

PARTIS  
Artistic Practices  
for Social Inclusion

# Art, Reinvention and Futures

 CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION

**PARTIS Community  
Artistic Practices  
2019-2022**

coordination Hugo Cruz

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RT.

IS.



**Art, Reinvention and Futures.**  
**PARTIS Community Artistic Practices 2019-2022**

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In recent years, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has placed great emphasis on promoting the civic role of the arts, seeking to enhance the role that the arts can play in building more inclusive, fair and sustainable communities. In this sense, the Foundation has developed a shared work agenda in the different regions where it operates, namely in Portugal, the UK and France.

In the United Kingdom, it is worth highlighting the *UK Award for Civic Arts Organizations*. Currently in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, this award aims to highlight notable work of cultural organisations, demonstrating different models of artistic participation and co-creation. More recently, in France, the Foundation launched the *Prix Social Practice Arts*, in partnership with the Edmond de Rothschild Foundations and the Centquatre-Paris, seeking to encourage the development of new participatory art practices in that country.

In Portugal, the anchor-project of this work agenda has been the PARTIS initiative. Created in 2013, the initiative's main objective is to promote equitable access for all to artistic creation and cultural participation. Through this initiative, the Foundation has supported participatory art projects, selected by competition, that bring together professional and non-professional artists in shared co-creation and learning processes. It thus seeks to highlight the role of art in developing skills, strengthening the feeling of identity and belonging, and building more resilient communities. There have already been 5 editions of the competition, the last two in partnership with the "la Caixa" Foundation, and 80 projects in different regions of Portugal have been supported.

This book reports on the projects supported under the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the PARTIS initiative. Coordinated by Hugo Cruz, an authoritative voice in the fields of Art and Community, the book itself is an exercise in participation, including testimonies and reflections of supported projects, the views of external evaluation teams, and the learnings of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation team involved in the management of the initiative. It also has a preface by Tiago Rodrigues, artistic director of the Festival d'Avignon and member of the PARTIS selection jury.

More than seeking to convey certainties and share successes, this book aims to show how the path of participatory art is made not only of enthusiasm, but also of doubt, with moments of hesitation and growth. It is perhaps in such challenging times that the questions that most need to be answered arise: Are we managing to develop effective models of co-creation and participation? Are we managing to build more cohesive and equitable communities? More than a manual of answers, this book seeks to be an exercise in asking questions.

In 2023, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation begins a new cycle of work governed by the guiding principles of equity and sustainability. In this context, promoting the right of all people to cultural participation will be one of its strategic priorities, reinforcing the centrality of the civic role of the arts. This will mean intensifying its support for artists and organisations working in these fields, creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, and establishing partnerships with cultural institutions and other national and European foundations to develop this agenda.

In one of his letters, Calouste Gulbenkian referred to the consoling power of art in the face of life's disappointments. That moment is only the beginning of the transformation that art can bring about in each of us and in our communities. It is this transformation that we seek to promote each day.

Martin Essayan  
*Trustee of the Calouste  
Gulbenkian Foundation*

January 2023



Tiago Rodrigues



Enxoval © Carlos Porfírio

The forest is  
change

To tell the story of a forest, we should not think of the whole. If it is the forest we want to talk about, then we have to tell the story of a tree. It is in the detail of a trunk, a branch or a leaf that we find the deep meaning that allows us to understand the collective notion of forest. It is the intellect and imagination of those who listen to the story that form the idea of the forest.

This book tells the story of 14 trees, projects carried out in the context of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS initiative. Social trees grafted with art, artistic trees grafted with social inclusion practices, and hybrid trees where we no longer distinguish social from artistic roots. Each of these trees had to overcome specific challenges in order to thrive. Each of these trees has borne fruit with its own unique flavour. It is by examining these particular stories that we can hope to build an image of the forest. The forest is change.

The importance of this book lies in its dual function of documenting the past in order to imagine the future. The "forest rangers" of the PARTIS initiative understand that change follows seasons of sowing that are cyclical, though not always predictable, and that only the fruit of a mature tree can sow the trees of the future. This work is crucial to ensure that the process of change is informed by the experience of change itself, in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's conviction that great ideas are realised through time and memory.

This book is a decentralised portrait of a country at a particular moment in its history, a cartography of the imaginary borderland region where art and society meet. It is also a critical handbook of practices and reflections on the transformative power of art, advocating for harmony between artistic demands and the effectiveness of participation, overcoming the binary and sterile vision that contrasts "artistic quality" with the risk of "the social instrumentalisation of art." And it is a book of portraits of people and communities trying to overcome obstacles, using hope as fuel and art as a tool. A collection of 14 leafy, rich trees in whose shade we cannot rest because the forest is change.

Hugo Cruz



Como Desenhar uma Cidade? © Paulo Pimenta

# The pause as a season of reflection

*Art, Reinvention and Futures – PARTIS Community Artistic Practices 2019-2022* emerged organically as a follow up to *Art and Hope – PARTIS Initiative Trajectories 2014-2018*<sup>1</sup> published in 2019, and seeks to record, discuss, reflect and inscribe the action of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS initiative to date. The production of this second book reinforces the relevance of these publications<sup>2</sup>, which seeks to deepen the movement of inscription and reflection that the co-construction of these objects instigates with and about the projects developed, involving their different protagonists: non-professional and professional artists; social, educational and health professionals; political decision-makers; academics; promoting and partner entities; and the Foundation's team.

This possibility of organising thought, a Foundation's distinctive line of action in Portuguese society, grows more robust, making the work in this field more consistent in its ethical and aesthetic dimensions, allowing for more and better reflection and for the sharing of national and international experiences. Since 2014, with art as a starting point and through co-construction, we have reinforced our hope to intensify the powerful dialogue between artistic creation and social realities, particularly those persistently characterised by inequalities. Today, in 2022, with the continuity experienced through the initiative and the fast and complex changes that are taking place in the contemporary world, we propose in the following pages to think about the relationship between art and the creation of multiple presents and, as such, of other possible futures. This publication thus presents an ideal opportunity to pause and co-construct an updated vision of participatory and community artistic practices in Portugal, an exercise that is naturally understood to be incomplete insofar as it does not reflect the totality of experiences in this field.

This book, which records different perceptions on the actions developed by the PARTIS projects between 2019 and 2022, is inevitably crossed by the parentheses in which life seems to have been suspended. While it is true that this pause, caused by Covid-19, had greater impact on some dimensions, geographies and people than others, it has nevertheless been an inescapable part of our

1 Publication available for free in Portuguese and English at <https://gulbenkian.pt/publications/arte-comunidade-percursos-da-iniciativa-partis/>

2 As part of its commitment to contribute to the development of this field in Portugal and internationally via the production and sharing of knowledge, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has commissioned and published material that focus on participatory and community art. *A Restless Art*, the series *Art and Community Notebooks*, and *Art and Hope* are some of the publications available on the Foundation's website: <https://gulbenkian.pt>

individual and collective lives. It is precisely on the importance of this pause, as a privileged season for reflection, that one of the central principles of construction of this book lies.

From the outset, the process has involved creating and promoting moments of pause in the complex and intense daily action of the projects. The intention was simultaneously focused on activating continuous reflection among the teams in order to inform the work being developed, while consolidating the thinking that gives form and content to this book. Pausing and having time to think, reposition, and reinvent with focus were possible reactions to the provocations brought about by the pandemic and which shook Western societies more used to operating on a "a tyranny of certainties" environment. The co-creation of this book was thus proposed as a space for "de-formatting", crucial in a complex field characterised by the dispersion and scarce systematisation of ideas, and by the difficulty in accessing existing thought.

This book is written and published in a space-time characterised by uncertainty, and which is felt to be a transitory moment towards another reality, still under construction, for which, no outlines can yet be defined, despite predictions of all kinds. It is in this space-time that it records and shares the diverse experiences arising from 14 projects developed in different parts of Portugal, each with its own specificities. It is based on a continuous and integrating reflection that amplifies visions, voices and hybrid and multiple languages. As part of this process, we sought for each project to have its specificity enhanced in its relationship with the social and the artistic, avoiding homogeneous perspectives on this field of action to, on the contrary, reinforce the richness of diversity and the activation of critical thinking that are fundamental characteristics of artistic practices.

The thirty-nine authors of the texts, as well as other voices that they invoke, have generously and openly accepted the challenge, producing texts underpinned by various kinds of material and associating each text with key moments of the projects (e.g. audio and video recordings, field diaries and notes, drawings, interviews, focus groups, photographs, etc.). It is from the political, utopian and scientific questioning of this material, which occupies spaces of intersection between different fields and knowledge-production modes, that the richness of this book emerges, integrating ideas and perceptions that might often be thought to be irreconcilable.

The proposal did not involve an a posteriori record of the work developed, but rather the reflexive inscription of certain moments in the life



cycle of the projects, which meant writing in real time. A dialogical approach of permanent co-construction was adopted, seeking to value the specificity of each project, the production of narratives that revealed existing tensions, and the translation of informed and structured thinking about this field.

Over the past three years, I kept introducing various "triggers" in order to stimulate these reflections, beginning with the invitation to record a "ground zero" of each project, including the expectations and motivations of those involved in the processes, so that we could return to these repeatedly along the way. At the following stage, already in the midst of the pandemic, the suggested catalyst points focused on the main challenges and potentialities felt during project development phase. Authors were also encouraged to record the ways in which challenges were overcome, particularly in relation to the pandemic, and which are mirrored in this book. At a later stage, the project teams proposed an initial text structure to be discussed, followed by a first writing exercise. The end of the process, which took place over 2022, focused on critical and creative dialogues that allowed bringing this publication closer to a process of co-construction and shared authorship, in line with what is proposed by the PARTIS initiative.

Part of that journey is inscribed in this book, expression of the pause in the season of reflection, multiple in its voices, approaches, languages and formats, as it necessarily had to be. The following pages are broadly organised into three parts. The first is presented as a prologue that frames the PARTIS initiative and the participatory and community artistic practices at present. The second focuses on available data and provides a reflection on the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the initiative, shared from the point of view of the Foundation and the external evaluation teams. The third part focuses on the narratives of 14 projects that took part in this edition of PARTIS. It is worth mentioning that reflections are offered throughout the book, highlighted with a green background. These are supported by the legacy created and will sustain the production of futures built from the present moment.

And because one is never alone in the co-construction processes of participatory and community artistic practices, or in the writing of a book such as this, thank you to all those who have contributed to this gesture of expression. Thank you above all for the lucidity, resistance, openness, creativity, tensions, careful confrontations, and reinforcement of the belief that it is in collective experiences that we can realise other ways of being and acting.

November 2022

Hugo Cruz



Mare Liberum © Carlos Porfirio

# Art, reinvention and futures

*The future, this word, triggers in each of us, in the cell of each one of us, an expectation of something that will happen later: tomorrow, for example. (...) The future is a parable about something that does not exist. Nobody can beat tomorrow, tomorrow is not for sale. When you think about something that cannot happen here and now, only later, you are playing a game, it is a lottery: let's see if it works out (...).*

AILTON KRENAK, 2022

Ailton Krenak's idea of the future as a space that does not exist, a subjective human projection that, contrary to popular belief, takes place in the "here and now", underlines the urgency of thinking about the current moment of participatory and community artistic practices<sup>1</sup> from the present moment. This book intends to contribute to that exercise, as it accounts for a part of this here and now, conveying a considerable representation of the diversity of actions developed in this field in Portugal, through the experiences of projects included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS.

The Western vision of the future sustains an attitude of postponement and alienation towards the necessary structural changes that the existing realities demand, pushing them into a space, still to be built, that depends intrinsically on the present to which our daily experiences give shape and content. The "old" idea of a unique and perfect future which will "magically" solve present problems,

1 In the context of artistic creation, it is important to differentiate community art from participatory art. Both refer to relationships established between professional and non-professional artists. In the first, this relationship is seen as a collaboration between equals, as a fundamental human right, and the intentions and formats are defined jointly. In this sense, these are meetings characterised by an unpredictability in processes and results, where non-professional artists participate in the different phases of the creative process and not only in some of them (Matarasso, 2019; Cruz, 2021). In the participatory approach, the proposal may be defined in its form and content without the involvement of non-professional artists, or their participation refers exclusively to some phases of the creative processes (Cruz, 2021). This approach is characterized by the presence of a theoretical and aesthetic framework that guides those who are involved, with a defined temporal and spatial duration and public presentation (Matarasso, 2019).

More recently, these concepts are updated in a proposal that results in the designation of community art practices that emphasises their experimental character and the principles of collective creation, the connection to a territory and socio-political context, the horizontal relationship between professional and non-professional artists, the flexibility and openness of processes and results, shared authorship, critical reflection of artists and audiences, negotiation and joint decision-making, and connection to the real concerns of citizens. The diversity of these artistic practices is based on how the participation of communities is developed; on the dynamics of the creative processes that take place; on the identification and development of the themes that serve as the starting point for these processes; on the configuration of creation and presentation spaces; and on the construction of a relationship between professional and non-professional artists (Cruz, 2021).

in which others, and not ourselves, will be the active agents, frees us of our responsibilities and inhibits the production of other possibilities. Rigidity, which reflects fear, frequently puts the brakes on an organic movement of reinvention that proposes what today seems impossible to us, but which needs to be experienced in order to make room for the realisation of different possible futures. This feeling is not new and the world BC (before Covid-19) was already giving an indication of what we are presently living through. If we pay attention to the inequalities, impasses and fatigue as elements of the present scenario, what the pandemic brought about was probably a deepening of these experiences and of structural problems that already existed, as well as the emergence of others.

However, there are positive signs to be highlighted. Faced with technological colonisation, the environmental crisis, and political extremisms from a variety of geographies and actors, a growing number of proposals for social organisation and relations have revealed possible alternatives to the dominant ways of life. It is in this broadened scenario that social, educational and communitarian approaches have increased their connection with artistic creation in recent years, seeking to make their actions more powerful in a wider range of contexts; while simultaneously contemporary artistic creation has been focusing attention on participatory and community engagement dimensions in its creative processes. Considering the strong expansion of this field, any reflection on participatory processes and artistic practices that address social inequalities needs to urgently examine these in deep dialogue with their actions.

The development of these artistic processes in Portugal over recent decades, a period which includes the *troika* intervention, has intensified with a strong contribution from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, mostly through the implementation of the PARTIS initiative, launched in 2013. Today, participatory and community artistic practices, along with other approaches imagined and materialised during the pandemic<sup>2</sup>, are at a decisive moment for their development, reflection and reinvention in the face of risky imbalances between ethics and aesthetics, social and artistic dimensions, or institutional and participatory/community agendas. These risks, which simultaneously represent opportunities for change, reflect the contextual difficulties manifest in today's fragile democracies, namely in the articulation between the representative and the participatory.

2 The publication *Creativity and Resilience: Participatory art in a time of social isolation*, by Isabel Lucena, delves into this subject. Available at: <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/creativity-and-resilience/>

It is important to emphasise in this reflection that, concerning these practices, Portugal is a specific case in Europe. This is largely due to the influence of the principles of cultural democracy experienced in the post-revolutionary period<sup>3</sup>, and to contact with the Latin American modes of production and aesthetics of that time. Despite the generally positive development of the principles of democratisation of culture, centred on access to cultural fruition, it is essential to go further, expanding the focus and contemplating the premises of cultural democracy geared towards citizens' access to modes of cultural and artistic production<sup>4</sup>. Beyond inspiring narratives, the present time requires concrete approaches anchored in cultural diversity and which create conditions for the production and expression of individual and collective knowledge. In this way, the emphasis is placed on the urgency of effective participation in the cultural practices of communities, without an exclusive underpinning in a logic of consumption. It is a matter of deepening a relationship established from the bottom up, contemplating distinct aesthetics without pre-defined hierarchies.

Due to idiosyncrasies in their approach to creative processes, participatory and community artistic practices are well placed to contribute to reinventing creation and the condition of "being together"; that is, establishing themselves as quality spaces for artistic experimentation, considering the simultaneous exhaustion of some proposals and opportunities for political experimentation in the face of, for example, an increasingly reduced public space. The current centrality and visibility of these practices is thus understood as a reaction to the space-time in which we live. Some justifications for this can be synthetically hypothesised: a sense of exhaustion of social, educational, environmental, cultural and health policies; the existence of several funding streams for this purpose, which reduce the precariousness associated with cultural activity in Portugal; and a growing and positive concern with the fulfilment of the principles of cultural democracy.

3 The post-revolutionary period refers to the years that follow the Portuguese revolution of 25 April 1974.

4 In this context, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community is underlined as a central element in the realisation of citizenship and democratic life, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the case of Portugal, the Constitution of the Republic (Article 78(1) ("Everyone has the right to cultural enjoyment and creation, as well as the duty to preserve, defend and value cultural heritage") is very clear regarding the complementarity between the processes of democratisation and cultural democracy. More recently, this perspective has been reaffirmed in the Porto Santo Charter: <https://www.culturaportugal.gov.pt/media/9171/pt-carta-do-porto-santo.pdf>

## Questioning myths and reinventing actions

Departing from the specific contributions to this book and other inputs such as: the legacy of the three editions of the PARTIS initiative to date; an analysis of significant national and international experiences in this field; the evolution of related local, national and European policies; and the growing academic production around this topic, we are able today to question some perennial myths associated with community artistic practices. Such myths, which are contemporary reconfigurations of recurring ideas, serve to obstruct a constructive dialogue between the specific agendas of the different actors involved in these practices, and create implicit and explicit obstacles which need allaying. The five myths presented below constitute a possible encapsulation of ideas, albeit imperfect and under evolution, which may serve to instigate discussion, reflection and clarification in a field characterised by hybrid and intersecting ideas and activities. They are offered as a contribution to the collective construction of a shared, non-homogeneous vocabulary, which aims to facilitate communication between the quite diverse terminologies, actors, methodologies and communities involved in these practices.

