construction of an object where speed and direction can be fully controlled by the

spectator, and whose literal movements animate the virtual (and internal) dynamics of the work so as to “alter the space of the object as one passed around or before it.” (p.95)

As an example of this kind of work, she takes Tinguely’s “Manifesto for Statics” 1959, in which the artist hired an aeroplane to fly over a neighbourhood suburb and cast out 150.000 leaflets with his “Manifesto for Statics”. As Lee argues, this gesture can be seen as an almost site-specific performance. The Manifesto reads: “Stop evoking movement as gesture. You are movement and gesture” (pp.106, 107)

She also elaborates on the difference between mechanics and what came to be known as automatization. She traces a progressive decrease in the logic of mechanics (kinetics) against a parallel increase in the systematized logic of automatization.

Writing about “Bridget Riley’s Eye/ Body Problem” (chapter 3), Lee associates Op Art with Carolee Scheemann’s performances. She is keen on exploring the body’s relation to the eye (the time it takes the body to assimilate an experience) and the experience of time mediated by the body. This is the only

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moment when the author analyses performance art directly.

«Endless sixties» is the penultimate chapter of the book. It concludes the argument that as been developed in the previous sections by bringing together the three specific moments (minimalism, kinetics, and Op art and performance) with Kubler's model of history and Robert Wiener's cybernetics.

Here, Lee concludes that since the sixties, various artists have been influenced by new information-based technologies and an administrative logic. Hence, she goes further and explains to what extend system theory — the control of human and systems for the transmission of information — has changed what we understand as the art work's temporality.

Lee's treatment of Kubler's proposal on "The Shape of Time" (1962) concludes one of the principal arguments at stake in her thesis: the art of the sixties is endless because after the influence of system theory and cybernetics (controlled distribution of information) there is no way back; a new era of relationships between artworks has started. If we follow Kubler's theory on the historicity of things, each time a new art work comes into contact with an art work produced in the sixties, we are again collecting assemblages of the 60s aesthetics.

To my thinking, the most striking contribution of Lee's study is the use of Wiener's cybernetics in relation to

this subject. According to Wiener, a cybernetic system is not a closed entity but one that is open to receive information from subjects who are equally producers and receivers. As system theory came to be seen as a model for conceptualizing the art world, it became clear that the temporal anxiety that was proposed before was not solely caused by a feeling that events move too fast, but by the strong strength of systems. Lee's excellent take on cybernetics theory and its application to art and art theory is impressive and convincing.

In chapter V the author draws her conclusion moving towards a discussion of historiography.

She discusses the work of On Kawara and Andy Warold through the lens of Fernand Braudel's concept of historical time *longue durée* and Hegel's bad infinity. *Chronophobia* is very useful as an historical document on the utopian commitment to bringing together art and technology. Lee offers an extremely resourceful study on the question of time in the sixties (and beyond). However, at times it seems as if her ambitious scope raises more questions than it is able to answer. For those familiar with performance theory, some key references may be missed.

In Lee's book it's clear that in performance art (one of the most proliferous art forms questioning the matter of time), the revival of the sixties is related to the fact that the sixties inaugurated much of its aesthetic

features. The much-celebrated ephemerality of the object (against time) and the question of the history of performance pieces (time's endurance), are examples of two fundamental aesthetics recuperated from this period.

**Pamela M. Lee. *Chronophobia: On Time in the Arts of the 1960s*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004. 394 pp., 67 ills.**

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# NEWS

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## ARCHIVE PRACTICES IN PERFORMING ARTS

**INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR, 16-18 NOV 2017**

**A**n international seminar entitled «Archive Practices in Performing Arts» will be held in Portugal, on 16-18 November 2017, with the aim of evaluating and thinking about current archival practices in performing arts. The activities are scheduled to take place at the Academic Theater of Gil Vicente in Coimbra (16<sup>th</sup> nov) and at the National Theater of São João, in Porto (17-18<sup>th</sup> nov).

The Seminar intends to reflect on archive practices in the field of performing arts, taking simultaneously into consideration: (1) the various disciplinary contexts and occurrences (theatre, dance, performance art, music); (2) the pros and cons of assembling an archive in today's technological and mediated context; (3) the dynamics that develop between the documented/documentable archive and the contemporary practices of creating and embodying memory. The event will develop as a sequence of debate sessions and shows. Each day will be organised as follows: an opening plenary conference; presentation, analysis and discussion of case studies from Portugal and abroad; a workshop (respectively on “Documentation and Indexation in Performing Arts” and “Software and Management of Digital Archives”); the session will end with shows based on such topics as archive, memory and documentation. A decisive feature of the project is the

publication of a bilingual book that will provide further documentation concerning this debate and inscribe it in the public sphere, close to the community of artistic creators, researchers, agents and institutions.

