

✦ Gulbenkian Próximo Futuro/ Next Future Programme



Catarina Botelho

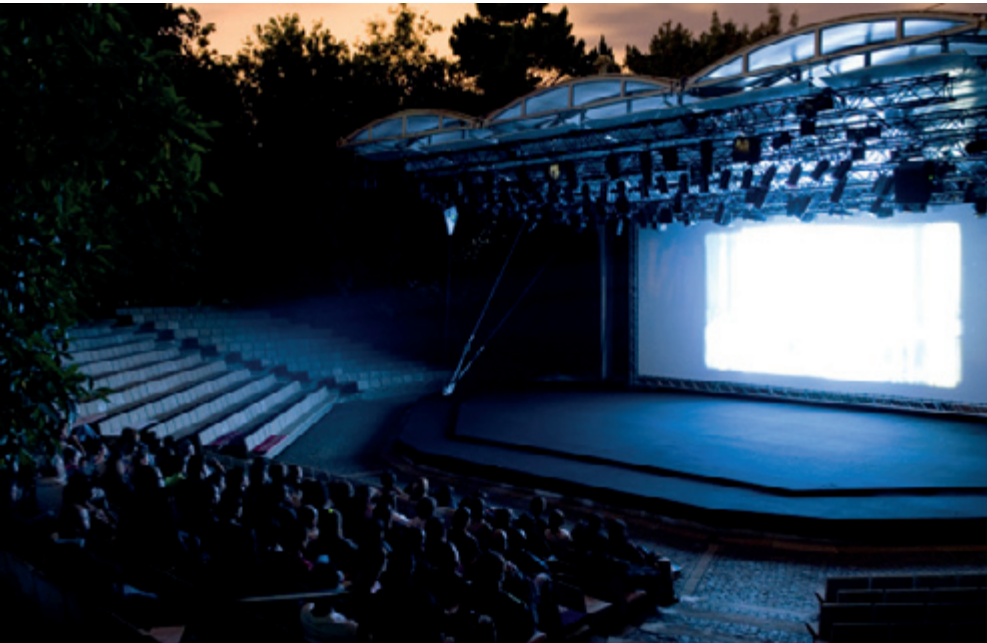
✦ Concert by the Imperial Orchestra.

2009 was the first year of the Gulbenkian Próximo Futuro/Next Future Programme, a project that is set to continue until the end of 2011, and will cover all aspects of contemporary creation in Africa, Europe, and South America and the Caribbean countries.

	Amounts in euros
Own activities	427 967
Total	427 967
Receipts	17 350

The activities developed during the first year of the programme were fundamentally centred upon the months of June and July, with the installation of the work *A Casa* by the Brazilian artist José Bechara in front of the Gulbenkian Museum, the installation of awnings with poems printed on them in the Gulbenkian Gardens, and the presentation of seven concerts and nine film sessions (all shown in the Open-Air Amphitheatre). Given the short space of time available between the definitive formulation of the programme and its first activities, it proved impossible to include in this first series of events either the performing arts or other dimensions of the visual arts, so that special emphasis was given to the musical concerts. As has traditionally been the case in our programmes, this one was also opened with a concert performed by the Gulbenkian Orchestra.

Following the success of the two film sessions held in the previous year, under the scope of the Gulbenkian Distance and Proximity Programme, this year we showed a series of films that included European, African and Latin American cinema, including both documentaries and fictional films. We should like to underline the impact that these film sessions enjoyed amongst the public, even on a



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✚ Film cycle.

particularly cold night when, for the showing of the film *Paul Virilio: Penser la Vitesse*, the audience numbered as many as 225 spectators.

The awnings with poems by authors from each of the continents covered by this programme were a particular success amongst visitors to the garden, as were the cushions and *pouffes* – these latter seats being made from the remnants of last year’s awnings designed by artists. The Brazilian artist José Bechara erected his installation *A Casa* in front of the Gulbenkian Museum, which was a development of a work that had already been presented at the Rio de Janeiro Museum of Modern Art and at countless Brazilian galleries and museums. It greatly aroused the curiosity of the visitors to the Museum (and, indeed, not only these), while its strange appearance resulted in the organisation of a number of guided tours led by us.