### ***"Participatory and community artistic practices solve social problems"***

This myth is based on the belief that the artistic action associated with these practices enables the resolution of social, educational and environmental problems (among others) that more conventional approaches typical of these fields have not been able to solve over time. The specificity of a cultural and artistic approach focused on the resolution of such problems reduces creative potential and often reproduces other methods and interpretations of social intervention.

The tendency to focus participatory and community artistic practices exclusively on their social impact, neglecting their intrinsic cultural and artistic value, is based on a classic vision that opposes the conceptions of "art for art's sake" and "art with a social function", associating the former to a "detachment" from social contexts and the latter to an "instrumentalisation of art." Contrary to this watertight binomial, it is interesting to envisage a continuous tension between the artistic and the social (Bishop, 2012). It is precisely because the cultural and artistic approach has a specific way of building experience and knowledge that it can develop a strong relationship with the social dimension. This relationship, which is more complementary than overlapping in nature, assumes the cultural and artistic dimension as one more dimension of life, essential to broader human development.

***"These artistic practices are good because people have the opportunity to participate"***

This myth is related to the idea that participation in itself is good and is therefore sufficient for a satisfying experience. However, and according to research into participation, the act of participating can take on a positive character when it is associated with high levels of quality in participatory experiences (Ferreira & Menezes, 2012). Approaches which instrumentalise people in illusory participatory processes, reducing involvement to actions previously defined in form and nature, without any input from the participants, are a real and common risk.

The participation proposed within the scope of artistic processes, which takes on an enormous diversity of formats, expresses the same tensions and can potentially constitute a form of "community background acting" (Cruz, 2015). This concept refers to a vertical relationship between professional and non-professional artists, based on the development of processes defined at the outset with little or no room for co-creation and shared decision-making. They are characterised as practices focused on the artistic result, with few procedural concerns, placing technique as the only priority before, for example, the relevance of experimentation and the spontaneity of non-professional artists. In this sense, it is important to consider the quality of cultural and artistic participation<sup>5</sup> as an activator of mechanisms, aligned with democratic principles, which are essential in this field of action.

***"These practices do the people who get involved a lot of good and no harm whatsoever. And that is the most important thing"***

This myth refers to an approach centred on the individual and group, disregarding the importance of any effects at community or institutional level. There is a recurrent tendency in these practices to target only personal benefit in a group context (e.g. development of self-esteem and/or communication skills). Even if we consider this viewpoint important, it still ignores the potential role these actions may play in changing community and institutional dynamics in terms of improving their sustainability and that of other personal or group developments.

5 For more information on this concept and studies on this area, see [www.artandparticipation.com](http://www.artandparticipation.com) and the book *Práticas Artísticas, Participação e Política* [Artistic Practices, Participation and Politics], included in the bibliography of this text.

It is also important to remember that approaches which do not promote quality cultural and artistic participation may contribute to reinforcing an idea that all such participatory citizen actions lack efficacy, with unsatisfactory participatory experiences leading people to question the value of any participation – “Why participating? My participation is of no consequence!”. In that sense, and contrary to the myth, these practices *can* do harm by deepening mistrust and distancing cultural and artistic participation from the broader civic and political citizenry.

### ***"Participatory and community artistic practices contribute to creating an 'us'"***

This myth is closely related to the first one, insofar as it expects these practices to build a united community which, in order to function well, requires people to think consensually. This idea of a perfect, homogeneous community excludes the existence of confronting opinions, respectful disagreement and diversity in communities. These practices may help develop a space for creation and discussion and for the development of critical thinking and shared decision-making processes which do not necessarily correspond to a single "us". It is important to celebrate and accept diversity as an inherent dimension of life that may also enable the reinvention of humankind through the construction of another relationship with that which is beyond humanity

### ***"Participatory and community artistic practices allow people to be freer, more autonomous and creative"***

The realisation of this idea depends on the quality of cultural and artistic participation, including elements such as: construction of a sense of efficacy; connection and mutual influence between creative and organisational aspects of these practices; continuity of actions; a predominantly procedural vision, with the final result seen as just another phase of the process; plurality and reflection; shared decision-making; connection to the territory; activation in the creations of significant and concrete issues related to daily life; social interaction based on emotions beyond rational ones; a balance between action and reflection; an optimal level of challenge in the proposals developed; use of artistic methodologies that bring together artistic, educational and community dimensions; attention to instrumental issues (e.g. adequate schedules and spaces) and the relationship with creation and presentation



spaces (Cruz, 2021). The capacitation of the different people involved in these practices, particularly professional artists, and the development of monitoring, supervision and evaluation processes by agents external to the projects, provide the distance essential to reflecting on the action in question.

As already mentioned, despite a significantly positive evolution in recent years, these myths continue to create entropy in realising the broader potential of these practices. ***Questioning these myths, what ideas and actions can be reinvented in order to build ecosystems where trust, care, sobriety, solidarity and creativity are deepened?***

In light of this, below we outline some ideas to be taken into consideration here and now, where the futures begin. Of course, this is offered as an open-ended proposal under continuous construction, for which multiple future contributions may prove decisive.

## 12 ideas to inspire participatory and community artistic practices

1. Assume "risk" as inherent and necessary to these practices and their unpredictability as a strength;
2. Take up reflection as a daily practice and in a continuous relationship with the action developed;
3. Develop effective community participation in the definition of cultural policies, programming and artistic creation;
4. Value and stimulate the micro-politics produced by these practices as inspirations, especially regarding autonomy and self-organisation;
5. Value the clear political positioning of these practices and the sharing of the resources produced with communities;
6. Acknowledge solidarity, reciprocity and continuous participation as fundamental;
7. Intensify the construction of multi-level work of co-creation, simultaneously political and artistic, integrating new configurations and crossing cultural agents with educational, social, environmental, political and health agents from the community;
8. Set up continuous training mechanisms with and among the local agents who form these networks;
9. Make these practices environmentally sustainable in terms of their production, creation and circulation processes;
10. Reinvent spaces of creation/presentation and technologies for connecting with the public, experimenting with a path of greater proximity, intimacy, in a caring environment that does not separate life and art;
11. Build real spaces that allow the constructive confrontation of different aesthetics, activating different ways of seeing the world and producing meanings, and reinforcing the value of the symbolic in our lives;
12. Learn to seek inspiration in everyday spaces, times and actors.



The necessary changes and the fissures required to bring them about give rise, in the present, to unusual signs of openness to dialogue and of a search for collective construction in the face of persistent vagueness. These signs and their real intentions can only really be measured in those futures, still impossible, that we draw every day. The ideas that circulate in this text, animated by the instigating contributions of the co-creators of this book, provide material for reflection today as a way of continuing to imagine futures. These ideas can be starting points to allay fears and allow breathing, listening and enchantment take their place. But they are ideas, with all the limitations that this also implies. To go further, it will be necessary to "profane" our daily lives, to dare to create in this time-space policies and actions that move towards the dignity of the different existences in the world, allowing an approximation to "cosmovisions". It will be necessary not to leave futures to chance, as if it were a game or lottery, as Ailton Krenak says.

September 2022

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Mare Liberum © Carlos Porfírio



Meio no Meio © Carlos Porfírio





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# PARTIS INITIATIVE 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION

Hugo de Seabra and Narcisa Costa



Enxoval © Nuno Canhoto

Supported projects  
2019-2022



The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's main purpose is to contribute to building a cohesive society that offers equal opportunities and promotes well-being and quality of life among the most vulnerable groups. To that end, for over a decade, the Foundation has been valuing the role of the arts – through their co-creation processes that encourage the participation of all – as a privileged means of promoting change and social transformation.

These efforts gained greater expression in 2013 with the creation of the PARTIS initiative. In the first three editions, 64 artistic projects with social impact were supported across Portugal, representing an investment of about 4.5 million euros.

With these initiatives, the Foundation aims to highlight the civic role of art and culture in Portugal, believing that the democratisation of access and the participation of all in artistic and cultural creation and enjoyment are keys to building more sustainable, cohesive and fair communities.

In the following pages, the 15 supported projects are identified and some of the indicators of this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS are presented.



## COMO DESENHAR UMA CIDADE?

**Lead Organisation:** Associação Cultural Terra Amarela  
**Artistic area:** Theatre, Music, Audiovisual  
**Territorial reach:** Lisbon (Lumiar)  
**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities  
11. Sustainable cities and communities

The project promoted a process of reflection, practice and creation around the key premise of building a collective social space that was more inclusive, accessible and participatory, involving a group of 60 people from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds that live, study or work in the parish of Lumiar.

## VELEDA - WOMEN AND SINGLE PARENTHOOD

**Lead Organisation:** Beira Serra - Associação de Desenvolvimento  
**Artistic area:** Theatre  
**Territorial reach:** Belmonte, Covilhã, Fundão  
**SDG:** 5. Gender equality  
10. Reduced inequalities

A project aimed at single women with dependent children in situations of socio-economic vulnerability in the three municipalities of Cova da Beira. The artistic proposal was based on the use of theatre as a creative agent of personal and social transformation, developing soft skills and promoting the initiation to theatre practice, creating a documentary theatre show.

## ORQUESTRA DE AFECTOS

**Lead Organisation:** Associação das Orquestra Sinfónicas Juvenis Sistema Portugal  
**Artistic area:** Music  
**Territorial reach:** Amadora, Oeiras  
**SDG:** 4. Quality education

A project that worked on affective communication in kindergarten through music, in particular through voice, as a way to mitigate conflict that often results in a transfer of problems from the surrounding neighbourhoods to the school.

## SETE ANOS SETE ESCOLAS

**Lead Organisation:** Al Kantara Associação Cultural

**Artistic area:** Dance, Theatre, Audiovisual

**Territorial reach:** Almada, Porto

**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
10. Reduced inequalities

Artistic workshops with young people from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades in which active reflection was promoted based on performances of the artistic project "Sete Anos Sete Peças." Participating schools were located in run-down urban areas and included young people in situations of social vulnerability.

## MEIO NO MEIO

**Lead Organisation:** Artemrede – Teatro Associados

**Artistic area:** Dance, Music, Theatre

**Territorial reach:** Almada, Barreiro, Lisbon, Moita

**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities

A multidisciplinary project with dance as its main subject which promoted the empowerment, learning opportunities and active citizenship of young people and adults in different situations of social vulnerability, residents in four municipalities associated with Artemrede.

## ORQUESTRA DE CORDAS DA AJUDA

**Lead Organisation:** Yellow Cusca Associação Cultural

**Artistic area:** Music

**Territorial reach:** Lisbon (parish of Ajuda)

**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
10. Reduced inequalities  
11. Sustainable cities and communities

This project tackled the various problems identified among children in situations of social vulnerability in the parish of Ajuda, seeking, through the creation of a Community Choir, to promote cohesion between the different generations that compose it.

### **CORPOEMCADEIA**

**Lead Organisation:** Companhia Olga Roriz  
**Artistic area:** Dance  
**Territorial reach:** Sintra (Linhó Prison)  
**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities

An artistic project that brought the experience of dance and theatre to a group of inmates aged between 18 and 30 while serving their sentences, creating spaces for experimentation and reflection on human identity and experience and, at the same time, making society aware of the added value of this type of intervention.

### **DIÁRIOS DE UM INTERIOR**

**Lead Organisation:** Associação EPSEDUSA – Espaço de Psicologia, Educação e Saúde  
**Artistic area:** Photography  
**Territorial reach:** Sardoal  
**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
11. Sustainable cities and communities

Participation through art project whose objectives were the social inclusion of individuals and communities from the interior of the country at risk of losing their identity, history and culture and the development of artistic, cultural and educational skills.

### **MARE LIBERUM**

**Lead Organisation:** APORVELA – Associação Portuguesa de Treino de Vela  
**Artistic area:** Theatre  
**Territorial reach:** Lisbon and Oeiras (Education Centres)  
**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
10. Reduced inequalities

A pilot project that worked with young people in three educational centres in Lisbon, based on the conviction that these young people lack the differentiating and worldly experiences required to fully reintegrate into society and the educational community, and seeking, through physical and artistic stimulation, to help them develop their self-esteem, creative capacity and team spirit.

## LAB INDANÇA

**Lead Organisation:** Municipal Council of Santa Maria da Feira  
**Artistic area:** Dance  
**Territorial reach:** Santa Maria da Feira  
**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities

An inclusive dance project focused mainly on people in situations of social vulnerability, with and without cognitive, motor, visual or hearing disabilities, and which sought to overcome social barriers of prejudice in relation to disability through experimentation and learning activities, reflection, awareness and the production of knowledge.

## FILARMÓNICA ENARMONIA

**Lead Organisation:** Bengala Mágica – Associação de Pais, Amigos e Familiares de Crianças, Jovens e Adultos Cegos e de Baixa Visão  
**Artistic area:** Music  
**Territorial reach:** Lisbon, Cadaval  
**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
10. Reduced inequalities

This project aimed to promote musical training and the practice of wind and percussion instruments among children, young people and adults who are blind or have low and normal vision in the city of Lisbon.

## ENXOVAL – TEMPO E ESPAÇO DE RESISTÊNCIA

**Lead Organisation:** PELE – Associação Social e Cultural  
**Artistic area:** Music, Theatre, Visual Arts  
**Territorial reach:** Porto, Amarante  
**SDG:** 5. Gender equality  
11. Sustainable cities and communities

Starting from the idea of the trousseau (*enxoval*) as a social representation of the female condition that crosses different generations, this project proposed the collective creation of another trousseau, built by men and women, that would reveal the will to question and transform gender stereotypes, and that would open spaces of freedom and inspire a desire for change.

## SOB O MESMO CÉU

**Lead Organisation:** InPulsar – Associação para o Desenvolvimento Comunitário

**Artistic area:** Visual Arts, Audiovisual, Urban Art

**Territorial reach:** Leiria

**SDG:** 4. Quality education  
10. Reduced inequalities

Project focused on the community of the Quinta do Alçada housing estate, considered a priority intervention area. It was aimed at expanding social development policies and action in the public space, seeking to rethink spaces as meeting places for the integration of people, training and the construction of citizenship.

## NOTAS DE CONTACTO – OCPSOLIDÁRIA AT CERCIOEIRAS

**Lead Organisation:** Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa

**Artistic area:** Music

**Territorial reach:** Oeiras

**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities

The project developed musical actions and activities oriented to expand the capacities of people with disabilities, promoting their quality of life and integration in the community and contributing to the promotion of an inclusive society.

## LADO P

**Lead Organisation:** Teatro do Silêncio Associação

**Artistic area:** Theatre, Music, Audiovisual

**Territorial reach:** Oeiras (Caxias Prison)

**SDG:** 10. Reduced inequalities

This project sought to provide prisoners and their families with different instruments of artistic expression to help them communicate with each other and, at the same time, to produce objects that would raise awareness of this reality, based on artistic practices.

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implementation indicators

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**132** applications received    **15** lead organisations    **178** partner organisations

**1021** female  
**920** male

**1941** direct participants

**1278** 0-25 years old  
**611** 26-64 years old  
**52** 65+ years old

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issues  
(multiple choice)

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**553** absence of spaces for expression of own culture

**408** difficulty or impossibility of accessing cultural products or facilities

**403** financial hardship

**334** social and/or geographic isolation

**251** special needs

**192** migrants/asylum seekers/ethnic minorities

**201** children and young people at risk

**102** imprisonment/deprivation of liberty

**254** professionals  
(with an employment contract, including part time)

**133** volunteers



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artistic area

(main, there are also multidisciplinary projects)

11 performance projects

2 audiovisual projects

2 visual arts projects

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investment

CGF

€1,044,000

external leverage

€757,753

€1,801,753

TOTAL

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events

163 public events

8 PARTIS projects showcased at CGF

40522 audience



# Aiming higher, breaking ground, stabilising partnerships and alignments

The path of the PARTIS initiative  
at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

*The PARTIS initiative (...) stands out for its impact potential and its capacity to generate systemic change. (...) There is evidence of systematic concern with continuous improvement, with capturing learning and its incorporation in the initiative's design. Knowledge sharing and networking is an objective pursued within the initiative (...). Knowledge sharing with external entities is also present in this initiative, through the reflection documents produced, the relationship with the academic world, and Conferences on the theme. Internally, there is a concern with the involvement of other departments of the Foundation in the Initiative's activities or with the sharing of information. The initiative is transparent in its communication, especially from the point of view of the organisations / projects supported and their outputs.*

IN ESTUDO SOBRE OS CLUSTERS DE GRANTGIVING DA FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN NO PERÍODO 2018-2021, CATÓLICA PORTO BUSINESS SCHOOL, APRIL 2021, PP. 106-108.

\* Emphasis by the author of the article.