**Coordinated by Cláudia Madeira (IHA-UNL),  
Fernando Matos Oliveira (Ceis20-UC) and Hélia Marçal (IHA-UNL)**

**Organisation**

**Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares do séc. XX (Ceis20-UC)  
Instituto de História da Arte (IHA-UNL)**

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## NEW CLUSTER OF PERFORMANCE ART & PERFORMATIVITY

**E**Performance art has, in recent years, been analysed and historicized as a particular genre in diverse countries throughout the world. In Portugal, performance art has been characterized by what the art theorist and artist Ernesto de Sousa called the “history-without-history” of the Portuguese avant garde. This research line aims at bringing together researchers who have been developing their research on Portuguese performance art and the new forms of performativity that have developed through hybridization within the worlds of art and society in areas such as theatre, dance, music, photography, installations, digital art, as well as social movements.

The history of this artistic genre has a key role when discussing the social performativity of the Portuguese people, mainly regarding issues of the Revolution, the Dictatorship, the Colonial war, or the Return to Portugal of Portuguese people living in the colonies, or even more recently, their memory, absence or post-memory. If, on the one hand, we intend to address these contemporary practices; on the other, we intend to contextualize them within a historical perspective and an international context, to promote comparative histories of performance art and performativity in diverse artistic contexts (countries, regions, etc).

**IN ARTS COORDINATED BY CLÁUDIA MADEIRA  
AT IHA/CAST/ FCSH/NOVA**

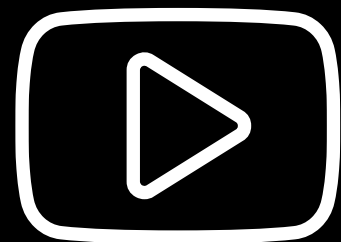
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# PERFORMATIVE TALKS

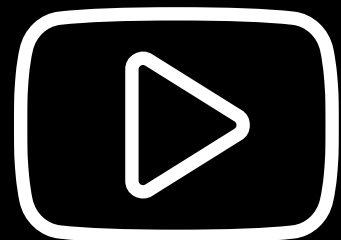
## Performative Talks #1

This performative talk was dedicated to the theme “Performance Art Stories”, and features the testimony of some pioneers from the Portuguese Performance Art panorama: E. M. de Melo e Castro, Fernando Aguiar, Rui Orfão e Manoel Barbosa.



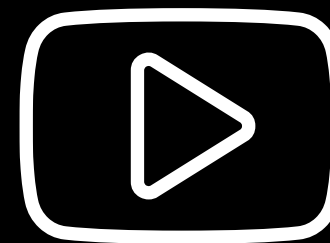
## Performative Talks #2

In the second Performative Talk, some artists from younger generations, such as Paulo Mendes, Filipa César and Susana Mendes Silva join two pioneers of this genre, Manuel Botelho and Albuquerque Mendes, to speak about some aspects of their work.

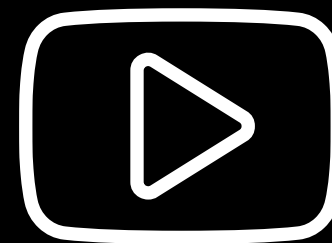


## Performative Talks #3

The last Performative Talk is dedicated to Vânia Rovisco’s project “REACTING TO TIME: The Portuguese in Performance Art”. Vânia Rovisco is joined by the artists Manoel Barbosa and António Olaio as they put the *performative* in *performative talks*.



PERFORMANCE



DISCUSSÃO



# VIRTUAL SHOW OF SELECTED PERFORMANCE ARTWORKS

## UMA MOSTRA (NÃO) REPRESENTATIVA DA ARTE DA PERFORMANCE PORTUGUESA

A mostra bibliográfica e a mostra artística/documental da performance arte que se apresentam neste espaço tiveram o seu enquadramento específico no simpósio “Performance Arte Portuguesa: 2 ciclos para um arquivo”, que decorreu no anfiteatro do Museu Coleção Berardo de 20 a 22 de Julho de 2016. Jogou-se aqui com a questão da representatividade ou da não representatividade destas mostras, uma vez que todos estes documentos, fotografias ou vídeos são de alguma forma representativos de uma história que tem ficado oculta, são indícios que nos dão a ver aspectos particulares, fragmentários, mas que no seu conjunto permitem ir criando um retrato da performance arte portuguesa. Não deixam, contudo, de ser não representativos de uma história maior porque não estão contemplados aqui todos os nomes nacionais e internacionais que deram corpo a este campo singular, nem estão presentes documentos que nos dariam um retrato mais preciso.

Esta mostra mantém as características do que tem sido a construção desta história: fragmentação e dispersão. Esperamos, contudo, que seja um apontamento relevante para a constituição de um arquivo futuro e da exposição que há-de vir sobre o contexto da performance portuguesa e das suas relações com o panorama internacional. Onde seja possível mostrar ou recriar os processos artísticos, os artistas, os festivais nacionais e internacionais, os variados registos fotográficos, em filme e vídeo e, também, os testemunhos dos próprios artistas, dos organizadores e dos seus públicos sob este património performativo português.