Although its underlying proposal is fundamentally cultural and artistic in nature, the Next Future programme seeks to give prominence to research and theoretical production, not only contributing to moments of reflection and the production of texts, but also affording greater exposure to the intellectual production arising from the context of the artistic proposals that emanate from the geographical area on which this is centred. This idea of combining artistic practice and cultural theory is a concern that has already been seen in earlier projects, but in this project an even greater effort is being made to reconcile artistic creation with theoretical production.

That is why 18 research centres awarded the classification of “Excellent” by the Foundation for Science and Technology were invited (and have agreed) to carry out research work in areas that touch upon the same concerns as those exhibited by the Next Future programme.

These research centres are set to meet three times per year in order to discuss pre-defined themes. The first workshop was held in November 2009, at which papers were presented on the theme of “Responses to the Crisis”. These workshops consist of a day spent in private discussion between the participants, followed by a second day at which the session is opened to the public. All the texts presented are published and made available online.



✚ Awnings with poems.

On 23 June, Nicolas Bourriaud, the Gulbenkian curator responsible for the last Tate Triennial, gave a lecture in the Sala Polivalente of the Modern Art Centre. The lecture fundamentally dealt with the subject of altermodernism, a concept that the speaker had himself developed and which lay at the centre of the proposal made for this year’s Triennial. The lecture had been eagerly awaited in academic and artistic circles, as was confirmed by the large audience that attended the event.

Most of the promotional materials, the internet webpage, as well as the texts commissioned by the Next Future Programme or produced under the scope of the workshops devoted to theoretical production, were published in Portuguese, Spanish and English. This decision would appear to be a natural one, taking into account the Foundation’s current position on such matters, and it can be considered an obvious tool to be used for creating closer ties between a specific audience (which it is hoped can be expanded even further) and the object of the Programme.

Also held over the course of four weekends during the months of June and July were a series of educational activities, implemented in partnership with the Gulbenkian Programme of Education for Culture – *Descobrir*. These activities were adapted to the objectives of the Next Future Programme, establishing a link with the current activities of both the Gulbenkian Museum and the Modern Art Centre.

In the same way, on three Saturdays in June and July, special gastronomic encounters were held at the Café of the Gulbenkian Museum, in partnership with the Central Services Department. The dinners were served in accordance with the gastronomic traditions of the three continents covered by the Next Future Programme, under the responsibility of the Chefs José Avillez and Miguel Castro Silva. These encounters enjoyed a highly positive reception,

as is clearly borne out by the interest, expressed both by the Chefs and by those attending the events, in repeating the experience next year.

After the “State of the World” Cultural Forum and the Gulbenkian Distance and Proximity Programme, attempts have been made to find different ways of promoting and publicising activities, with the aim of overcoming the limitations of the written press (both in terms of the news items that are published about events and in terms of the advertisements inserted in newspapers and magazines), while at the same time keeping a close watch on the possibilities offered by the internet.

With this aim in mind, the main novelty introduced this year was the creation of a trilingual newspaper (in Portuguese, Spanish and English) which simultaneously promotes the cultural programme and publishes theoretical texts specially commissioned for this purpose, together with portfolios of visual artists. As was mentioned earlier, this is one of the ways of combining the artistic programme with theoretical production, which will, we hope, make it possible to provide a better contextualisation of what it is that we are seeking to achieve. This newspaper will be published three times a year. The impact of the newspaper/programme and the *Próximo Futuro/Next Future* brand has met with enormous approval at both a national and an international level, and, on several occasions, we have received requests for copies of this newspaper from national and foreign institutions, as well as embassies, requests that we have naturally been pleased to meet.