## The genesis of the PARTIS initiative

On 18 July 1956, the statutes of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation were published in the *Diário do Governo* (Government Gazette), with Article 4 of Chapter III stating that "(...) the purposes of the Foundation are charitable, artistic, educational and scientific" (p. 1098).

Throughout its more than 60 years of existence, the various boards of the Foundation have sought to adjust their actions in order to fulfil, as optimally as possible, this ambitious and comprehensive mission, bequeathed by the Founder, to act in areas as wide and diverse as those listed above.

In 2006, the Foundation celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, producing a vast number of reflections on its past while envisaging and idealising its future. In the book *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian – Cinquenta anos 1956-2006*, the book's coordinator, António Barreto, underlined:

*It is also true that one does not always know or understand the Foundation's intentions. Its traditional style has been above all to respond to external requests. (...) In almost all sectors, there was no visible strategy, programme or even medium or long-term objectives (p. 65).*

In 2007, within the framework of ongoing work around the theme of Migrations by the Foundation's Health and Human Development Department, under the leadership of Luísa Valle, a partnership was established with Amadora Municipal Council to enable a closer presence in the areas where problems were found. Through this partnership, and within the framework of this Service's work on migrations, it was possible to break the reactive cycle underlined by Barreto and to aim at proactively designing, in partnership, a medium-long term intervention with local agents in order to pilot new methodologies that would seek to break cycles of poverty. With a special focus on children and young people, always in co-construction with the Municipal Council and different actors of civil society on the ground, it was possible to develop "Projeto Geração" (Generation Project) over 8 years and to pilot different approaches with a strong focus on the reduction of school absenteeism and failure rates. It was here, in this local partnership, that the first seeds of what would become the PARTIS initiative started to be sown.

Over time, interventions in the area of "pure" training (Oficina dos Penteados – Hairstyling Workshop) or sport (Escola de Judo Nuno Delgado – Nuno Delgado Judo School) demonstrated the impact that this kind of approach could have on changing the behaviours and the organisational climate within schools. An early project that particularly stood out was "Orquestra Geração", developed in partnership with the Music School of the National Conservatory, seeking to adopt and adapt for the national context the successful "El Sistema" of Venezuela. Through one of the most obvious artistic expressions – music – the project sought to break away from local views that neglect erudite/classical music and to demonstrate the impact that learning solfège and the discipline of playing a musical instrument can have in various areas of a young person's life.<sup>1</sup>

Over a few years, within the same framework of "Projeto Geração", other approaches were piloted through artistic practices, including photography, video, creative writing and theatre, demonstrating the transformative power of art,

<sup>1</sup> About Orquestra Geração, see the chapter "Orquestra Geração 2007-2014: a inclusão pela música" in *Arte e Comunidade* [Art and Community], coordinated by Hugo Cruz, 2015, pp. 289-312.

and empowering children and young people to become real actors and protagonists of community life.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the positive individual impacts, numerous improvements were witnessed in terms of the dynamics and immaterial routines in local spaces<sup>3</sup> such as schools, community centres, social areas, and the streets themselves.

Between 2010 and 2013, new partnerships emerged in new and diverse territories where migrant populations (and descendants of migrants) were in the majority, but always with the common thread of art as a tool for individual empowerment and social transformation.<sup>4</sup>

In 2013, already within the framework of the Gulbenkian Human Development Programme (PGDH), in view of the awareness that participatory artistic practices can generate positive social impact in more societal domains than just the urban space marked by migration, it was decided to move forward with the preparation and launch of an open call, at the encouragement of then board member Dr. Isabel Mota. The PARTIS initiative (an abbreviation created at the time for *Práticas ARTísticas para a Inclusão Social* – Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion) was launched in 2013 after consultation with various stakeholders (internal and external to the Foundation), seeking to fill a gap in terms of existing funding in Portugal and to open a space for reflection and validation of this type of approach with regard to the transformation of individuals, families and communities in situations of great social vulnerability.

As an initiative that unquestionably touches three of the Foundation's statutory areas (Arts, Charity/Beneficence and Education), PARTIS aligned most clearly with the Foundation's distributive area, more connected to support for social interventions developed by civil society organisations in Portugal.<sup>5</sup>

2 A concrete example was the “Kê Li Kê Lá” project by Vende-se Filmes.

3 See the external evaluation report of Orquestra Geração: *Orquestra Geração – Impacto 2.0*, João Reis, Marina Carreiras and Jorge Malheiros, Centro de Estudos Geográficos and Instituto de Empreendedorismo Social, June 2015.

4 For example: Hip Hop de Batom; Hip Hop pela Paz; Nu Kre Bai na Bu Onda; Orquestra Todos; Da Rua para o Palco; Kê Li Kê Lá.

5 For more information on the first two editions of the PARTIS initiative, see the work *Art and Hope – PARTIS Initiative Trajectories 2014-2018*, coordinated by Hugo Cruz (2019).

## The first internal partnerships

In the preparation for the open call, several conversations were held and advice sought, both within and outside the Foundation.

Because the focus of this chapter lies in the importance of dialogue and partnerships between departments of the Foundation, we will not detail here the external conversations that took place. Even so, we cannot fail to underline the importance external conversations had for an actor aiming to enter new territory, seeking to identify and fill existing gaps, but not to ignore existing work, developed by reference institutions such as the Fundação Casa da Música or the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II and, in parallel, all the academic reflection already produced, especially Hugo Cruz's publications.

Due to their importance for the design of the initiative, in this section we highlight two departments of the Foundation which, from the very first moment, helped shape the PARTIS initiative, albeit in different ways:

- The programmer of the Next Future initiative, António Pinto Ribeiro, who, despite doubts as to the approach, underlined points that have so far proved central to the implementation of the initiative, including a suggestion to open the range of "artistic languages" beyond performance. As stated at the time, "not all of us like to be exposed on stage, but we can equally grow and benefit from the transformational power of artistic practices behind a camera, in the construction of a set, or in the production of a work of fine art"<sup>6</sup>;
- The UK Branch and its coordinator of the Sharing the Stage initiative, Isabel Lucena, that despite some significant differences, was also developing a grant giving strand to support ideas aimed at social transformation through performance-based projects carried out as co-creations between professionals and non-professionals.

Another crucial moment of this proximity with the UK Branch was the joint commissioning from François Matarasso of the work *A Restless Art*, written between 2017 and 2019,<sup>7</sup> having subsequently become a key reference for numerous arts-related higher education courses.

6 Quote not exact, but close to that shared in 2013 by António Pinto Ribeiro.

7 Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation editions in English and Portuguese (2019).

## The exceptional receptiveness of the various CGF arts departments

In January 2014, within the framework of the first PARTIS cohort, 17 projects with very distinct but highly ambitious aims got off the ground. Between 2015 and 2016, new challenges and questions arose from the implementation of these projects on the ground which the PGDH was ideally placed to attend to, while others were clearly "outside" the capacities and skills of this department of the Foundation.

It is in this period that one of the most remarkable transformations achieved by the PARTIS initiative began. Despite close physical proximity – sometimes just a corridor away – over the years a siloed working environment began to crystallise, with very little room for collaboration between the Foundation's different departments. At times, there even seemed to be a kind of dialectic (almost a rivalry for resources) between "direct activities" (Museums, Orchestra, Educational Services, Art Library) and the "indirect and/or distributive activities" (Support programmes/grants/scholarships).

When analysing the presidency of Emílio Rui Vilar, António Barreto (2007) underlines:

*Only recently, over the last decade, a new trend has been emerging: that of defining a strategy, programming and planning for the long term (...). This means that the Foundation is preparing to abandon an extensive method, which consists of helping everyone who asks for help, and to adopt an intensive method, that is, to concentrate means and initiatives. This seems to be the trend with the administrations led by Emílio Rui Vilar. This would have further implications. Firstly, that of preferring indirect activities, to the detriment of direct ones (...)* (p. 65).

Over time, the existence of an initiative stemming from the so-called indirect/distributive activities and focused on the transformational power of artistic practices enabled approximations, collaborations and effective internal partnerships between the PGDH and the Music Department,<sup>8</sup> the Museum(s) Educational Services,<sup>9</sup> the Gulbenkian Culture Programme and the Gulbenkian Art Library/Archive itself.<sup>10</sup>

8 Projects: "Ópera na Prisão"; "Mãos que Cantam"; "IBISCO", among others.

9 Projects: "RefugiActo"; "Imagine Conceptuale"; "VELEDA – Women and Single Parenthood".

10 "Sete Anos, Sete Escolas" project.

Throughout this period (2014-2022), we witnessed (and contributed to) an approximation between the so-called direct activities of the Foundation and this type of participatory approach of co-creation in the artistic programming offered by the Foundation. Small but symbolic actions such as the hiring of supplementary musicians for the Gulbenkian Orchestra from among former students of the Geração orchestras or the collaboration of refugees in Portugal (participants of the PARTIS RefugiActo project) as temporary mediators of the Islamic Art Room of the Founder's collection are examples of this openness and collaboration.

Some other high impact examples deserve to be highlighted here:

- The presence on the judging panel for all PARTIS open calls of directors of other departments more closely linked to culture, such as the Next Future initiative, the Gulbenkian Culture Programme, the France Delegation and the Music Department;
- The involvement, far beyond what was normal and expected, of the technical teams from the Foundation's Central Services (events, stage, sound, light, scenography, etc.), facilitating sophisticated adaptations of stages to the characteristics of those involved (both on and off stage) during public performances, providing optimised personal and collective fulfillment for those having the experience of working on a professional stage;
- The collaboration of the Music Department from the outset, making the Gulbenkian Orchestra available to accompany performances in the Grand Auditorium of the adaptation of the opera "Don Giovanni" and, later, of two more pieces at the Prison in Leiria and at the CGF itself, "Così fan tutte" in 2019, and "O tempo somos nós" in 2022;
- The collaboration of the Museum(s) and its/their respective educational service(s) in adapting guided tours to audiences that do not usually visit places like the Gulbenkian Foundation, adjusting expectations, encouraging involvement and participation and lowering levels of anxiety and tension;
- The exemplary cooperation with the Gulbenkian Museum (exhibition design) and its educational services team specialised in audiences with special needs in setting up and running the activities for the exhibition "Seeing with other eyes" (photographs taken by people who are blind or have low vision).



Following the maxim "the path is made by walking", it seems to us, in 2022, that we have entered a period of transversal collaboration between direct and distributive departments, very different to what existed in 2013. Today, effective, quality-focused collaborations, through the excellent professionals at the Foundation, provide authentic moments of individual and collective transformation, not only for non-professional participants, but also for the professionals that work alongside them. New audiences that come to the Foundation to witness the artistic results/objects developed by the PARTIS projects are also key beneficiaries.

### The greatest challenges (past, present and future)

If multiple achievements were accomplished over these almost 10 years of the PARTIS initiative, many challenges are still present, inside and outside the Foundation.

Some examples concerning the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the PARTIS initiative was the subject of an internal audit in 2020/2021. Although it received top marks, some of the recommendations for future adjustments were aimed at making the procedures even more bureaucratic, complicating the relationship between funder and funded, that we seek to be based on the vision of the Foundation as a partner and not as the "owner";
- Within the Foundation, we continue to have different readings of what participation and co-creation are. As repeatedly underlined in several forums by the coordinator of this publication, Hugo Cruz, it is urgent to develop a common vocabulary that everyone understands and employs;
- In addition to the previous point, we continue to witness internally some options for "easy ways" of "simulated" participation, but with a quick positive return. True participation of non-professionals implies investment of time, knowledge and financial resources. Following this line, the return is much more rewarding and aligned with the Foundation's mission;
- - Perhaps the greatest challenge of all: how to incorporate all projects into a single programme of artistic-cultural events of the Foundation? There is a huge gap between the programming capacity of a Museum or a Music Department (working with a minimum

time horizon of two years in advance) and the programming of this type of participatory projects, in which it is usually only after two years of activity that it is possible to understand what the artistic object resulting from it may be (and if it has the potential for public presentation).

Constructive dialogue focused on the interests of the CGF as an institution and not on the limited interests of each department has shown us that there is space and will for the challenges listed to be addressed in coming years by acting in a joint and coordinated manner.

## Final reflections

The mission established for the PARTIS initiative is to "value the role of arts through co-creation processes which stimulate the participation of all, as a privileged means of promoting change and social transformation."

A lot has happened between 2013 and 2022. Through its support and several knowledge-sharing initiatives (conferences, seminars, publications), we believe that the PARTIS initiative, truly innovative and groundbreaking in 2013, has contributed to the emergence of new private and state programmes and lines of support, much more aligned with the vision outlined above.

What is the future of PARTIS? To become complacent and reproduce cycles of support that are "easy" and virtually identical? Or to continue breaking new ground and filling in the existing gaps, further promoting the sharing of knowledge and transformational experiences?

In the words of A. Barreto in 2007:

*(...) This is the great strategic discussion surrounding the Gulbenkian Foundation itself, which has been going on for over a decade. To what extent should its activity be supplementary or complementary to that of the public and private initiatives? Or should it be above all avant-garde, dealing essentially with what makes a difference, with what is new, and with what would never have been done or arrived in Portugal before?*

A. BARRETO, 2007, P. 66

Having overcome so many obstacles and achieved so many goals (internal and external to the Foundation), we are confident that we will continue (through direct and distributive activities) to break new ground and consolidate, with evidence, this domain of participatory artistic practices in Portugal, leading by way of example in the European philanthropic context.

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Enxoval © Paulo Pimenta

Art is the reality of  
the dream<sup>1</sup>

My relationship with PARTIS began in 2013, when I submitted an application for the initiative's first edition. The project received support and I thus became the coordinator of a project supported by PARTIS for three years (2014-2016). During this period, I expanded my experience in the field of community-based art and discovered a series of questions, tensions and possibilities that led me to want to further deepen my understanding of this artistic domain and its potential to actively contribute to people's quality of life and to a fairer society. Shortly after, in January 2018, I joined the PARTIS management team. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the initiative, to which this book is dedicated, was the first that I oversaw in this position. It appeared that I had changed sides, moving from those developing artistic projects with communities on the ground, to those who fund these projects. Yet, if I had changed sides, my attitudes certainly remained the same. My professional objective of actively contributing to making art present in the development and daily lives of people who, for various reasons, are in situations that hinder or prevent their access to the enjoyment and/or creation of art and to cultural participation remained the same.

For me, joining the PARTIS team was an extraordinary opportunity to bring the two "sides" closer and blend the artistic and social areas, both in terms of my personal process of continuous learning and for the initiative itself. I believed that my experience as someone aware of the realities of making art on the ground could be useful in a team that comes from the Foundation's area of social action and, due to its institutional remit, seldom experiences "work on the ground". Yet if I felt that I could be useful, this was essentially because I found in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS team the space and openness to listen and take on new ideas from someone coming from "the other side." While not all members of the team agree all the time – we look at "the transformational power of art" from different perspectives - that has actually been essential for the initiative to maintain a constant process of questioning, evolution, and repositioning in order to become today something quite different from what it was in its early days.

1 Phrase taken from the manifesto *Arte Perturbadora! Manifesto aos pintores inconformistas*, by José de Guimarães, 1968.

## Tension between the artistic and the social

One of the central issues of our discussions and learning is present in the name of the initiative itself: PARTIS – Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion. Phrases such as "art as a means of promoting social inclusion" or "art at the service of social transformation" have been fertile territory for reflection and evolution.

From what perspective do we look at art and its transformative power? Is art a means to intervene in "situations of social vulnerability", or is art an end in itself? Or can it be both?

Art, in itself, does not transform situations of social vulnerability. Rather, it offers people participating in its processes the possibility to fulfil their potential more fully. And by becoming fuller, more creative and freer people, we also have a greater capacity to be more socially involved and responsible, contributing to change situations of social imbalance and to develop a more tolerant, empathetic and fair society.

One of the great differences of perspective on the work of art with communities seems to me to be in each individual's focus and motivation for developing this work: Are we focused on people's vulnerability or on their creative potential? According to Marta Porto in her book *Imaginação. Reinventando a cultura* [Imagination. Reinventing culture] (2019), it is this difference in motivation which distinguishes social work from cultural work.

A social project can make use of artistic practices to provide better quality of life for participants, allowing them to develop their personal skills and their relationship with the world, to alleviate social disadvantage. Art doubtlessly offers valuable tools for the development of individuals and for how they relate and position themselves in society. But the fact that artistic practices are activated in a work process is not enough for a project to claim to be artistic. If the focus is directed towards a social problem that an individual may be associated with, rather than towards the artistic practice and creation to be developed per se, then we should not confuse this work with an artistic project. Distinguishing artistic projects with communities from social projects that employ artistic elements is essential at a time when these practices are becoming increasingly widespread. Indeed, we have found a lack of clarity around this distinction in some teams wishing to apply for PARTIS support for their projects. Let us consider an example for what I am trying to convey: a team approaches us with what it says is an artistic project involving people with disabilities. When detailed, it proves to be a project that runs regular dance sessions with social objectives: promoting the well-being of the participants,

improving their physical mobility, strengthening their sense of group identity and confidence, increasing their self-esteem, etc. The dance sessions culminate each year with a public performance for families that is open to the general public. The main objective of the performance is to showcase the work that that group has developed during the year in its dance sessions. We do not find in the purpose or structure of this project (either in the dance sessions or in the performance) a clear artistic motivation and objectives that make it an artistic project.