Neste retrato contemplou-se o primeiro registo sobre o manifesto futurista internacional publicado em Portugal, apresentaram-se diversos catálogos de festivais nacionais e internacionais de performance arte, documentos e fotos, assim como se apresentaram fotos e vídeos de artistas de gerações e áreas diferentes que participam neste simpósio. Registam-se aqui os seus nomes: Ernesto de Melo e Castro, Manoel Barbosa, Albuquerque Mendes, Rui Orfão, Fernando Aguiar, António Olaio, Alexandra do Carmo, Rui Mourão, Rita Castro Neves, João Garcia Miguel, Paulo Mendes, Filipa César, Manuel Botelho, Susana Mendes Silva, Pedro Barateiro, Beatriz Albuquerque, Frederico Diniz, António Contador, Susana Chiocca, Fernanda Eugénio & Ana Dinger, Vânia Rovisco. Estes, por sua vez, trazem até nós nos seus registos artísticos e documentais, e nos seus testemunhos, outros artistas que participaram nesta história, tais como, Ernesto de Sousa, Ana Hatherly, João Vieira, Ana Borralho e João Galante, Miguel Pereira, entre muitos outros.

CLÁUDIA MADEIRA, LISBOA, JULHO 2016

## A (NON) REPRESENTATIVE SHOW OF THE PORTUGUESE PERFORMANCE ART

Performance art’s bibliographic and artistic/ documental exhibition as currently presented at this very space has its specific framework set as the symposium “Portuguese Performance Art: two cycles for a single archive”, taking place at the amphitheater of Museu Coleção Berardo, from the 20th to the 22nd of July, 2016.

Issuing the question of representation or non-representation of these shows, and since all these documents, photographs or videos are somehow representative of a history that has been hidden, have established themselves as clues allowing us to look at particular fragmentary aspects though, once gathered, they enhance the possibility of composing a picture of Portuguese performance Art. However, they assume themselves as non-representative of a larger story for they do not contemplate all the national and international names that have given substance to this unique field, nor the documents that would give us a more accurate picture are featured. This show holds the characteristic of what has been the construction of this story: fragmentation and dispersion. We hope, however, this might be a relevant momentum for the establishment of a future archive, and to the exhibition to come, on the context of Portuguese performance and its relations with the international scene. Where one can display or recreate the artistic process, the artists, national and international festivals, various photographic records, film and video, and also the testimonies of the artists themselves, the organizers and their public under this Portuguese performative heritage.

In this panorama we contemplate the first record on the international futurist manifesto published in Portugal, displaying several catalogs of national and international festivals on performance art, documents and photographs, as well photos and videos of artists from different backgrounds and generations who participate in this symposium.

Here are their names: Ernesto de Melo e Castro, Manuel Barbosa, Albuquerque Mendes, Rui Orfão, Fernando Aguiar, António Olaio, Alexandra do Carmo, Rui Mourão, Rita Castro Neves, João Garcia Miguel, Paulo Mendes, Filipa César, Manuel Botelho, Susana Mendes Silva, António Contador, Susana Chiocca, Fernanda Eugénio & Ana Dinger, Vânia Rovisco. These, on the other hand, bring us, through their artistic and documentary records, and through their testimonies, other artists who participated in this story, such as Ernesto de Sousa, Ana Hatherly, João Vieira, Ana Borralho and João Galante, Miguel Pereira, among many others.

CLÁUDIA MADEIRA, LISBON, JULY 2016

## Mostra Artística / Documental

(Curadoria Cláudia Madeira)

A cronologia não nos ajuda muito na definição do que é a performance arte portuguesa, segui-la serve apenas para construirmos uma ordem de acontecimentos que tem sempre outros acontecimentos ocultos ou invisibilizados ou a que se poderiam dar nomes diferentes. Ernesto de Sousa numa carta a Noronha da Costa, datada de 21 de Abril de 1982, referia-se à catalogação do “Encontro no Guincho-Rinchoa”, em 1969, como *happening*, considerando que melhor seria ter-lhe chamado *performance* porque esta noção eliminaria muitas das falências teóricas anteriores. E, por isso, afirmava: “julgo que alguma coisa do que fizemos do passado, os poetas experimentais, o João Vieira, eu com o Jorge Peixinho, contigo, etc. – teriam sido melhor classificadas de *performances* ... Isto só tem importância porque a *performance* (do fr. Antigo: *per formare*), a performatividade, é conceito primordial na ciência e na estética dita pós-moderna”.

À problemática conceptual, sobre o que é e não é performance arte, têm-se juntado outras questões conflituantes em torno da ontologia da performance arte. Diversos autores nos estudos da performance têm adoptado perspectivas diferentes face ao posicionamento deste género híbrido e indefinido em torno das questões da representação ou da não representação, das artes plásticas e do teatro, da performance arte e da performance social, da efemeridade e da mediação, do estatuto documental ou teatral dos seus registos, dos “ciclos” e do “início” e do “fim” da performance, entre diversas outras questões. É claro que devemos procurar ser precisos a definir o que é performance arte, mas seguindo a linha de pensamento apresentada acima por Ernesto de Sousa, se olharmos para os registos de *Música Negativa* de Ernesto de Melo e Castro, apresentada pela primeira vez em 1965 no âmbito do *Concerto e Audição Pictórica* na Galeria Divulgação em Lisboa, podemos ver aí um happening, uma performance, uma vídeo-performance, uma performance para a câmara, ou um *re-enactment*, uma vez que o filme de 16mm a que temos acesso foi posteriormente registado em 1977 por Ana Hatherly. Já para não dizer que entre 1965 e 1977 Ernesto de Melo e Castro re-apresentou diversas vezes e em diversos contextos esta peça que simbolizava o silêncio imposto durante a ditadura portuguesa até 1974. E importa também referir que Melo e Castro não se define nem como artista plástico, nem como homem de teatro, mas antes como poeta experimental ou poeta visual, e foi a partir daí que criou esta e outras peças que podemos incluir hoje na história da performance portuguesa.


Por outro lado, ainda, Melo e Castro, numa entrevista a Ernesto de Sousa, registada em filme na Galeria Buchholz, em Dezembro de 1974, dará conta que esse “laboratório experimental saltou para a rua!”, levando o “povo” a subverter e a dar novos sentidos “artísticos”

e “políticos”, por exemplo, aos sinais de trânsito. Nas suas palavras: “se muitos de nós poetas visuais antes do 25 de Abril nos dedicámos à experimentação laboratorial de certo modo fechada e hermética para o público foi porque o contexto antes do 25 de Abril estava desligado da criatividade dos homens e das mulheres”. Caminhando pelas ruas portuguesas da pós-revolução, Melo e Castro mostrava como a Revolução tinha aberto as portas à manifestação criativa do povo, o que se revelava nas inscrições que apareciam nas paredes e mesmo nos sinais de trânsito, como, por exemplo, um sinal de stop onde se acrescentou a palavra “ao fascismo”; a sigla do P.C.P. (Partido Comunista Português) que foi transformada em BOB (numa nova significação meramente sem sentido); ou ainda a sigla C.D.S. (Centro Democrático Social) em que o “S” é substituído por um \$ (cifrão). Inscrições que pervertendo o seu significado unívoco e normativo ganharam uma assumida carga política.

Foi precisamente este ambiente de fusão da arte com o social que levou o historiador e crítico de arte João Pinharanda a caracterizar o 25 Abril como o primeiro exemplo de *arte pública anti monumento* em Portugal. Segundo este autor tratou-se de um momento de criação e participação colectiva: acção popular de rua que acompanhou a queda do regime, através de um processo simultâneo de destruição dos símbolos do regime (nomeadamente os símbolos escultóricos) e do levantamento alternativo de uma iconografia provisória nas ruas da cidade, constituída por pinturas, pichagens clandestinas, cartazes.

Se neste filme que será comentado no Simpósio pelo próprio Melo e Castro conseguimos ver algum do ambiente vivido nas ruas em 1974, por sua vez, na instalação sonora que *Alexandra do Carmo* criou para a Galeria Quadrum entre 2011-2012 temos acesso aos testemunhos, às memórias, dos agentes (performers, públicos, etc.) que circulavam nesta galeria para ver performance nas décadas de 1970 e 1980. Algumas dessas memórias nem sempre factuais ecoam na performance *Caretos* de João Vieira, de 1984, dando o título a esta instalação *Tudo foi captado (mesmo os movimentos do cabrito)* uma vez que este título teve origem na entrevista com Gracinda Candeias onde esta descreveu o animal presente na performance de João Vieira como sendo um cabrito, quando, na verdade, era uma burra como testemunhou depois Ana Isabel Rodrigues. A estas memórias juntam-se outras de diversas performances como as de Ana Hatherly, que conseguimos hoje ver numa pesquisa simples na internet como *Rotura*, de 1978 ou, ainda, em performances de artistas internacionais como *A hot afternoon 3*, de Gina Pane, também, de 1978.

Desse mesmo período temos o registo da passagem de performers portugueses por circuitos internacionais, como é o caso



das fotos e vídeo da peça de *António Olaio Il Faut Danser Portugal* apresentada no Centre Georges Pompidou, em Paris, em 1984, no âmbito da mostra *Performance Portugaise* sob organização de Egídio Álvaro, dez anos após o 25 de Abril, mas por onde passaram também outros performers representados no simpósio como *Manuel Barbosa*, *Albuquerque Mendes* e *Rui Órfão*. Estes dois últimos desenvolveram um trabalho performativo que, diversas vezes, passou pelo ritual/performance.