In order to do serious work of some consequence, it is fundamental to be well aware of the motivation, the area of intervention and the purpose of the project we want to develop, even more so if we want to improve people's quality of life. Social projects and artistic projects are equally valid and necessary, but they have very different characteristics that should be properly understood, so that they can be better implemented and advantage can be taken of their individual specificities and values.

An artistic project focuses on the potential and creative energy of each individual and on what this can bring to creation that is unique. Its priority is art and not social problems. If artistic practice is "dominated" by the lens of social intervention, it is deprived of some of its freedom and potency which are, in the end, the essence of the transformative power of art. It is in that expectant time and space that characterise the process of creation, in that latent freedom and power, that a person can express him or herself more fully, without the weight of socially imposed labels. And it is also in the field of art that society, as an audience, can witness the uniqueness and value of each person's contribution to a particular work, with a lower degree of prejudice and judgement in relation to that person's social context, status or condition. To look at a person as a creator is to allow that person to be whatever they wish to be, with a universe of possibilities depending essentially on their own choices, but also on the opportunities and conditions that they have available to develop them.

Going back to the example presented above, when developing an artistic project with people with disabilities, our motivation and our focus should be on what these people create or can create, on what they bring to a creation that is unique, and on providing tools for them to develop their creative capacity, instead of being focused on their disability. We also need to be vigilant not to fall into patronising and condescending attitudes when working with people living in a condition that society identifies as disadvantaged. When looking at the work created by these people, it is important to see not what they have managed to do "despite" their condition, but what these people, as unique individuals, present

and propose to us. The work of art places our attention on an object or objective that is outside the person who creates it, and this allows the person to feel less individually exposed or judged and allows the audience to evaluate the object created rather than the person who created it.

The tension between the social and the artistic has always been present in the growth of the PARTIS initiative. And, in this path of learning and maturing, it has become increasingly clear that what differentiates the work of most of the PARTIS projects, and what we intend to continue to stimulate, is the ability to combine the two aspects: having a participatory artistic creation as an objective while also working with the participants of the project on social aspects to which they relate. For this reason, projects applying for PARTIS support need to have a mixed team that includes artistic and social professionals. PARTIS projects are therefore hybrid, opening a new territory of intersection, a new form of relationship between art, communities and social issues. It has been very exciting to participate in this journey of discovery and definition, and also very challenging, as with anything new. One of the challenges we have often mentioned is the lack of a common vocabulary for those working on these projects, particularly in the Portuguese language. Discovering that we sometimes give different names to the same reality depending on our area of expertise, we realised that we needed to create a new vocabulary "in real time" to provide answers and plug gaps. To avoid misunderstandings and hurdles in the working processes, it seems necessary to think about this common vocabulary. It is not a matter of standardising language, but of knowing the meanings which we attribute to the words we use so that we can have a common ground of communication. Of course, this vocabulary will have to be constantly updated to integrate new insights, changes of direction and discoveries that the times we live in provide us with at great speed. This will not be a goal that is reached, but it may provide us with a certain "changeable stability" that allows us to move forward with greater harmony.

## **The right to access and participation**

It is unquestionable that art has characteristics that can be transformative for those who participate in it and that the changes produced in the person often have an impact that reaches far beyond their personal sphere to contribute to societal transformation. Art reveals the power of people to be creative, as well as to position themselves and actively participate in society. It stimulates listening,



exploration, imagination, and unveils a space of greater personal fulfilment while promoting new possibilities of relating to each other, creating a collective space where diversity and difference are natural.

More than looking at the role that art can play in social change, my wish is to look again at art as an essential and indispensable discipline for the integrated formation and development of the human being, as it was in ancient civilisations. A discipline that gives people a greater capacity to fulfil themselves, to be fuller, freer and more socially involved is a discipline that should be part of everyone's background. Not with the intention of creating artists, but with the intention of creating better people, more capable of responding to the challenges of our society. Regardless of their condition, of the social problems they may or may not experience, everyone should have access to art and its practice. To enjoy and participate in cultural life is, as we know, a universal right, but, as unfortunately happens with other rights, the reality does not yet mirror the written law. We must continue to work so that everyone sees this right fulfilled.

Participation in cultural life is also a way to strengthen communities, to exercise social responsibility, to reinforce cohesion and the connection to place, ensuring respect for values such as democracy, tolerance and diversity. There are no true communities without participation. It is participation that underpins the identity of communities.

It is therefore important to be attentive and aware about the level and quality of participation. Making access and participation possible is not enough. It is necessary to create conditions so that those who participate can truly have agency and that their contributions and choices are genuinely taken into account. How do people and communities participate in decisions about their cultural life? What spaces and opportunities are given to them to make these choices? To what extent can they intervene and make decisions? This is also where the difference between cultural democratisation and cultural democracy begins.

Cultural democratisation is a concept based on the maintenance of vertical social power and hierarchy in culture: cultural policy-makers invest in making the art and culture they value more accessible, i.e. they seek to "promote quality art" and to bring their cultural heritage to a wider public. From this perspective, there is a single, hegemonic version of culture, and the public is a passive subject, a receiver of the culture and art offered to it. This policy was developed in the post-war years in Europe and is clearly insufficient to meet the demands of today's society.

Cultural democracy, on the other hand, recognises that there are many possibilities and versions of culture, and that none of them should override or impose itself on others. Each community and each person has the ability and the right to participate in cultural life, to create and to choose which version of art or culture they wish to value. The path of cultural democracy is to welcome different cultures and to exercise spaces of freedom in society so that these different versions can coexist. It is a challenging path, which requires us to let go of prejudices and certainties about what is culturally good and less good, about what people or communities need or do not need, and which makes us aware of judgements ingrained in society that continue to hierarchise culture into "high" and "low", into erudite and popular, considering one preferable to the other.

In our present time of transformations and adjustments in the relationship of communities with arts and cultures, it seems essential to me to continue investing and advancing in two simultaneous movements, which complement and reinforce each other. One is the movement of democratisation of access to arts and cultures, which seeks to remove persistent geographical and socio-economic barriers and inequalities which tend to perpetuate themselves and keep groups of the population away from artistic and cultural dynamics. The other is a movement to invest in promoting and embedding the concept and practice of cultural democracy, ensuring that everyone is able to participate contribute and choose what they want for the cultural life of their community. Developed together, these two movements create possibilities for the coexistence of more diverse cultures and for thinking about the role of art and culture in today's society to be revisited.

In this path of bringing art and people's lives closer together, the participatory and community arts have been fundamental, disseminating and normalising their practices across Portugal in an increasingly regular and consistent way. The PARTIS initiative, which boosted this movement in the country, is increasingly accompanied by other governmental and private entities that seek to strengthen and embed these practices in cultural dynamics nationwide. The next steps must be thought out and executed taking into account a network of partners that is forming and that, if it decides to join forces and combine strategies, may make the difference and create real change in the cultural policies of the country.

## Art transforming itself

Participatory art, which brings together professional and non-professional artists in the joint creation of a work, to which all contribute, provides those who get involved with many discoveries and many challenges. Non-professional artists are challenged in being confronted with a number of issues specific to the artistic field that may be new to them, while professional artists are also challenged in encountering a working reality that is different from what they have experienced in their training and work. The training of arts professionals is a fundamental aspect that needs to be rethought and restructured. If we want to enable everyone's participation and access to art and culture, we must have courses that integrate diversity and the specific needs these people may have if they want to become professionals; at the same time, these courses need to better prepare professionals to work with diverse participatory realities. Training is the foundation for any change we want to make in this area and, obviously, change is sustained from the ground up.

The dynamics of co-creation are also a challenge in themselves, a challenge which intensifies when we bring together professional and non-professional creators. Questions about hierarchy/horizontality, power, sharing, authorship are all delicate issues that need to be consciously considered and discussed by the teams before starting a participatory project.

Levels of participation of non-professional artists in creative processes can be very different, reflecting a multiplicity of artistic approaches and options on the part of the teams implementing the projects. There is no right level of participation, but because integrating an artistic project inevitably provokes expectations, particularly in non-professional participants, it is essential that professionals and non-professionals know and share the rules of the game from the outset: what they can expect and what is expected from each of them so that everyone can participate in a conscious and informed way and for misunderstandings to be avoided.

For some professional creators, working with non-professional artists is a very stimulating experience because of the novelty and surprise that the contributions of "technically uninformed" people can bring to an artistic language. For some creators, the experiences of "real people" from "real life" are an inspiration and "material" for creation. It is this reality that they want to put on stage and amplify through art. There are other creators who, in addition to being inspired and working with the stories of "real people", make room for their art to be contaminated and modified by the experience and contribution

of these non-professional artists. Based on the process of co-creation and on what this allows all participants to discover, transform and add to, this space of contamination and mutual influence is the most challenging and eminently innovative terrain for artistic languages.

When the creative process is shared by people with different experiences, the diversity of vision and experience gains space and, in this way, gains visibility in society. Normalising the presence of diverse creations and creators contributes to breaking down imbalances and discrimination and allows us to start looking at art in a freer way, with less of the prejudice that still assails us when we take into account who creates or participates in art and culture. By this I mean that we are given an opportunity to look at art as “just” art; art happening in a multiplicity of possibilities, made by diverse creators, but “just” art, without extra labels that, despite good intentions, often only reinforce stereotypes. Everyone, from the public to artists, programmers and policy-makers, has a way to go and several prejudices to overcome in this respect, but I believe that living with a more democratic and diverse art helps us to reposition and change our focus: to stop placing our judgement on *who makes art*, and from there pigeon-holing it, and to start placing *the work created* at the centre of our attention. Today, it is the artistic languages that are being questioned, challenged to reinvent themselves, to innovate and to transform their boundaries to incorporate the diversity of the makers of art and culture.

This is art transforming itself. It is also “art being the reality of the dream.”

Among many others, these are some of the themes and questions on which we continue to reflect and which, throughout the four years of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS, were evolving and clarifying the positioning and vision of the PARTIS initiative for the future.

We continue to dream and to believe that art is a promising and attentive reality of that dream.



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Isabel Lucena



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# PARTIS 3<sup>rd</sup> edition - reflections on the artistic dimension

## Background

The present text looks into the artistic dimension of PARTIS' 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. It does not seek to present an individual analysis of the 15 projects that make up this edition of the initiative, but rather to reflect on the relationship between the initial potential of this set of projects and the singular period in which their creative processes were developed, taking into consideration the impact had on the artistic results generated. This retrospective exercise, which benefits from the temporal distance necessary for an objective analysis, aims to contribute to the reflection needed to enable processes of growth and consolidation in the area of participatory art which provides a framework for the projects and initiative.

The system designed to evaluate "artistic quality" in the context of the PARTIS initiative<sup>1</sup> is characterised by a holistic approach anchored on two basic ideas: a) to conceive of project development as a cyclical process in which all stages contribute to the results obtained, including their quality (Matarasso, 2019); and b) to understand that quality is influenced by all the decision-makers involved in the project, including those who are more distant from the creative process (Seidel, 2009).

Considering these two premises, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS could not have had a more promising start. Having solid proposals as a starting point, the first year of activity was focused on the consolidation of key aspects such as partnerships, teams, groups of participants and artistic proposals which frequently need adjustments to the realities encountered on the ground. The progress achieved in this initial phase of the project development cycle allowed this edition of PARTIS to conclude its first year of implementation on a level manifestly higher than previous editions in the equivalent phase, which translated into the following characteristics:

- High quality creative processes and results;
- Excellent levels of commitment and involvement in creative processes by the participants;
- Teams that were highly receptive and capable to adopt the tools and resources provided;
- Highly functional partnerships;
- Academic monitoring as an integral part of most projects;

1 This evaluation system is described in detail in the publication *Art and Hope – PARTIS Initiative Trajectories 2014-2018* by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Available at <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/arte-comunidade-percursos-da-iniciativa-partis/>

- A more structured and profound level of reflection;
- Strong interaction and relationships among peers; and
- A marked sense of belonging to the PARTIS community, characterised by a noticeable increase in attendance and participation in activities organised by the initiative and/or peer projects.

A reflection on the characteristics listed above suggests that the qualitative leap identified is the result of a set of factors, including the greater consolidation of participatory art in Portugal which is largely due to the strategic vision of PARTIS itself. Alongside support for individual projects, the initiative had been developing a community of practice dedicated to the sharing of knowledge and critical reflection on art and social inclusion, organising an annual showcase and conference on the theme, and encouraging academic partnerships that contribute to knowledge production related to the area in question. In addition to these ongoing actions, integral to the initiative since its 1<sup>st</sup> edition, there are other factors whose impact on the qualitative leap is perceptible, and which are the result of adjustments made by the initiative's management team in response to knowledge developed over the course of previous editions. These include: a specific focus on artistic quality in the initial phase of the selection process, which has resulted in better structured and more coherent artistic proposals; and the adoption of an adjustment period in the early stage of project implementation, which allows the teams to fine-tune initial proposals according to the realities encountered on the ground.

Applying the premise of cyclical development on which this evaluation system is based, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS can be seen as a clear example of the impact achieved in the medium and long term, with the significant qualitative leap being the result of six years of learning (reflection, capacity building and skills development).

Notwithstanding this evolution, the first year of implementation of the projects also revealed some weaknesses, namely:



- Capacity building needs related to co-creation between professionals and non-professionals, particularly focused on potential situations of vulnerability of both the participants and the professional artists involved;
- Ethical issues and the need for the development of a "Code of Conduct" offering guidelines to the PARTIS community;
- Issues related to the (physical) accessibility of participants, particularly the provision of transport;
- Weaknesses within some partnerships, mostly concerning the involvement of institutional partners;
- The need for skills development regarding the management of multi-stakeholder projects, including internal communication practices and mechanisms.

Despite the challenges mentioned above, the overall balance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS at the end of its first year of activity can be considered quite positive, with the weaknesses identified in this period corresponding to issues that have proved to be chronic in the area of participatory art in Portugal and, in some cases, also common in the international context. Having been identified at the end of the first year, these weaknesses benefited from the time factor, and had the potential to be addressed in the following stages of the project cycle, through the reflection and capacity-building processes provided by the initiative.

It should be noted that the nature of the strengths and weaknesses listed above highlights one of the premises on which the present evaluation system is based: that of all stakeholders having an impact on the quality of the projects. However, the robustness developed over the first year of project implementation was tested by the unexpected and demanding challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and related containment efforts, demonstrating that project quality is also dependent on external factors that, usually, remain outside the scope of project evaluation/analysis processes.

## Challenges posed by the pandemic

Except for a minority of projects whose implementation is based on annual cycles that encompass the entire creative process, including the presentation of final results, the vast majority of projects that make up the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS was right in the middle of the creative development period at the time of the pandemic's sudden arrival in March 2020. The set of conditions that usually ensure quality for artistic participation in the context in question (e.g. adequate spaces for participants and practice, teams with the appropriate professional and human skills, adequate financial and logistical resources, etc.) were thus subject to a series of restrictions that had a huge impact on the quality of the projects, both in general terms and their artistic quality in particular.<sup>2</sup>

The general lockdown period, decreed to halt the spread of the virus, presented an initial set of challenges:

- The abrupt interruption of all face-to-face activities (and consequent risk of disintegration of the relationships and communities developed through the projects);
- Unpredictability regarding the realisation of existing plans and uncertainty regarding the development of alternative ones;
- Widespread insecurity and fear;
- Asymmetries in access to technology (which proved to be the main means of communication between teams and participants) and consequent ethical issues.

The following phase was characterised by a process of deconfinement which, contrary to the homogeneity experienced during the general lockdown, affected the development of the projects according to their individual characteristics and how these were articulated with health and safety measures that constantly varied in order to respond to local/regional needs without disturbing too much the wider context. This period, which corresponds to the beginning of the “normalisation” phase, was characterised by a set of challenges of a much more diverse nature, including:

2 The publication *Creativity and Resilience: Participatory art in a time of social isolation* presents a more in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities summarised in this text. Available at: <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/creativity-and-resilience/>

- Difficulties in returning to face-to-face settings, especially for projects developed in institutional contexts;
- Restrictions to movement between municipalities and weekend lockdowns, which particularly affected inter-territorial projects and those taking place outside working hours;
- A series of distancing measures that proved particularly limiting for creative languages in which physical proximity is common (e.g. dance);
- Mandatory use of protective equipment (e.g. masks) that affect communication, especially with children and hearing impaired people;
- Reduced capacity in spaces, giving rise to a fragmentation of groups of participants (with impacts on the development of creative objects conceived as collective creations), and placing an extra burden on human resources;
- Impossibility of contact between groups belonging to different age groups, which affected projects whose rationale involved intergenerational relations;
- Restrictions on the use of shareable materials (e.g. musical instruments);
- Difficulties in acquiring material essential to the creative process due to disruptions in the production and distribution chains.

The set of challenges described above, among other impacts, caused a significant fall in numbers, mainly within participant groups and partner networks. This abandonment, which at the advanced stage the projects were in caused a new set of challenges, on the participants part resulted from issues such as conflicts within groups due to tensions exacerbated by the extreme situation lived or by lack of choice (e.g. in contexts of deprivation of liberty where issues such as the end of sentences or transfers between prisons prevent inmates to return to the territory where the project is taking place). With regard to partnerships, the additional demands derived from the pandemic tested the capacity and commitment of various partners, resulting in the dissolution of less robust relationships.

## Opportunities

From the set of unique challenges faced by these PARTIS projects, some opportunities emerged that are pertinent to note, considering that extreme situations usually test the contours of existing systems, leading to exploration, discovery and reinvention. Despite the scepticism of those involved in the projects, the opportunities created emerged in the most diverse circumstances and often resulted in positive impacts at individual, group and institutional levels. The artistic dimension in particular was clearly impacted by needs for reinvention that resulted in a broadening of horizons for participants and professional artists and a redefinition of rationales that produced unexpected artistic results and/or outcomes that surpassed those initially proposed. These opportunities include the following examples:

The use of digital platforms, which soon became consolidated as the main means of communication between professional teams and participants when restrictions on face-to-face meetings were in place, also proved to be a mechanism of inclusion. Despite raising ethical issues related to the exclusion of those prevented for various reasons from accessing the necessary technology, these platforms allowed the participation of individuals who would otherwise find themselves excluded by issues such as physical vulnerability or the impossibility of travel. The opportunities offered by the digital platforms identified in the course of the pandemic include the following: to continue the affective relationship between team and participants, either through direct contact or through the circulation of material related to the project and that promotes feelings of belonging and community; to develop creative activities, from the simple exercises to stimulate the participants to the production of independent artistic results or of material that feeds collective works with different degrees of centrality in relation to the interrupted creative process; to explore individualised relationships that lead to deeper impacts, both in the artistic and personal spheres; to contribute to the development of digital literacy and to the provision of technological equipment (especially in the case of children in situations of socio-economic disadvantage); to enter the homes of participants and involve or win over families, which is extremely important in certain contexts; to extend creative content to colleagues of the participants who are not part of the project (particularly relevant in institutional contexts, such as schools and CERCIs); to create synergies with other peers; and to disseminate the projects.

Project development processes themselves benefited in several ways, including the possibility to speed up network development through the establishment of contact and partnerships with geographically distant peers at a point when the restrictions to physical meetings resulted in greater availability to explore other areas; capacity constraints encouraged a rethinking and reorganisation of groups of participants that, in some cases, allowed for faster progress in skills development (e.g. fragmentation of the orchestra into small ensembles centred on a certain type of instrument, allowing greater individualised attention); the availability that teams of professionals enjoyed as a consequence of the ban on face-to-face activities in some cases allowed for a focus on different aspects (e.g. creation of adapted instruments and inclusive scores) that will allow for greater integration and advancement in the future; changes in the artistic rationale of the projects that allow for more efficient support of the participants' potential (e.g. development of digital literacy, creation of new languages and tools for creative work).

The opportunities for individual and collective reflection that resulted from this atypical period would have been unlikely to occur under normal circumstances. In the initial phase, quite a few projects used the break in face-to-face activity as an opportunity to explore dimensions such as structured reflection and knowledge production. Structured reflection activities included adapting the toolkit provided as part of the artistic evaluation process to their particular needs, including managing the specific challenges faced during the pandemic, and developing internal evaluation processes. Regarding knowledge production, the work carried out was divided into academic work and the production of material shareable among peers. With respect to the academic work, most projects noted a greater availability on the part of academic partners, which enabled progress to be made in the work to be carried out in this area and a strengthening of relationships. Material with a more practical and shareable application among peers included work developed specifically in response to the pandemic context, such as contingency plans that may benefit other projects in similar circumstances. Participants also developed individual or group reflection processes as part of the creative challenges posed by the projects and which included introspective work in formats such as writing, drawing or photography. Other materials produced, despite resulting from the opportunities for pause and reflection provided by the situation in which the projects found themselves, had no direct relationship to it (e.g. new methodologies, materials and reflection texts about the topics approached by the projects).

In the artistic dimension, a range of opportunities for creative development emerged, including:

- A broadening of horizons through activities such as reading and watching films or documentaries related to the artistic area explored;
- The maturation and development of participants' critical thinking through introspective work on the creative challenges posed by the projects;
- The development of independent and unexpected artistic results, generated by the same challenges; and
- The redefinition of the artistic rationale and aesthetics of some projects triggered by both the reflection undertaken and the experience lived through.

## Results

Considering that the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS benefited from a year of extension in order to compensate the disruption of the pandemic on creative development processes, the final phase of project implementation coincided with a progressive return to "normality". It is important to note, however, that the pandemic left its mark at all levels, including on artistic results, and it is noteworthy that, for a considerable number of projects, this particular dimension seems to have benefited from the intensity of the experience. Thus, and except for one case where the creative process was interrupted for reasons unrelated to the pandemic, in general, the quality of artistic results was equivalent to (and sometimes higher than) initially expected from the potential of this group of projects.

Less robust artistic results were generally associated with those designed as long term projects, such as music ensembles which start from scratch and whose participants, mostly children and young people, will have the opportunity to develop artistic skills on an ongoing basis, as the intervention is not limited to the period supported by the initiative. It should also be noted that these are mostly projects which take place in institutional contexts (e.g. schools), and were among those most affected by the constraints arising from the pandemic situation. On the other hand, it is a fact that some of the results of higher artistic quality (in technical, aesthetic and audience impact terms) were associated with highly experienced artists and/or lead organisations, whose knowledge proved indispensable in adapting artistic proposals to adverse circumstances while securing the high quality of the artistic results produced. This is an issue

that deserves attention, as the support to established organisations or artists is often questioned. Established and experienced artists instil artistic rigour to the projects in which they are involved, exert positive influence over their less experienced peers and give credibility to the initiative and to the broader area of participatory art which is still in a phase of consolidation in Portugal.

Still regarding the creative dimension, it should be noted that much of the material produced in this period was of a very intimate and introspective nature, strongly marked by the unprecedented circumstances faced by its authors. Although the works produced do not always directly focus on that experience, its influence is usually present in some way. From this perspective, the body of work generated, largely through creative outputs that were not part of the rationale initially proposed, constitutes an interesting artistic/psychological/social record of the period in question.

Keeping the projects active in the face of the prolonged situation of insecurity and instability caused by the pandemic is a credit to the teams and partnerships that make up this set of projects. Their resilience and capacity for reinvention were decisive for the results obtained, not only in the artistic dimension, but also in their social aspect, in which already vulnerable populations were faced with extreme situations. Many participants from such populations were able to rely on their project to fight isolation and express themselves creatively in relation to the situation they found themselves in.

Keeping up the activity was only possible thanks to the intervention of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which ensured the continuity of the projects through financial support, allowing artistic proposals to be carried out, even in cases in which this implied a considerable temporal extension. In addition to the institutional response, the team responsible for the management of the initiative redoubled its availability, assuming a leading position with regard to keeping the PARTIS community active and cohesive, including through the organisation of a range of virtual meetings. Not intended to replace the traditional PARTIS community gatherings, these virtual alternatives provided moments for introspection and sharing among peers, as well as opportunities to broaden horizons with the participation of guests who offered external perspectives (sometimes international), instigating processes of collective reflection that contribute to the contextualisation and relativisation of individual challenges, while fostering the development of a wider, more diverse, mature and cohesive community of practice.

## Reflections for the future

The extreme circumstances in which the projects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS were developed highlighted latent weaknesses, including socio-economic asymmetries and ethical issues, but also generated a set of opportunities arising from the need for reinvention. The resulting range of learnings is part of the legacy of this unique edition of the initiative, and the knowledge acquired should be applied to contribute to the continuous improvement of projects, initiative and the area in which they fall. This text concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at contributing to this process of growth and consolidation.

As far as the projects are concerned, it is important to work on the recurrent weaknesses in some types of partnerships, particularly with institutional entities whose hierarchical structures maintain decision-makers in the circle furthest away from the projects' creative process. Some of the issues exacerbated by the extreme situation experienced during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS illustrate this need.

It is also urgent that more capacity building opportunities are created, particularly related to issues of co-creation between professionals and non-professionals, focusing on topics such as the quality of cultural and artistic participation (Cruz, 2021), and on potential situations of vulnerability of participants and professional artists.

Regarding issues of sustainability and the legacy of the projects, it is advisable that continuity strategies are discussed and developed, including processes of autonomy. This is an issue of particular importance for the projects of this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, due to the singularity of the experiences lived by the participants alongside their projects and the opportunity to channel intense emotions into creative output.

International partnerships have been growing in number and intensity. It is important to maximise the potential of these relationships, both for individual projects and for the initiative as a whole. Besides opening up reflection sessions to a more diverse and wider community, as happened in the online session on ethics, it is advisable to explore possibilities of international circulation, including exchanges and the sharing of results from artistic activities and from the area of knowledge production.

Taking into account the potential already demonstrated by the Joint Learning and Circulation Initiatives, it is advisable to particularly encourage and support collaborations between projects and/or actors of different PARTIS editions. Particular emphasis should be given to meeting opportunities between



3<sup>rd</sup> edition projects and their peers from the two following cohorts, in order to provide opportunities for joint reflection and knowledge sharing to those members of the PARTIS community who have had this aspect hindered by the pandemic and, at the same time, to ensure that their knowledge contributes to the future of the initiative and wider context.

The significant expansion of the PARTIS/PARTIS & Art for Change community requires a reinvention of mechanisms to allow for its development in an organic and sustained way. The consolidation of communities of practice around specific themes (interests, target groups, partner typologies, artistic languages, etc.) is a good option to generate and share knowledge in a format that promotes natural cross-pollinations, arising from overlapping interests that encourage circulation between different groups.

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Meio no Meio © Carlos Poffrino

# PARTIS initiative 3<sup>rd</sup> edition projects - a critical overview based on ongoing evaluation



The experience of monitoring and evaluating the PARTIS projects, which for Logframe – Consultoria e Formação began with the initiative's 1<sup>st</sup> edition development stage, has proven to be a uniquely enriching "observatory" in the quest to generate change and social impact through social intervention based on artistic practices.

In this third generation of projects, these processes were reworked based on feedback from our experience evaluating the first and second generations of interventions, reinforcing some of our earlier analyses and revealing the key issues and critical factors for achieving success and maximising the potential for social change of the projects themselves and the PARTIS initiative as a whole.

However, it seems fair to mention the unique challenges faced by the projects during the pandemic and its implications in terms of access to participants and limitations on planned activities, giving rise to tensions between the schedules, resources and skills envisaged and those required in an unexpected, unprecedented situation. Our reflections here relate to the initiative as a whole, but we cannot overlook the fact that some projects fell short or diverged from the original plans due to these unforeseen external factors. We will briefly reflect on these projects, as well as making suggestions for ongoing, incremental improvements in the use of artistic practices as a tool for social inclusion.

Following this introductory note, it is important to reflect on the most relevant aspects arising from the monitoring and evaluation process of the projects in this edition of PARTIS.

Our analysis will focus on two main themes: the efficacy and efficiency of artistic practices as a true mechanism for social inclusion and the management practices used in the projects that form part of the initiative.

With regard to the former, the trends observed in previous editions have been reinforced by this latest generation of projects, which is very positive and suggests that the interventions are entering a new phase of maturity.

The following points are considered particularly relevant:

- The potential for artistic practices to encourage active participation in processes of inclusion has been confirmed – the co-construction of pathways for inclusion has a powerful ally in artistic practices, as many of the projects in this edition have amply demonstrated, especially when it comes to developing and enhancing participants' skills and abilities;
- The close relationship between the robustness, "quality" and standards involved in the planning and implementation of artistic practices and

- the concrete potential for artistic practices to be effective mechanisms for social inclusion has been confirmed;
- There has been an increase in the participation of professionals from social sectors in these projects, although this participation is not always as differentiated as it should be. In other words, their specific knowledge is not incorporated into strategies for intervention and the opportunity to enrich interventions in the area of effective social change is missed;
  - There has been a rise in the proportion of projects aiming to take a more robust approach to measuring the social change brought about, but these efforts are often betrayed by shortcomings in the planning and project management processes (which will be examined below), as many projects are aware;
  - In the vast majority of the projects, strategies for intervention were carefully thought out and we found evidence to suggest that significant changes had been made that affected participants; however, since our analysis is of the PARTIS initiative as a whole, we would have liked to have seen more robust systems of metrics and indicators in the projects.

Despite the issues identified above, it is important to note that most of the projects made a real effort to incorporate indicators capable of measuring the changes identified in the "Theory of Change"<sup>1</sup> for the projects in their intervention and management practices, which bodes well for the future.

In the second part of our analysis, which considered the management practices used in the projects, we observed several improvements with regard to previous editions of PARTIS but these often remained at the discourse level rather than feeding through into effective management practices. However, it is relevant to note that the project-based approach is quite a recent development in the professional practice of many organisations and technicians and some difficulties are to be expected. We observed a shift in the discourse and in the efforts made by the projects, even if the outcomes were only partially attained in practice.

1 A "Theory of Change" is a graphic representation of the process of creating social value in an initiative or project. It identifies the logical links leading from resources to activities, and from outputs and outcomes to impacts.

With regard to project management practices, we make the following observations:

- In this edition, the management practices used in the projects had improved overall, especially when it came to using the "Theory of Change" clarification exercise for each project;
- Coordinators and teams were more aware of the need for more standardised management practices and tools to support project management on an ongoing basis;
- Often, there were difficulties "regulating" the ongoing implementation of tools for recording and project management, with consequences for the projects' ability to create more robust narratives of social change;
- The mechanisms used to record and manage information on project activity are not well-suited to show evidence of the promotion of effective social change. As a result, there were constant assertions that social change was being promoted but these were based on "guesstimates" without any concrete indicators or metrics to back these assertions up.

We have come to the end of another cycle of implementation of projects in the PARTIS initiative. This group of projects experienced the greatest, most unexpected challenges to the implementation of their proposed interventions and that, we must acknowledge, made additional efforts to stay true to their initial plans, even if only partially..

Although we have identified several limitations and shortcomings in the projects' implementation and in the way in which human resources are managed in some of the projects, we want to emphasise that there has been clear progress in this edition, even if only at the discourse level, in the degree of concern for evaluating and collecting data on social change, implementing management systems and including professionals from social sectors in intervention teams.

At the end of this third cycle of implementation of the initiative, does the team responsible for evaluating the first three editions of PARTIS believe that further investment and efforts must be made to improve the project design, internal monitoring and evaluation, and effective promotion of greater social change?

In order to answer this question as clearly and directly as possible, we will consider three main themes: planning, management and evaluation, and finally, communication.

## Planning

The sustained efforts made by the team at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to improve the quality and clarity of the projects' "Theory of Change" for the projects with a *clear focus on the social change sought* (which is not always present) must continue. It is important to bear in mind that the motto of the PARTIS initiative is "Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion", so the projects in the initiative only make sense if they focus on inclusion. They are more than "just" artistic projects; they are interventions that only fulfil their mission when they bring about social change. A clear focus on social rather than artistic change is, in our opinion, key to the initiative. Good artistic projects that offer a quality product but do not lead to social change are not appropriate for an initiative of this kind.

## Management and evaluation

Significant improvements must be made in this area. It is vital that systems are put in place to record activities and artistic practices (not only products) and to monitor the management indicators required for decision-making. Systematising implementation monitoring indicators is also necessary, as many projects struggle to easily produce basic evidence of their activity, such as evidence of its physical or financial implementation. For most of the projects, more precise recording as part of their monitoring and evaluation systems may be relevant for lead organisations and their partners in present and future planning processes. This would enable greater clarity on the changes effected, the results obtained and the resources mobilised, allowing the projects to reflect on areas for improvement and to identify the resources and strategies needed to guarantee the sustainability of part of their actions and/or changes, as well as new areas for intervention. Investment should also be made in harnessing the skills of professionals from social sectors effectively within the teams, as is already the case with arts professionals.

## Communication

The main focus here should be on *Communication for Social Change*, where in order to develop a narrative of change we must have data on the changes that have taken place. These data must come from management systems designed to collect robust evidence of social change. Investment is also required to develop more effective internal communication strategies for the projects to

facilitate communication of the results obtained internally as well as externally, thus promoting more consistent involvement of partners and maximising the potential sustainability of certain activities and actions.

At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of PARTIS, we appear to have reached a point at which the initiative's "growing pains" are more apparent. The naivety and "pure" enthusiasm that surrounded the first attempts to highlight the role of artistic practices in promoting social inclusion have faded and we are embarking on a phase of greater professionalism and higher standards, in which investment must be made to improve the quality of the interventions and collect robust evidence of the social change that they have made possible. These may not be the most exciting or motivating aspects of the interventions, but they are part of a collective endeavour that funders and project staff (as well as evaluators, consultants, etc.) are all obliged to undertake in order to do justice to the great potential of art as a mechanism for inclusion. Anything less than our best efforts will leave room for hesitation and wariness to take hold of these projects sooner or later.