Estas performances cujo enquadramento temporal se situa entre meados dos anos 60 e 80 e por onde ecoa o ambiente da ditadura e da revolução portuguesa constituem um primeiro ciclo da história onde a performance arte ganhará este nome, e a partir do qual as experiências mais performativas dos futuristas, surrealistas e dos poetas experimentais serão re-catalogadas. A partir de 1990 e, especialmente, no novo milénio surgem novos trabalhos de artistas nem sempre, ou nem todos centrados na performance mas que fazem uso dela para dialogarem com a arquivo e repertório da performance social dos portugueses. *Paulo Mendes* incorporando a figura de Salazar em *S de Saudade*, desde 2007. *Filipa César* dando a ler num texto encenado palavras de Amílcar Cabral no âmbito de *Mined Soil* apresentado na Old School em 2014. No mesmo espaço *Manuel Botelho* tinha apresentado no ano anterior uma performance interpretada por si a *Viagem Triunfal que o Presidente da República o Contra-Almirante Américo Tomás realizou à Província Ultramarina de Angola* em 1963. *Susana Mendes Silva* tinha apresentado em 2012 no Colégio das Artes 69-12 para fazer ecoar de novo as palavras-de-ordem que se diziam nos movimentos estudantis em 1969 em Coimbra. *Frederico Diniz* tem enveredado por uma performance tecnológica que dialoga com a memória dos lugares e das gentes, nomeadamente da guerra colonial portuguesa, como é exemplo de *Adeus até ao meu regresso* de 2015.

*Rui Mourão* desenvolveu performances “ativistas” em Portugal, explorando um potencial transformador na arte que reaproxime a estética da ética, o eu do outro, a arte da sociedade. Os dois vídeos presentes na mostra focam-se nesse potencial transformador, entre o íntimo e o político, sempre por via do artístico.

Neste contexto diverso é importante ainda sublinhar que quando falamos hoje e quando se falava ao tempo da performance arte portuguesa há que dizer que se trata sempre de uma realidade que atravessa fronteiras. Os processos contaminaram-se, os referentes hoje e sempre foram misturados. Os performers portugueses sempre possuíram traços cosmopolitas, cruzaram fronteiras, partilharam ou criaram informação, como a *mail arte*, redes de afinidades e sentidos.

*António Contador* hoje faz esse cruzamento mais expressivo, entre Paris-Lisboa, cria lá e cá, produzindo performances que acentuam atravessamento de culturas. *Ana Rito* inscreve também o seu trabalho nesse movimento. *Pedro Barateiro* a par disso faz uma

incursão por um dos eixos centrais da performance — o quotidiano — e mostra-nos essa ligação intrínseca entre arte e social na performance. *Fernanda Eugénio & Ana Dinger* criam um metadiálogo dessa história onde conceitos, autores, referentes se misturam.

*Susana Chiocca*, no Porto, conjuntamente com *António Lago*, criou a *sala em 2007* dando espaço na sua casa para as suas performances e as de outros acontecerem. Ela apresenta-nos aqui registos da sua peça *Europa* e também o filme da sua performance *Bitcho*. Também no Porto, *Rita Castro Neves* havia criado em 2001 o festival de *Live Arte Brrr*, num tempo onde as novas gerações redescobriam aos poucos uma outra geração percursora. *Fernando Aguiar*, que nos anos 80 traduz a poesia visual numa corporização performativa, vai também organizar diversos encontros de performance: num desses encontros, em meados dos anos 90, denominado *Ações Urbanas*, que decorreu em Lisboa, deu-se conta que as novas gerações que enveredavam pelas práticas artísticas mais interdisciplinares desconheciam a geração que tinha ganho o nome de performance arte portuguesa, tornou-se urgente para ele dar a conhecer os catálogos que indiciavam essa história invisível do panorama artístico português.

Nesse mesmo processo, mais recentemente, surge em 2015 *Reaction to Time* de *Vânia Rovisco*, transmitindo para novas testemunhas e novos intérpretes performances históricas como *Identification* que *Manoel Barbosa* criou em Madrid em 1975, ainda Espanha vivia o jugo ditatorial, e *Il faut Danser Portugal*, de *António Olaio*, de 1985.

Entre estas duas “gerações” (e, fazemos referência que este conceito é problemático uma vez que os artistas se entrecruzem em redes de várias gerações) outros grupos e “gerações” de artistas estão presentes como o colectivo *O OLHO*, liderado por *João Garcia Miguel*, onde se forma a dupla *Ana Borralho* e *João Galante*, entre outros, e antes ainda assiste-se a uma deriva da performance para a cultura pop mais mediática. Por exemplo, em finais da década de 80 surgiram novos grupos como os *Homeostéticos*, ou os *Felizes da Fé* que não foram integrados nesse mesmo movimento da performance, ainda que pudessem ser considerados herdeiros desse movimento. Seriam, por isso, muitos mais os nomes que deveriam ser contemplados nesta mostra e neste simpósio. *Manuel João Vieira*, *Rui Zink*, *Alberto Pimenta*, seriam alguns, para não falar de *António Barros*, que atravessou o campo da performance arte portuguesa, dialogou com os seus agentes mas criou as suas próprias *artitudes*. Fiquemos então com a imagem de Ernesto de Melo e Castro orquestrando uma pauta de música negativa para nos lembrarmos dos silêncios da história e para repensarmos o valor do arquivo da performance arte portuguesa.