Enxoval © Carlos Porfirio

Orquestra de Afectos © Márcia Lessa







CORPOEMCADEIA © Tiago Figueiredo

# PARTIS

## 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION

# EXPERIENCES

**Alkantara**  
Cláudia Dias, Carlota Quintão, Karas, Luísa Veloso



Sete Anos Sete Escolas © Alkantara

# Memory of the future



This text reflects on the "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" project developed by Cláudia Dias and launched in 2016. The project is based on the choreographer's artistic work and, more specifically, on the "Sete Anos Sete Peças" project, which provided the formal and thematic content to be explored with young people in workshops delivered in schools. Produced by Alkantara, the project worked with schools in the municipalities of Almada and Porto. From 2019, it received support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS – Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion initiative and, subsequently, from the "la Caixa" Foundation. The Associação A3S has also joined in, with a view to reflecting on the project's contribution to promoting social inclusion. The text begins by introducing the project, before discussing the main challenges encountered and considering areas for action and reflection for the future.



## 1. The "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" project

"Sete Anos Sete Escolas", by Cláudia Dias, is an arts education project whose main aim is to find ways to promote the social integration of young people through contemporary performative practices. The groups of young people who took part in the project were taken from classes at the participating schools (Years 10-12) and were mostly youngsters who struggled to integrate into the education system, had repeated academic levels or had left school early. In the case of Almada especially, many had a history of migration and different cultural backgrounds.

One of the premises of the project was that it was vital to take not only the young people themselves but also their teachers and the artists as a target for observation, reflection and intervention.

The project takes a systemic approach, including all relevant social actors involved, as this was deemed the only possible way to build systematic channels and practices to promote young people's social integration and contribute to the development of political awareness and active citizenship.

"Sete Anos Sete Escolas" is based on the art project "Sete Anos Sete Peças", which was launched in 2016 and produced by Alkantara, a cultural association working in the performing arts. Drawing on each of the pieces in the project, in "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" Cláudia Dias worked with schools in the municipality of Almada, with financial support from the Municipal Council and the Directorate-General for the Arts. Each year, new artistic creations were developed by groups of young people. Artistic creation was understood as a tool for questioning and learning, as a way of expressing voices and visions of the world and as a trigger to awaken political consciousness.

From 2019, with the piece *Quarta-Feira* [Wednesday], "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" expanded with support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS initiative and, subsequently, from the "la Caixa" Foundation. In collaboration with Teatro de Ferro, the project began to operate in the city of Porto that same year, working with new schools.

The project was reinforced by reflection and the development of a social inclusion dimension, in collaboration with Associação A3S, a research and development association that partnered the project for three years as part of a co-construction approach based on the principles of collaboration, partnership and evaluation.



## MEMORY OF THE FUTURE

Fulfilling the initial plan, project development was based on a series of workshops delivered by artists, which culminated in the creation of art objects by the young people and public presentations of these objects, including performances, exhibitions, films, etc.

Throughout the project, the young people were able to see the pieces created by Cláudia Dias and participate in a range of activities (workshops, city tours, etc.) in different territories. They also had the opportunity to discover the archival practices used at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and visit its archive.

A3S supported the project for three years (2019-2021), participating in and organising sessions to present the project to groups of young people, workshops with young people, interviews and focus groups with teachers, artists and producers, young people's visits to different territories, support for the project's activities and talks on topics relevant to the project. As part of its work to evaluate and systematise the project, A3S produced written materials that were distributed among all stakeholders and participated in several conferences where it shared its reflections.





Sete Anos Sete Escolas © Alkantara

The project met its objectives, which revolved around encouraging active citizenship, quite clearly and heuristically. The objective of building young people's personal and relational skills and their ability to create and find enjoyment in doing so was also met. A process of critical reflection on the promotion of social inclusion through artistic practices was carried out, taking the role played by all the social actors involved into consideration. The book *Sábado. Aprendizagens no cruzamento entre arte, educação e cidadania* [Saturday: Lessons from the Intersection between Art, Education and Citizenship], edited by Luísa Veloso and Carlota Quintão, which will be published this year as part of the "Sete Anos Sete Livros" [Seven Years Seven Books] project supported by Dona Maria II National Theatre, is a key resource for understanding the project as it contains accounts from several of the participants and other people invited to share their experiences and reflections.

## 2. Project implementation challenges

With support from PARTIS, in 2019 the "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" project embarked on a new implementation cycle marked by the challenge of expansion: expansion to a new city, new partners in the worlds of arts, schools and evaluation, and new areas for reflection associated with the topic of social inclusion through artistic practices, which is the primary aim of the PARTIS initiative.

The first challenge faced by the project was to create a management structure capable of involving all partners and maximising their opportunities for participation. The launch of the activities in the middle of the academic year, involving new schools and a new artistic partner in the city of Porto, and the need to meet the bureaucratic and methodological requirements of the PARTIS initiative, placed huge logistical and motivational demands on the project's coordinators and main implementers (coordinators, artists and teachers). This was exacerbated by the need to condense the implementation of the first cycle of workshops with groups of young people into a single semester. At the end of the first year and start of the second cycle, the challenges experienced and areas for improvement were discussed. These challenges included developing new planning tools, organising the work to suit the specific needs of each city and finding ways to communicate, share information and coordinate between the two cities. This was an important first step towards creating a joint forum for coordination and reflection involving all the participants from the partner organisations.

The forum grew over the course of the second year of the PARTIS cycle in response to the challenges and difficulties that arose in implementing activities with groups of young people and in fulfilling an important objective of the project: to bring artists and teachers into dialogue, not only to coordinate activities and organise logistics, but also to set aside time to discuss and reflect on aspects such as the role played by each partner in the project, the challenges of involving larger educational communities and the role of the project in developing skills among young people and among the partner organisations themselves. The pandemic hindered this joint reflection, resulting in huge logistical obstacles that made it more difficult to implement activities with young people. Despite this, the project continued along this path of reflection: the different situations in the two cities were shared to raise awareness of the role of teachers and artists in the project and of representations of that role and create a sense of belonging and sharing with a committed group of people with joint responsibility for the objectives to be achieved by everyone involved in the project.

This pathway was particularly fruitful when it came to reflecting on the incorporation of contemporary artistic creation into public schools, the broadening of teachers' and students' contact with different artistic languages and forms of expression, the potential for artistic processes to play a role in young people's learning and the role of artists in building bridges with schools, including the potential for work on learning vectors such as the "word" or "historic events" in combination with school curricula and formal knowledge. This process of reflection revealed the lack of long-lasting public policy programmes, beyond short project cycles, and the need for studies to enhance understanding of the different worlds inhabited by artists, teachers and young people in order to promote models of work involving the different social actors.

Sete Anos Sete Escolas © Alkantara





Despite falling short of what was envisaged at application phase, this area saw significant innovation and intangible results that were immensely important when designing new, similar projects aiming to link the education and social action sector to the art world.

At the start of the second year as part of the PARTIS initiative, one of the most significant challenges was the gathering between young people from the two cities. Although a gathering had been held during the first cycle, the second cycle gathering immediately sparked conflict. To address this, the project invested greater resources in designing field trips based on methodologies to encourage crossovers and small joint challenges between the young people to overcome the tendency to stigmatise and radicalise their differences and establish areas of curiosity, dialogue and collaboration with the Other. This led to several positive experiences in which the previous problems were overcome and allowed the partners to grasp the importance of carefully designed gatherings. Once again, this process was limited by the pandemic, which caused several of these study visits to be postponed to a later date once the crisis had abated.

The issues of violence and stigmatisation in general, and of gender and nationality in particular, were present, even among young people from the same city, all along the different implementation cycles of the project. This required considerable mediation by the artists and teachers and was viewed as an opportunity to deconstruct stigmas and encourage alternative attitudes and behaviours.

As noted above, the pandemic hindered progress in stimulating, promising areas of work, but it did not prevent important lessons from being learned that have shaped ongoing interventions in these areas. It did, however, lead to considerable challenges when working with young people. In Almada, the workshop programme was quickly shifted online, while in Porto, it was condensed into a shorter period of time as public health measures eased. Despite the challenges surrounding these formats, including difficulties interacting, maintaining working routines and adapting to new rules of behaviour online, there were also several positive aspects. The circumstances gave rise to new methods for disseminating the end results and stimulated new formats. For some young people, it improved their discipline and autonomy.

"Sete Anos Sete Escolas" posed major challenges in terms of integration and diversity management in heterogeneous areas and educational and social contexts and different languages and paces in the components of the project to be implemented simultaneously (art, production, sociology, education). There were huge challenges involved in discovering different realities, learning to deal

with Otherness with the aim of "conveying and seeing worlds" and engaging in collaboration and partnership, which were key to coordinated action with the groups of young people.

### 3. Reflections for the future

Taking both the continuation of the "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" project and its contribution to future projects into consideration, we will now reflect on time, which is a central factor that intersects with different aspects of the project. The first question here is how time is perceived in different ways by different social actors and partners, and how different temporalities can coexist alongside one another within a single project: the temporality of artistic practices, which require more time to allow tools to be transmitted, learned, appropriated and incorporated; the temporality of production, which is much quicker than all the others; and the temporality of schools, which is slower, shaped by learning dynamics internal and external to formal settings and more dependent on bureaucratic procedures than the other temporalities. Finding ways to bring these temporalities together in a way that is fruitful for everyone is one of the main challenges.

Another key factor is ensuring that quality time is set aside to work with young people in order to allow relationships of trust to develop. Mutual trust is a vital precondition for achieving results, bringing about change and developing skills. Indeed, working sporadically for very short periods of time leads to a contradiction between these projects and their objectives. Overcoming

Sete Anos Sete Escolas © Alkantara





Sete Anos Sete Escolas © Alkantara

this contradiction is another key challenge. We believe, therefore, that continuity should be a central concern in these projects, which should involve the entire educational community with the aim of achieving robust collective implementation.

It is also important to consider how and for whom these formats are designed. In their public discourse and management/evaluation practices, these "inclusion" projects draw on models from the business world, which are based on functionalist, mechanistic, cost-benefit dynamics. These models are imposed on totally different realities to those for which they were intended, which often gives rise to friction and hinders progress, as well as creating areas of exclusion.

They are also exclusionary in terms of the way in which working time is calculated and the work of the artists involved is paid. Guaranteeing stable conditions for the artists delivering the projects is key in ensuring that inclusion is also applied to workers in the cultural sector.

Another crucial aspect that is also linked to time is the issue of space. More specifically, the territorial coverage of these programmes of artistic practices for social inclusion in Portugal. These projects are not part of a system of universalist public policies, so their territorial coverage is not democratic despite this being a constitutional principle that should be considered crucial.

In future, these programmes should not just be planned around a temporary notion of continuity but also be based on a comprehensive spatial plan covering the whole country.

It is also relevant to reflect on the extemporaneous nature of the artistic expressions taught at state schools. The mismatch of time and praxis between contemporary artistic practices and artistic expressions in schools must be overcome by bringing working artists and schools together to find ways of complementing and combining contemporary artistic languages and forms of expression with young people's learning processes in order to encourage their development.

Finally, we would like to reflect on our current times and the need to develop a sense of citizenship among young people. Rather than training a specialist workforce for the labour market, the main purpose of schools is to serve as an equal, inclusive space based on solidarity, where economic, social and cultural inequalities vanish. They must be capable to promote social mobility and provide all young people with access to tools that empower them as citizens who are attentive to public affairs, informed, take an interest and play an active part in the democratic system. This is even more important given the huge amount of misinformation spread by the media in general, and by digital media in particular, and the economic interests behind it, as well as the imposition of belligerent, security-focused discourses. Inclusion also entails the development of a civic and political conscience among young people, providing them with the tools they need to tackle future hazards. That was one of the project's aims: to facilitate a space where young people can reflect and discuss matters relating to the *polis*, giving substance to their visions, encouraging them to speak and listen, emphasising that listening does not equal agreeing and that it is possible to build something together despite holding dissenting opinions and promoting the vote as a collective decision-making tool.

## 4. Conclusion

From 2016 to 2022, "Sete Anos Sete Escolas" served as an artistic, social, temporal, territorial space occupied by social actors, art objects, learning and political institutions. It allowed a series of objectives to be met and, above all, encouraged reflection on possible futures among young people, artists, teachers, producers and researchers. It enabled different visions of the world to be compared and created with the aim of countering the division between education and the arts, promoting young people's emancipation and transforming long-established institutional and individual dynamics. Echoing a belief in the emancipatory power of learning and the multiplicity of the respective times and spaces, young people were encouraged to reflect on the non-inevitability of their social status throughout the project.

The memories of this project are more than just records. They are tools for the future, which must be shared and discussed to boost their power to transform.

Artemrede  
Joana Craveiro



© Estelle Valente

# Defining a project with a verb tense: present

Notes on "Meio no Meio",  
an ongoing project



This text reflects on the artistic intervention and education project "Meio no Meio" (Artemrede/PARTIS Initiative-CGF/Municipal Councils of Almada, Barreiro, Lisbon, Moita/Rumo/CIES-ISCTE). Replicating one of the main methodologies used in the project and in the show on which it is based, Joana Craveiro draws on interviews with Victor Hugo Pontes, artistic director, and Cláudia Hortêncio, cultural manager for "Meio no Meio", to create a puzzle made up of different topics, concerns and emotions around what has become and continues to be in the present, a period of far-reaching change in the lives of the projects' participants.



The team received a series of notes and guidelines to help them write this text.

The team was grateful for and happy to comply with the rules on formatting, footnotes and bibliographic references.

The team asked a playwright to write the text, and this is where things began to get complicated.

*Joana Craveiro (J) – For you, is this a past project?*

*Victor Hugo Pontes (VH) – No.*

*Cláudia Hortêncio (C) – It's not for me, either.*

*VH – I mean, I'm still circulating the project with them at the moment and we're designing another project that leads on from this one, that's why it's in the present.*

*C – Yes, because of that and because the project hasn't yet been completely wrapped up.*

*J – So we've established that the verb tense to be used in this article is the present.<sup>1</sup>*

## 1. The first thing to know: this is a project that takes place in the present

He said: it all began with the interviews;  
or: the interviews were a crucial part of this project;  
or: why not write this text as if it were an interview?

It made sense.  
Interviews.  
Getting started.  
Voices.  
The voices behind the project.

<sup>1</sup> Discussion exercise with Cláudia Hortêncio and Victor Hugo Pontes, mediated by Joana Craveiro (19 May 2022).



He said: that pitch I hated making – but our discussion didn't delve any further into this matter.

He did not say: careful with the structure – because he did not know that structure would be an issue in this text, in this present text.

Just as it was *in the other one* – the one spoken on stage and continues, that is also **present**,

as present as any continuation can be – because this is a project that takes place in the present.

Thus concludes this pre-introduction; perhaps a preface; almost an epigraph.

Epigraphs are good; they show us that we are indebted to something.

"The goal of an artwork may be to create a space in which *any* conversation can take place"

HELGUERA, 2011, P. 44

VH – *This project came out of a pitch that I hated making.*

C – *This project is about working late to prepare an application.*

VH – *This project is about a meeting that Cláudia, Victor Hugo and Marta had in Porto.*

C – *This project is about a meeting where we discussed who would be artistic director, and Victor Hugo was the first choice.<sup>2</sup>*

Procedural note: This text was constructed around two interviews with Victor Hugo Pontes and Cláudia Hortêncio; a series of statements requested from the participants; and a creative exercise that I carried out with Victor Hugo Pontes and Cláudia Hortêncio, where the aim was to list all the things that the project is about. The choice of the **present** tense was established during this exercise, confirming the nature of the project and its continuation: "Meio no Meio" takes place in the present; it is happening; it happens; it is.

2 *Idem* (19 May 2022).

I was asked to write the text because I had also been asked to write the script for the show that came out of this process and they thought it made sense for me to write both.

When I began to write this text, I opted for a form of creative writing at the intersection between what I believe in and what this project as a whole also practises: artistic intersectionality, transversality and interdisciplinarity<sup>3</sup>.



© José Caldeira

## 2. The idea of the project

"Meio no Meio" is an artistic intervention project coordinated by Artemrede, and included in the PARTIS initiative run by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The other stakeholders in the project are the municipal councils of Almada, Barreiro, Lisbon and Moita, Rumo – Cooperativa de Solidariedade Social and CIES-ISCTE. The project involved artistic interventions in four territories – Trafaria, Barreiro, Marvila and Vale da Amoreira – and covered a three-year period with an unforeseen pandemic right in the middle. The project has a significant educational component<sup>4</sup>, culminating in the creation of a show with artistic direction by Victor Hugo Pontes, which continues to be performed at theatres around Portugal at the time of writing.

I asked Victor Hugo Pontes where the idea for the project had come from. I thought it was important to establish a genealogy. He referred me to Cláudia Hortêncio, the project's cultural manager and a member of the Artemrede team:

3 For more examples of this artistic practice applied to writing, or a creative form of academic writing, see, for example, Burrell (1997) and Hilevaara & Orly (2018).

4 As part of the project, five educational workshops were held for the participants: dance, theatre, visual arts, cinema and hip-hop/rap, which were coordinated by Victor Hugo Pontes, Carina Silva, Catarina Pé-Curto and Joana Sabala, and Mário Ventura and Nuno Varela, respectively. A municipal social intervention and mediation team was also set up for the project: Patrícia Teixeira and Teresa Pestana (Almada), Maria José Ledo, Célia Gaudêncio and Catarina Gil (Barreiro), Cláudia Matos and Sara Rodrigues (Lisbon) and Sofia Figueiredo and Rita Azevedo (Moita). The following mediators also participated in the project: Mavati José, Celso Fonseca, Cristina Santos and Rolaisa Embaló. Rui Telmo Gomes, a researcher at CIES-ISCTE, provided support throughout the process and wrote the text for the brochure for the show. He was consulted for this article.