**ALBUQUERQUE  
MENDES**

**ALEXANDRA  
DO CARMO**

**ANA RITO**



**ANTÓNIO  
CONTADOR**

**ANTÓNIO  
OLAIO**

**BEATRIZ  
ALBUQUERQUE**



**ERNESTO DE MELO  
E CASTRO**

**FERNANDA  
EUGÉNIO &  
ANA DINGER**

**FERNANDO  
AGUIAR**

**FILIPA  
CÉSAR**



**FREDERICO  
DINIS**

**JOÃO  
GARCIA  
MIGUEL**



**MANOEL  
BARBOSA**

**MANUEL  
BOTELHO**

**PAULO  
MENDES**



**PEDRO  
BARATEIRO**

**RITA CASTRO  
NEVES**

**RUI  
MOURÃO**



**RUI  
ORFÃO**

**SUSANA  
CHIOCCA**



**SUSANA  
MENDES  
SILVA**

**VÂNIA  
ROVISCO**

# PAULO MENDES

## THE POSTCOLONIAL SINGER [LADO B VERSÃO IMPÉRIO] 2013/2016

### Uma performance musical

A urgência do presente oblitera a memória. Aliviem-se as consciências colonizadoras, chegou a hora de expurgar memórias passadas. O detergente histórico vai purificar uma descolonização historicamente desastrosa e fora de tempo através de investimentos e parcerias estratégicas. De colonizador, a economicamente colonizado, entre reeditados álbuns de postais idílicos do Ultramar, na Lisboa europeia e timidamente cosmopolita do século XXI, capital do Império, as pretas, passeiam-se com malas Louis Vuitton e sentam-se á mesa de conselhos de administração ou de velhos palacetes em faustos jantares diplomáticos, enquanto a constrangida nomenclatura do poder e os seus ministros da velha República negociam mais um empréstimo que permita a sobrevivência do antigo colonizador. A metrópole bem comportada, ainda desnordeada na encruzilhada histórica dos antigos fantasma coloniais e em pânico económico numa Europa á deriva, encaixota as memórias e agradece a expansão económica — **Kanimambo!** Assim cantava João Maria Tudela no lado B de um single editado em 1959, intitulado Holiday in Lorenzo Marques.

A gestão do mundo português, da economia e da realidade, como nas velhas fotografias, segue dentro de momentos a preto e branco — realpolitik dixit.

**“Só temos o passado à nossa disposição. É com ele que imaginamos o futuro.”**

EDUARDO LOURENÇO, 1997

Esta performance integra a série de trabalhos S de Saudade que desenvolvo desde 2007 tendo sido já realizadas várias exposições e performances em espaços mais convencionais como museus e também em galerias e projectos independentes.

No seu conjunto foram produzidos ao longo dos últimos anos trabalhos em pintura, desenho, instalação, fotografia e vídeo. Nas performances a memória do Estado Novo tem sido invocada através da personagem Senhor S.

**“O que é a verdade?”** questionava Salazar em 1966 no seu discurso em Braga nas comemorações do 40º aniversário do 28 de Maio.

O seu rosto já envelhecido desafiava a assistência no seu habitual tom professoral. Restavam os aplausos concordantes de uma elite instalada e fora de tempo que enunciava o início da agonia do Salazarismo.

Este projecto foge a um realismo mimético para criar uma distância crítica em relação á época. Não é a pessoa do ditador que é questionada mas o simbolismo em si concentrado — figura

do absurdo — como representante de um passado colectivo. Este trabalho relaciona-se com as formas, os meios e os métodos, as imagens e as suas histórias e concepções que se transformaram num “património” comum.

**“Politicamente só existe o que o público sabe que existe. É muito difícil ver o mundo da janela do nosso quarto.”**

SALAZAR, DISCURSO NA TOMADA DE POSSE DO DIRECTOR DO S.P.N. ANTÓNIO FERRO EM 1933

**“A invisibilidade constitui o próprio estado de Salazar.** Ele é invisível e quer-se como tal. Só raramente se mostra em público e ainda menos em manifestações de massas. A sua pessoa física, a sua presença corporal não se expõem aos olhares (...). Esta forma pouco habitual de presença de um Ditador não escapou a António Ferro: “E este nome, Oliveira Salazar, (...) começou a diminuir-se, a encurtar-se, até se engrandecer na sua redução à expressão mais simples, até ficar sintetizado nesta palavra sonora Salazar. Esse nome, com essas letras, quase deixou de pertencer a um homem para significar o estado de espírito dum país, na sua ânsia de regeneração, na sua aspiração legítima dum política sem política, dum política de verdade.”

JOSÉ GIL, 1995

Ultrapassadas pelo avanço da história as representações do Estado Novo estão agora armazenadas em esquecidos acervos de museu ou em arquivos esquecidos de televisão, como adereços ou fragmentos de uma peça fora de cena.