*J – Where did the idea come from and how did it start out? Can you tell me the story of the project from the start? How did it begin?*

*C – Actually, thinking about "Meio no Meio", it was a continuation of Odisseia, which was Artemrede's first PARTIS experience and was also a participatory project, but was not based on the same idea of continuity. It emerged from small exercises and from several artists who were involved and who were also working with territories covered by Artemrede. It has a lot to do with the idea of continuity, or rather, how can we offer an alternative to the people who participated in Odisseia and wanted to continue, on the one hand, and on the other, adjust what we thought hadn't turned out so well in Odisseia, which was our craving for results every moment, every year. We realised that the process was much more important than the final outcome itself. That was clearly an advantage in "Meio no Meio" – having two years for training, getting to know each other, sharing ideas, etc. and, only then, the final show.<sup>5</sup>*

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5 Cláudia Hortêncio, interview by Joana Craveiro (18 May 2022).

I asked Victor Hugo again about beginnings. He replied: *I don't know much about beginnings, but I don't want to leave your question unanswered. Then, he said: In the beginning, it felt like we were in the middle, the middle felt like the beginning, and the end hasn't yet arrived, so I don't know where the beginning will be when it comes. Beginnings displace endings and vice versa, isn't that right?* [fictional dialogue]

J – Victor Hugo, can you describe the first day of the project?

VH – *The first day of the project began as an artistic residency at the CEA – Centro de Experimentação Artística in Vale da Amoreira that lasted for two days in February 2019. It was attended by the social coordinators for each municipality, the directors of Artemrede, myself and the trainers – it was the first time we had all come together – and there were also four mediators, one for each territory... It was an opportunity for us all to introduce ourselves and we had a group activity where one person interviewed another and then they swapped, then they wrote a text about the other person based on their interview... After that, we visited the different territories. First, there was a guided tour of Vale da Amoreira by Rolaisa Embaló...; the next day, we went to the historical and new parts of Barreiro...; then we travelled to Almada to visit the Segundo Torrão neighbourhood in Trafaria. That was when I discovered the situation in Segundo Torrão for the first time and I was shocked because I'd never imagined that people could be living in those conditions in Portugal, or that a social setting like that could exist...*

J – How long did it take for you to start interviewing potential participants?

VH – *Six months.*<sup>6</sup>

6 Victor Hugo Pontes, interview by Joana Craveiro (16 May 2022).



© Estelle Valente

We have dates: there is time between gatherings – that is one of the hallmarks of the project. We also have an initial methodology: discussions, interviews and a guided tour of the places where the participants come from. The word *territory* is summoned, bringing with it a *modus operandi*, a vision. It is one of the project's foundations: the idea of each of these places and of mixing or combining them (the construction of new places that transcend geography? People and their life stories as places?). The *places* of origin of each participant will also prove crucial in this dynamic of shared stories.

this project is about countries.  
this project is about geographies.  
this project is about origins.  
this project is about a History that never goes away,  
nor do we ever see it in school textbooks.  
this project is about colonised bodies.  
this project is a *battle*.

### 3. The idea of territory

Victor Hugo said: *I don't know when that word arose, but I know that the word **territory** was always there.*

And I asked: *Do you think that is a suitable word to describe the human and physical geography of these places?*

He replied that I was complicating matters, then he said:  
*But you're right, it is complicated. [fictional dialogue]*

*J – Tell me about each of the territories covered by the project, the geographical territories.*

*C – Starting with Almada, we mostly worked with people from Trafaria and Segundo Torrão in Trafaria... who we already worked with on Odisseia. In Barreiro, we initially wanted to work specifically with the old part of the town and with the gypsy community but it was very difficult: we had a mediator working with us at the start, but he really struggled to convince people from the community to participate... so we ended up focusing on other participants in Barreiro. In Moita, we worked with Vale da Amoreira, which was also based on a continuation of Odisseia... and as well as involving the younger community who regularly frequented the CEA, we also wanted to find older people who were not yet doing so. That was one of our main challenges, but we managed to find Teresinha, for example. In the case of Lisbon, we worked with the municipal library in Marvila, where they were already working with an older community and it was a case of finding young people, as well as bringing those young people into the library and establishing new audiences there too. One of the strongest indicators I recall at the time was that the Dom Dinis school in Marvila was one of those with the highest proportion of suicides among young people, making mental health one of our main concerns...<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> *Idem* (18 May 2022).

The identity of the various participants and the territories where they lived were important. It was important for them to come into contact with one another. Exchange and communication were important. And travel. Travel was important.

VH – *This project is about four territories, but it could be about the whole world.*

C – *This project is about mediation.*

VH – *This project is about difficult social settings.*

C – *This project is about flexibility.*

VH – *This project is about knowing how to dance.*<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. The idea of personal stories

It was Victor Hugo who said: *That first day, we began by interviewing each other.* The idea of personal stories, of each person's story, became one of the foundations of the project. Asking the other person who they are, where they come from, how they got there and where they imagine themselves in three years' time, when the show premieres, when the project comes to an end. This intimate moment became an integral part of the way in which the whole work was developed.

VH – *Ah, and when I think about it, the interview and the intervention began with this idea of an intergenerational project, and there was the assumption that we would work with these four territories and with two different generations. That was my starting point, my square one.*<sup>9</sup>

The project's title was based on the same premise of personal stories intermingling in that open space – the *middle*.

8 *Idem* (19 May 2022).

9 *Idem* (16 May 2022).

VH – *The theme arose because of the expression kind of in the middle, because it coincided with a time when I was rehearsing the revival of Margem<sup>10</sup> and I suddenly heard the phrase "We kind of didn't know, we were kind of in the middle", which is a phrase from that script, and I thought that with these two generations in the project and approaching life as a journey, I'd start out with the idea of the middle. For me, those people were in the middle – of a journey, of life. Some had lived a lot and others were just embarking on that experience, and I wanted to bring these two generations face to face in the show. Since it was a very long project spanning three years, I thought it would be interesting to interview them during the first few days of the project so that we could see after three years what had materialised and what hadn't, what dreams had been left behind and what dreams had come true.*

J – *So the idea of an interview was present from the start?*

VH – *From the start. I didn't yet know what material would come out of it, but that's how I wanted to start.*

J – *Did you have a script for those first interviews?*

VH – *I had an idea of the questions I wanted to ask but I didn't have a script as such. I was basically trying to ascertain who those people were... because I felt that... they needed to talk, they needed someone to listen to them; and as soon as they felt that someone was available to do so, they would share very intimate thoughts and, sometimes, I would have to try and shift the interview in a different direction because it was heading towards an emotional state that I wasn't so interested in; and sometimes, just the fact of asking them a simple question could trigger an emotional state in them as they evoked their memories, they were almost helpless because they were making themselves extremely available...*

J – *Were you ever left helpless at any point in the interviews?*

VH – *Oh, several times. Several times.<sup>11</sup>*

10 Creation by Victor Hugo Pontes, 2018, script by Joana Craveiro.

11 *Idem* (16 May 2022).





© José Caldeira

The first interviews were filmed<sup>12</sup>. They are hugely intimate, powerful documents that later served to allow the playwright to get to know each of the participants. The idea of the interview remained present in the show and underpinned a large part of the dramaturgy, interspersed with clapping between the scenes as a kind of makeshift clapperboard.

– *Shall I clap?*

– *Yes.*<sup>13</sup>

A desire emerged for this synchronism to be attained in life with a single clap. And for everything to suddenly make sense.

<sup>12</sup> Maria Remédio filmed the interviews and a large part of the process. She used this material to create the documentary "Chegou a Nossa Vez" [Our Time Has Come], 2021, which was co-produced by Artemrede and Nome Próprio.

<sup>13</sup> *Meio no Meio*, an original script by Joana Craveiro for the show with artistic direction by Victor Hugo Pontes, un-edited.

## 5. The idea of process

*J – Do you think that results sometimes undermine processes? Or the need for a result?*

*C – I think that the need for results does, yes. When that obligation is there, I think it can get in the way of what is important in a process, whether that's education or people getting to know each other, interacting with one another, feeling at ease, building trust. And I think that difference was apparent with Victor Hugo, who was the artist who would be working with them on an ongoing basis, beyond the training sessions in the different areas.*

*J – Do you think that having several artists, as in the "Odisseia" project, or having only one artist – or rather, having a single artist on a continuous basis for three years to create a final show – benefited the project?*

*C – Yes, quite clearly.<sup>14</sup>*



© José Caldeira

14 *Idem* (18 May 2022).



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The idea of process is present throughout the three years of the project, which managed to adhere to its plan to hold regular training sessions despite the unexpected arrival of the pandemic. On 25 April 2020, the project's records show that the participants, trainers and coordinators all sang "Grândola Vila Morena" via Zoom at the windows of their homes in different geographies and historical and ideological latitudes, bringing them together.

A year later, in the show, the actors hold the scripts in their hands, they are wearing rehearsal clothes, or "work" clothes as we usually call them, and the whole scene is about preparing a show that never opens, or that will open only after it ends.

*P – Victor Hugo, when will the show begin...? But really... really begin?*

*VH – Now, Paulo, it's starting **now**, clap your hands!*<sup>15</sup>

Those are the last words heard in the show.

*VH – This project is about people who have the word "difficult" written on their foreheads.*

*C – This project is about breaking into a sweat onstage.*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Meio no Meio*, an original script by Joana Craveiro for the show with artistic direction by Victor Hugo Pontes, un-edited.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem* (19 May 2022).

## 6. The idea of transformation

*J – What did you think this show, or this project, would bring to the lives of the people you would come across?*

*What was your intent every time you went out to work with these people?*

*VH – Look, I was really scared at first, mainly because of their expectations, because they were all very hopeful about what the project would be like and in the interviews, many of them, when I asked them a question like "imagine I'm the genie in the lamp and I can grant you five wishes", many of them used one of their wishes to ask to be in the show.<sup>17</sup>*

He said it had been very intense for him.

He said that, initially, he didn't know them.

He said he didn't want to disappoint them and he didn't want to disappoint them from the very beginning.

He didn't yet know them but he was already keen to avoid disappointing them.

He also said that some of them had been to see *Margem* at the Centro Cultural de Belém, giving them even higher expectations.

He knew he was going to have to choose, it was inevitable.

He thought: at least the training they're getting will stay with them.

He also said: I realised that the snacks and the meals they ate there were very important to them.

Then, he went on: that realisation was tough too, I say **tough** because it really was, it's tough to come face to face with that situation.

Thinking back, he asked himself: where did I think I was going to take them? What did I think I was going to give them?

Deep down, he knew that he wasn't the genie in the lamp and that there might be things they wanted that he would be unable to grant them.

Because he didn't have these things to give.

<sup>17</sup> *Idem* (16 May 2022).

*J – But did you think they could change their own lives through this project?*

*VH – I struggle to say that. I think everything can be transformative, change can occur on the way to the workshop, or it might not occur because of my workshop, but because of someone they meet at the workshop, who suddenly opens doors for them.<sup>18</sup>*

*J – Do you believe that art can change the world?*

*C – I'm certain of it.<sup>19</sup>*

She's certain of it and there's no point in trying to dissuade her. By the end of the interviews, they are both moved.

They find it moving to delve further into the list of everything that the project is about.

For example:

*VH – This project is about dreams.*

*C – This project is about loneliness.*

*VH – This project is about starting again.*

*C – This project is about death.*

*VH – This project is about being born again.<sup>20</sup>*

© Vera Marmelo



18 *Idem* (16 May 2022).

19 *Idem* (18 May 2022).

20 *Idem* (19 May 2022).

## 7. The idea of the present

The show "Meio no Meio" opens with a roll call.

Victor Hugo calls each of the actors by name.

They reply *Present*.

They jump as they answer.

As if it were not enough simply to say *Present*.

As if it were necessary to show that they are *Present*.

With a capital P.

*Present, Present, Present.*

Because other people don't always see us.

*J – One last thing: what is the project about?*

*C – About love.*

*VH – This project is bigger than the project itself.*

*J – OK. Can we put a full stop at the end of that statement?*

*VH – No, let's leave it hanging.*

*C – Yes, that's the exact feeling, that it's not over, that we haven't said everything.*

Let's leave it hanging, then.

"Good evening, this happens before it starts."<sup>21</sup>

"Meio no Meio" takes place in the *present* because it is a project that is always beginning. One that refuses, as a matter of principle, to be or have an end.

21 The first phrase from the script for the show "Meio no Meio", which follows the "Present!" shouted by each participant in response to the roll call.



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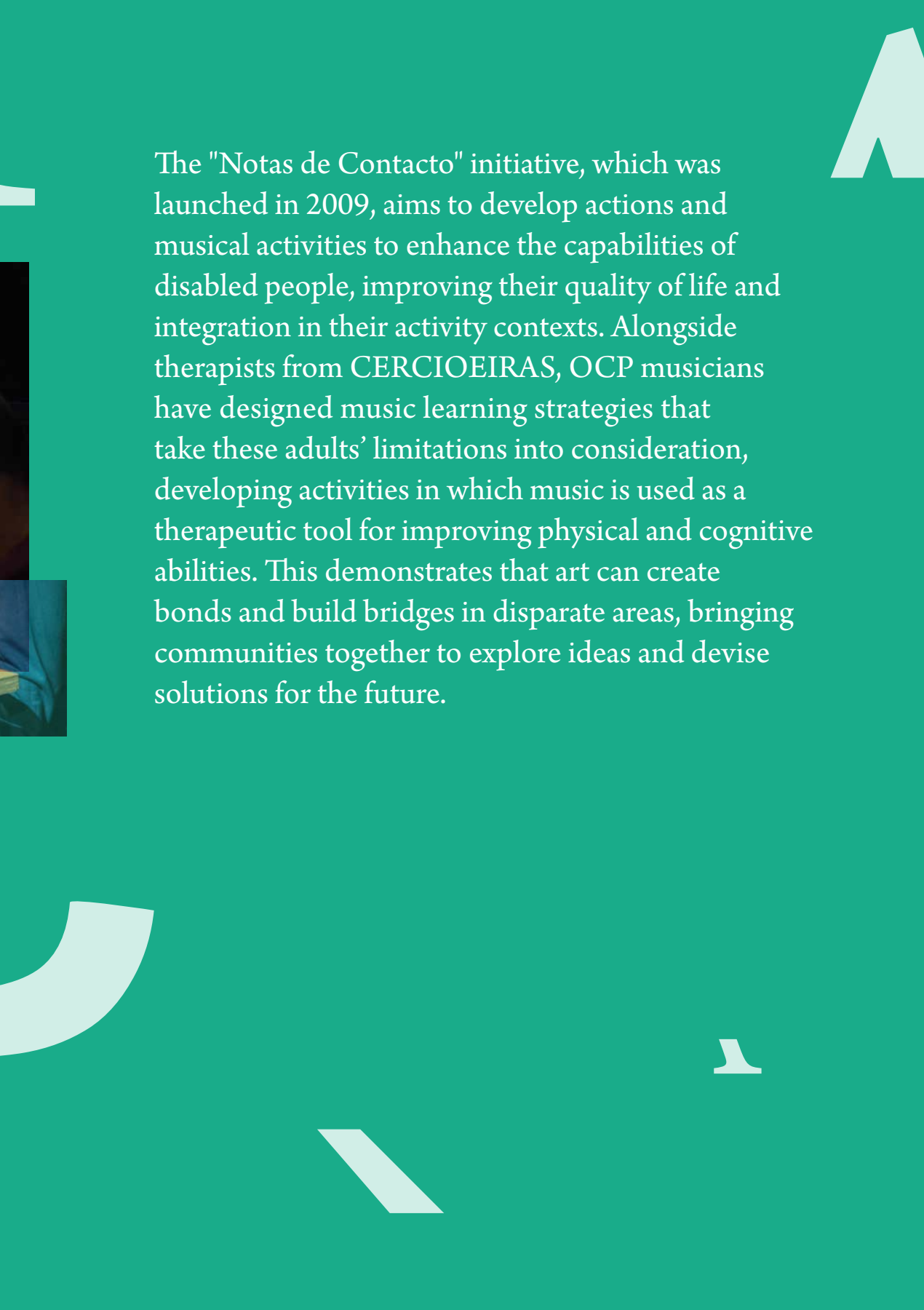
Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa, Associação Musical (OCP)  
Alexandre Dias, Teresa Simas and Pedro Carneiro



# Notas de Contacto - OCPsolidária at CERCIOEIRAS

An act of courage that changes lives  
through music





The "Notas de Contacto" initiative, which was launched in 2009, aims to develop actions and musical activities to enhance the capabilities of disabled people, improving their quality of life and integration in their activity contexts. Alongside therapists from CERCIOEIRAS, OCP musicians have designed music learning strategies that take these adults' limitations into consideration, developing activities in which music is used as a therapeutic tool for improving physical and cognitive abilities. This demonstrates that art can create bonds and build bridges in disparate areas, bringing communities together to explore ideas and devise solutions for the future.