**Numa sociedade de brandos costumes, este lento apagar da memória corresponde a uma amnésia colectiva.**

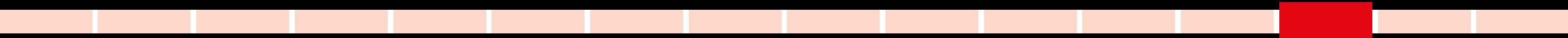
P.M. 2007/16

[Texto inicial escrito em 2013, acompanhado por excertos de um texto mais amplo que foi sendo escrito, actualizado e publicado ao longo do desenvolvimento desta série de trabalhos S de Saudade.

A apresentação em 2016 desta nova versão — **THE POSTCOLONIAL SINGER [lado B versão IMPÉRIO]** — resulta da reunião do texto escrito para a performance **silêncio, ordens, preces, ameaças, elogios, censuras, razões, que querem que eu compreenda do que eles dizem**, de 2010, uma colagem a partir dos textos À espera de Godot de Samuel Beckett e As Bodas de Deus de João César Monteiro e do vídeo que regista a apresentação original da performance **THE POSTCOLONIAL SINGER** em 2013 na Aula Magna da FBAUP Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto no âmbito da mostra de performances Sintomas e Efeitos Secundários.]



**PAULO  
MENDES**



# SIMPÓSIO INTERNACIONAL PERFORMANCE ARTE EM PORTUGAL: 2 CICLOS PARA 1 ARQUIVO

## Artes Performativas em Portugal: Breve Mostra Bibliográfica

(Curadoria Manoel Barbosa)

A convite do Simpósio Internacional Performance Arte em Portugal, exibe-se neste espaço — e em função do mesmo — muito seleccionada bibliografia pertencente a Manoel Barbosa Performance Arte. Body Art Archives, sobre alguns dos principais eventos no âmbito das Artes Performativas em Portugal, com especial incidência porque foi intenção inicial, nos happenings e sobretudo performances, mas também na dança-performance.

Porque o Simpósio é accionado, dirigido por docentes universitários, e participado para além de performers, por estudantes, docentes, historiadores, público sem dúvida crescente e interessado, optou-se por mostrar cronologicamente e desde o Futurismo as primeiras acções *performativas* de Almada Negreiros (a génese), Santa Rita Pintor, passando naturalmente pelos Surrealistas, notando-se mais um hiato até aos happenings como tal assumidos, anunciados e executados por Ernesto Mello e Castro, Ana Hatherly, João Vieira, Ernesto de Sousa entre outros, marcantes momentos de rupturas, percursos e *esticões* estéticos, discursivos, no marasmo da arte, da cultura e da sociedade de então.

Doutro modo, com suportes e objectivos diferentes, surgiu a obra corporal e performativa de Helena Almeida, trabalho perfeito, magnífico, fulgurante, que impõe-se desde a década de 1960 e insere-se na História das artes performativas, da body art. Por tal, esta resumida mas especial e merecida mostra dum percurso *entre* e com performers.

Outra artista, outro discurso corporal: Lourdes Castro, que com Manuel Zimbro criaram uma obra relevante, peculiar com o *Teatro de Sombras*, estão obrigatoriamente presentes.

Mais notáveis artistas que usam o seu corpo (ou doutros) em actos performativos registados e exibidos em vídeo e fotografia, estão necessariamente mostrados. Neste âmbito, por coincidência temporal e no Museu Berardo (até Setembro) pode ver-se na exposição *O Enigma—Arte Portuguesa na Coleção Berardo* (curadoria de Pedro Lapa) quatro excelentes *performers*: Jorge Molder, João Tabarra e João Maria Gusmão/Pedro Paiva.

Nestes cerca de duzentos documentos (não sendo uma Mostra fotobibliográfica complementa-a com algumas fotografias), propicia-se uma breve análise da muito relevante arte performativa criada e executada por portugueses, e a apresentação no país de alguns dos mais destacados autores, coreógrafos, performers estrangeiros.

Está por historiar de modo isento, com atenta pesquisa e concreto conhecimento analítico as artes performativas em Portugal,

embora Egídio Álvaro (principal impulsionador, promotor das artes performativas desde início da década de 1970 até inícios de 1990) tenha produzido vasta, indispensável e já histórica bibliografia.

Quem fizer esse trabalho historiográfico (e necessariamente fotobibliográfico) terá salutares surpresas, proporcionará inesperados *mapeamentos* territoriais, estéticos e discursivos, e prestará enorme contributo para (re)colocar de modo decisivo as artes performativas na História da arte portuguesa.

Destaca-se na Mostra e em espaços próprios, dois momentos que reprojectaram performers portugueses: o Symposium International d'Art Performance de Lyon (1979-1983, o mais importante evento de nível internacional até então, organizado e dirigido por Orlan e Hubert Besacier) e Performance Portugaise, no Centre Georges Pompidou, 1984, organizado por Egídio Álvaro.

Refira-se que outras obras de performers portugueses foram apresentadas em prestigiados museus, festivais, encontros, galerias em Paris, Nova Iorque, Londres, Berlin, Amesterdão, Madrid, Gent, Viena, Québec, Tóquio, ou Varsóvia, e mencionadas, analisadas em revistas como Flash Art, Art Forum, Art Press, inseridas em enciclopédias, livros sobre a história das artes performativas.

Noutra ocasião, preferencialmente em Portugal, se mostrará muito mais vasta e inédita, surpreendente bibliografia e fotobibliografia das Artes Performativas em Portugal.

**MANOEL BARBOSA, LISBOA 2016**

# SIMPÓSIO INTERNACIONAL PERFORMANCE ARTE EM PORTUGAL: 2 CICLOS PARA 1 ARQUIVO

BREVE MOSTRA BIBLIOGRÁFICA  
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Manoel Barbosa Performance Art Body Art  
Archives

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Alain Platel  
Alberto Carneiro  
Alberto Pimenta  
Albuquerque Mendes  
Alkantara Festival  
Almada Negreiros  
Alternativa-Festival Int. de Arte Viva  
Alternativa Zero  
Ana Borralho&João Galante  
Ana Hatherly  
Andrea Inocência  
André Fonseca  
Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker  
António Barros  
António Melo  
António Olaio  
António Palolo  
Armando Azevedo  
Arte na Rua  
Artitude:01  
Artur Barrio  
Audiovisual Lisboa'88  
A Sala  
Beatriz Albuquerque  
Ben Vautier  
Ção Pestana  
Carlos Gordilho  
Carlos Zingaro  
Charlemagne Palestine  
Ciclo Arte Moderna Portuguesa  
CAPCoimbra  
Cláudia Dias  
Colóquio-Artes  
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Cres Group  
Culturgest  
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Encontros ACARTE  
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Portugal  
II Encontro Nacional de Performance  
Ernesto de Sousa/Jorge Peixinho  
Ernesto de Sousa/Noronha da Costa  
Ernesto M.Mello e Castro

Espaço Lusitano  
Espiga Pinto  
Expresso  
Fernando Aguiar  
Festival Atlântico  
Festival Int. de Performance o Ângulo  
Recto Ferve a 90º  
Festival Mergulho no Futuro  
Festival Temps d'Images  
Festival Trama  
Festival X  
Fila K  
Filipe Garcia  
Forced Entertainment Company  
Francisco Camacho  
Francisco Tropa  
Fundação de Serralves  
Futurismo  
Galeria Espaço Lusitano  
Galeria ZDB  
Gerardo Burmester  
Gilbert&George  
Gina Pane  
Grupo Acre  
Grupo GICAP-Cores  
Grupo Neon  
Grupo Puzzle  
Gustavo Sumpsta  
Heiner Goebbels  
Helena Almeida  
Hotel Pro Forma  
Isabel Valverde  
James Coleman  
Jan Fabre  
João Dixo  
João Maria Gusmão/Pedro Paiva  
João Onofre  
João Tabarra  
João Vieira  
John Cage  
Jorge Lima Barreto  
Jorge Molder  
José Conduto  
José de Carvalho  
Julião Sarmiento/Patrick Mhor  
Kraftwerk  
Laurie Anderson  
La Fura dels Baus  
Les Ballets C.de la B.  
Line Up Action Festival  
Living Theatre  
Lourdes Castro  
Lourdes Castro/Manuel Zimbro  
Luís Castro  
Manoel Barbosa  
Manuela Fortuna

Marcel.Ií Antuñez  
Maria Trabulo  
Marina Abramovic/Ulay  
Matt Mullican  
Maus Hábitos  
Meg Stuart  
Merce Cunningham  
Meredith Monk  
Miguel Yeco  
Mute Life Department  
Nigel Rolfe  
Nuno Carinhas  
Obscena  
Olga Roriz  
O Olho  
Orlan  
Patrícia Portela  
Paulo Henrique  
Paulo Mendes  
Pedro Tudela  
Performance Portugaise,Centre George  
Pompidou  
Perform'Arte-I Encontro Nacional de  
Performance  
Pina Bausch  
PoN.T.I.  
Projectos&Progestos  
Público  
Raimund Hoghe  
Reacting to Time  
Revista Artes Plásticas  
Ricardo Pais  
Robert Wilson  
Roland Miller/Shirley Cameron  
Rui Orfão  
Santa Rita Pintor  
Semana Internacional de Arte Actual  
Serge III Oldenbourg  
Silvestre Pestana  
Sónia Baptista  
Sónia Carvalho  
Stuart Brisley  
Surrealismo  
Susana Chiocca  
Symposium International d'Art  
Performance de Lyon  
Tehching Hsieh  
Telectu  
Ulrike Rosenbach  
Vanessa Beecroft  
Vânia Rovisco  
Vera Mantero  
Vitor Rua  
Wim Wandekeybus  
Wolf Vostell



**SIMPÓSIO  
INTERNACIONAL**

PERFORMANCE  
ARTE EM  
PORTUGAL:  
2 CICLOS PARA  
1 ARQUIVO