## 1. Introduction

The "Notas de Contacto" initiative<sup>1</sup> is framed within the charitable arm of the Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa – OCP (Portuguese Chamber Orchestra), which, as part of a partnership established with CERCIOEIRAS<sup>2</sup> in 2009, developed a strategic vision of active citizenship that focuses on artistic and social inclusion and improvement, maximising investment and social and cultural responsibility. It is hoped that the initiative will help equip the population with wide-ranging, multi-faceted skills in a context of effective development and inclusion.



© OCP

- 1 Photos: Notas de Contacto – <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yYCCmzFlls0YIWrllo8JaghAN-wGiEr?usp=sharing>
- 2 Notas de Contacto – OCPsolidária at CERCIOEIRAS.

## 2. "Notas de Contacto" project

This project is based on an idea by conductor Pedro Carneiro and the OCP's Director of Projects and Innovation, Teresa Simas, with the aim of developing and implementing musical activities aimed at improving the quality of life and social integration of people with cognitive impairment and multiple disabilities. The project also aims to encourage autonomy and equality of opportunities, reducing the prevalence of discrimination and social exclusion.

An individual plan is drawn up for each participant according to their specific physical and intellectual characteristics in order to enhance their unique capabilities through the acquisition and development of tools to help them improve their habits, living conditions or interests, as well as their needs, self-esteem and expectations. Interaction with relatives and the community is a key component of this project, with the aim of optimising levels of activity and social participation and contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society through public presentations that raise awareness and demonstrate the importance of the work carried out by people with cognitive impairment.

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### 3. Partners

As mentioned above, the partner chosen for the project was CERCIOEIRAS, an institution of excellence set up as a Social Solidarity Cooperative with Public Utility status, whose objective is to unconditionally defend the rights of disabled people, supporting their participation and integration in social and professional life and encouraging them to fully exercise their citizenship through a comprehensive range of activities and services.

The cooperative stands out for its management and sustainability based on people-centred intervention, which aims to meet all the individual's needs and expectations and work to boost their competitiveness and efficacy, with complete respect for the principles of social responsibility and sustainable development at all times.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) funded the project from 2016 to 2022, allowing "Notas de Contacto" to evolve and carry out numerous public activities<sup>3</sup>, which include participating in the OCP Gala held in 2016 at Teatro Camões and the concert to commemorate the OCP's tenth anniversary in 2017 in the Main Auditorium at the Centro Cultural de Belém (CCB). In 2018, "Notas de Contacto" took to the stage in Auditorium 2 at CGF in collaboration with 5ª PUNKADA and performed a concert at Fundação Oriente, among other public

3 "Notas de Contacto" project – Festival Oeiras Cativ'arte 2020.

"Notas de Contacto" – International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2019 (Fundação Oriente).

performances. The OCP received an honourable mention for the project at the 2016 *Accesso Cultura Awards*. The project's activities also include the production of the *Manual de Metodologias I*<sup>4</sup> [Methodology Manual I] in 2018, which explains the good practices employed and gives examples of the initial outcomes of the methodologies and strategies applied in the artistic dimension of the project.

#### 4. Methodologies

As the art which encourages the harmonious combination of sounds and, in the words of conductor Pedro Carneiro, "breaks down barriers, because it is eternal", music is the perfect language for establishing channels of communication and interaction, serving as a stimulus for the development of a variety of skills and values as important as respect, cooperation and freedom of expression. By learning and developing musical tools and concepts, the participants in *Notas de Contacto* are able to enhance and expand their cognitive and emotional skills through the discovery and handling of different musical instruments, active listening, interaction in different working groups and individual creativity.

On a weekly basis, musicians from the OCP – Ana Maria Santos, Rui Borges Maia and Álvaro Rosso – and therapists from CERCIOEIRAS – Ana Isabel Dias and Mafalda Roque – develop innovative strategies and methodologies to enhance each participant's individual capabilities in a process intended to expand their horizons and break down preconceived barriers. The team seek opportunities to innovate and develop new concepts, methodologies, scores and sounds in order to transform musical discourse and complexity and meet the participants' need for expression. More specifically, the project team are currently working to create graphic scores in video format that convey fundamental musical concepts traditionally presented in a complex manner far more simply and intuitively.

By transforming and adapting conventional musical notation to include symbols, colours, images and photographs, the project has successfully improved the participants' autonomy, motivation and self-esteem.

Participants have been able to understand and memorise the new symbols and identify when they are performing a specific technique or handling an instrument correctly.

4 Video *Manual Notas de Contacto I* – OCPsolidária at CERCIOEIRAS. *Manual de Metodologias Notas de Contacto I*, 2018.

Based on a constantly moving, adapted musical score, the video format encourages high levels of concentration and focus due to the anticipation and curiosity aroused by this exploratory process. Free and/or guided improvisation has been the creative process used in the project to create new pieces. This enabled immense individual and collective freedom and expression, encouraging spontaneity and creativity among the participants and allowing them to interact in real time with the trainers, building bonds based on active communication, listening and reaction. This approach also had a positive impact on the perception of error in the improvisation process, encouraging equal participation within the working group. What seemed impossible became possible: everyone contributes according to their own potential and creative imagination.

The musical practice employed in the project is based on using classical instruments in an unconventional manner, enabling a more comprehensive, far-reaching exploration of their sonorities. Creative handling brings instruments and participants together, overcoming the difficulties involved in the demanding Western classical technique. Instruments like the cello are played communally (placed on a stand designed specifically for the project by the OCP's instruments workshop), using technical resources from contemporary Western musical practice that enable immediate sound production and contribute to the development of participants' creative skills through free improvisation. The project is also aware of the importance of making instruments to suit the participants, arousing their curiosity and desire to engage in sound exploration.



© Kai Bienert

## 5. Internationalisation (Young Euro Classic Festival, 2019 - Berlin, Germany)

In 2019, when the project was sufficiently advanced, mentors Pedro Carneiro and Teresa Simas decided to take the risk of submitting a proposal to the organisers of the well-known *Young Euro Classic Festival* to include an original piece written by a Portuguese composer and featuring participants from *Notas de Contacto* as soloists in the repertoire of the *Jovem Orquestra Portuguesa – JOP* (Portuguese Youth Orchestra) concert.

*The idea arose during a discussion between the project mentors and the composer João Godinho. The artistic director set the composer a challenge. Godinho, sensitive and brave, accepted the challenge.*

PEDRO CARNEIRO

This act of courage became the most special moment in the *Notas de Contacto* project: on 26 July 2019, the JOP took to the stage at Berlin's Konzerthaus, led by conductor Pedro Carneiro, and performed a brilliant, emotive rendition of *Alcance*<sup>5</sup> by João Godinho, featuring soloists from "Notas de Contacto" – Vanessa Gonçalves, Nuno Cabral, Carlos Ferreira, Jacinto Nunes and Gustavo Pinto – and OCP musicians Rui Borges Maia, Ana Maria Santos and Óscar Carmo.

The process to create *Alcance* was filled with hesitation and uncertainty, progress and setbacks, interspersed with the conviction that our participants deserved for the team to do their best to offer them this unique experience and promote the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in artistic contexts, where they are capable of playing the same role as any other musician on stage.

In the first stage of the process, composer João Godinho sought to understand the unique characteristics of the group of soloists and drew up some initial artistic options, combining his idea for the piece with the participants' different skills.

*When working with people with cognitive disabilities, one of the first things you learn is that each person has their own unique world of talents and struggles. We knew that some of them might get stage fright if they felt uncertain, while others might be overwhelmed with enthusiasm and lose concentration or burst out laughing or start talking during the concert. It was important to get to know each of the five soloists really well, not only with regard to their talents and struggles, but also their personal and emotional characteristics.*

JOÃO GODINHO

The next stage was to find appropriate musical instruments for each participant that would produce complex, beautiful sounds but be accessible and easy to handle. However, the main artistic challenge was the need to find a solution to enable the participants in the project to interact with the orchestral score, the orchestra and the conductor. After a great deal of work, a graphic score based on colours, symbols and photographs was created, which successfully enabled the desired interaction and encouraged effective autonomy among the participants in the group. This process played a key part

5 João Godinho, *Alcance*, Young Euro Classic Festival, 2019.



in opening up new possibilities to develop the project and allow participants to improve their skills.

During the process, we observed considerable progress in the participants' artistic, technical and social performance. In the final stage of the process, there was a wonderful week of rehearsals with the JOP, which exceeded all our expectations. The group were united, perfectly behaved, motivated and well-prepared. The members of the JOP grasped the importance of the moment and were committed, enthusiastic and mature at all times.

*It was gratifying to witness how moved the audience and the musicians from the JOP were when the inclusive component of the piece went so well. The five soloists performed with a genuine sense of commitment and responsibility, as well as a surprising degree of musical sensibility, like true professional musicians.*

JOÃO GODINHO

For their families, it was a truly powerful, unforgettable moment. In the words of Isabel Nunes (mother of one of the musicians in *Notas de Contacto*):

*Those of us who watched the concert completely forgot that there was a group of disabled young people in the orchestra: all we could see were wonderful musicians. When the concert was over, we clapped like we'd never clapped before. The audience gave a standing ovation that lasted so long it forced conductor Pedro Carneiro and his orchestra to return to the stage several times to thank them.*

ISABEL NUNES

At the end of the festival, the jury decided to award the "European Composer Award" to João Godinho on the grounds that he "*presented a demanding composition, offering an example of inclusion through music*". The jury were surprised, impressed and moved.

After the project's huge success in Berlin, 2020 looked set to be a time to reflect and build on the good practices and artistic outcomes obtained during this experience. However, the COVID-19 pandemic burst into everyone's lives and raised numerous challenges, especially for disabled people, who found themselves particularly isolated. It was a difficult time that required resilience and adaptation. A playlist was created and updated weekly with

music videos, games and short concerts designed specifically for this purpose, which became crucial for the project's participants, clients of CERCIOEIRAS, partners and family members. This allowed us to reach them all and maintain the project's momentum.



## 6. Conclusion

Over a period of 13 years, the *Notas de Contacto* project has had a tangible impact on participants, their families and carers,

*providing them with a sense of belonging; pride in their achievements and those of their children; improved self-esteem and confidence; opportunities to share their knowledge and concerns with their peers and social and leisure activities. The impact of the project on the organisation can be measured in terms of its pioneering nature; engagement; visibility; recognition and social inclusion, as an example of good practices in interventions with disabled people.*

DR IVONE FÉLIX, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CERCIOEIRAS

In the words of José Augusto Carneiro, Pedro Carneiro, Teresa Simas and Alexandre Dias (founders of Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa, Associação Musical), the project is crucial as

*it demonstrates that art can create bonds and build bridges in disparate, often conflictual areas, bringing communities together to explore ideas and devise solutions for the future.<sup>6</sup>*

JOSÉ AUGUSTO CARNEIRO, PEDRO CARNEIRO, TERESA SIMAS  
AND ALEXANDRE DIAS

6 Interview *Notas de Contacto* | Saúde+ TV channel | Pura Vida programme.

Companhia Olga Roriz  
Catarina Câmara




© Rui Morais e Castro



# CORPOEMCADEIA

Rehearsal for a choreography of life





Any portrait of "CORPOEMCADEIA" will inevitably focus on the edges of its frame. It is in the clash between inside and outside, consciousness made movement and movement made consciousness, that the experience of dance can be transformed into a choreography for life in the prison environment, a composition of coordinated and improvised movements undergoing constant critical and creative adjustment.

The pact between Companhia Olga Roriz's creative model and Gestalt psychotherapy is embodied in the power and vulnerability of the encounter between the artistic and social realms. In the aftermath of victories and frustrations, new relational poetics and politics are rehearsed.

*Identity versus existence*

## CHAPTER I

### Identity Card

*Introduction to the project's creative matrix and mission: the alliance between Companhia Olga Roriz's artistic practices and Gestalt psychotherapy. Focusing on the experience of this encounter with a view to creating a relational field in which the personal and the social, the poetic and the political are boosted and energised in a drive towards awareness.*

*Brief description of the project cycles: objectives, activities, challenges, critical and creative adjustments.*

*From theory to practice: on the gaps between what was proposed and imagined and what was executed and remains to be done (and imagined).*

*My name is Fábio Correia and I am 34 years old.  
I've been in prison for 16 years and I have always been a free man.*

FÁBIO CORREIA, PARTICIPANT



"CORPOEMCADEIA" was launched in 2019 at Linhó Prison with the aim of bringing body thought, contemporary dance practice and Gestalt psychotherapy to a group of young adults sentenced to six or more years in prison, who belong to a section of the prison population with very low levels of participation in artistic and social programmes.

We want to give voice to Article 78 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, which enshrines the right to cultural enjoyment and creation "on an individual and collective basis, in their multiple forms and expressions", differing from other European legislative traditions in its emphasis on cultural democratisation, and, consequently, on incentivising artistic processes with diverse, plural participation.

The hybrid nature of "CORPOEMCADEIA" is the product of a partnership between Companhia Olga Roriz (COR), the project's lead organisation, and the Gestalt Institute of Florence (IGF), the current social partner, and is based on an intense dialogue between the artistic strengths of the independent dance company and the techniques and instruments used in Gestalt psychotherapy.

Based on the notion that the aesthetic experience presupposes an ethical compass, in which "I" and the "Other", the social and the personal, mix with and cross-pollinate one another, the project highlights the awareness that forms at the frontiers of contact and in encounters in the "here and now", in which the Other is perceived not as someone who is defined but as someone who is discovered.

It is awareness of the relationship as a political/poetic experience, the idea of a collective of singularities woven together by dance, which constitutes this project's fertile ground.

## Impermanence-proof architectures

*It is unbearable to stay still. Not change. Endure. Survive. Remain.*

PAULO BARBOSA, PARTICIPANT

The project was designed to be implemented in four stages, a linear and progressive format, aimed to optimize the artistic development process as well as the participants' personal and social skills.

OCCUPYING THE BODY (April-Dec 2019) was the first stage and met the objectives of building a safe, stimulating space where participants developed ownership while assimilating introductory concepts and techniques of bodywork and the artistic world of dance

The group's attendance, interest and motivation exceeded our expectations. We believe that our decision to limit the number of people delivering the intervention throughout the whole cycle to two (working collaboratively on the ground) created an environment conducive to affective and artistic cohesion and continuous, predictable work, which was important during the launch of the project and suited the needs of these vulnerable people with experiences of abandonment and severance of ties.

The second stage, DRAMATIC BODY (Jan-March 2020 and June-Dec 2021), brought dancers and partners of the company into the project. The group responded to the style and communication suggestions made by the different trainers with great enthusiasm and artistic quality, showing their maturity throughout every workshop.

Alongside the artistic activities, the project organised *Práticas para a Liberdade* [Practices for Freedom] sessions, which were delivered by the artistic coordinator/trainer and a Gestalt psychologist and/or therapist.

Dance is a form of expression and a way of relating to the world that exposes us to unexpected interactions and freer, more spontaneous speech, so it is important to be able to recognise and incorporate this shared intimacy into the group's flow of consciousness. In the shift between conscious and unconscious processes, interspersed by movements, words and silences, personal and collective topics emerge that call for time to listen, observe and re-signify.

Every gathering at the prison chapel (where the sessions are held) is akin to an observatory for the group's relational repertoire. The *Práticas para a Liberdade* sessions operate as pockets of time, enabling the events taking place to be digested. They help to regulate the group's homeostasis and establish horizons of understanding of the dynamics underway.

Here, processes of awareness are extensively stimulated. Participants are encouraged to describe the experience, prioritising the "how" over the "why", to make abstract concepts concrete (i.e. justice, love, freedom, etc.) via personal narratives and events, and to break free of moralising introjections (i.e. saying "I want" or "I feel" instead of "I should"). Through dynamics that combine techniques from Gestalt psychotherapy with improvisation, participants are invited to reflect on emerging topics, differentiate between



thought, emotion and action and experience the difference between "acting" and expressing an emotion.



© Rui Morais e Castro

When the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on access to prisons were declared in 2020, some of our greatest fears became real: our processes of artistic training and social skills maintenance/acquisition were interrupted and suspended.

This shift in direction brought huge challenges for the project, but it also gave rise to new opportunities to understand the workings of the prison system, and, ultimately, of our own automatic patterns. It drew us into life as it is, allowing us to escape the modern neurosis of focusing on what once was or should be.

CREATIVE BODY (Jan-July 2022) corresponds to the creative process leading up to the show "A tua história não é igual à minha" [Your Story Is Not The Same As Mine] directed by choreographer Olga Roriz (with performances at Linhó Prison, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Teatro Experimental de Cascais) and these reflections came out of that effervescent process.

There was a clear effort to adjust expectations and mobilise everyone around a common goal and to calibrate choreographer Olga Roriz's artistic stringency and discipline to the human and technical conditions of the participants and the time available to create and prepare the show.

Successive restructuring of the group (release of prisoners, withdrawals due to clashes with educational or work activities or lack of motivation) resulted in a group of participants who had been involved in the project for different lengths of time (just under half joined "CORPOEMCADEIA" when it was launched in 2019, while the others joined in July or September 2021). This gave rise to differences in the participants' levels of maturity and artistic and emotional involvement in the project.

The pandemic also had a considerable impact on the physical and mental health of the prison population, with repercussions for the vitality of the work.

Given these conditions, a sensible balance had to be established between the discipline involved in dance and the truth of the participants' bodies. It was important for these bodies to express their truth on the basis of an honest desire for stringency and rigour, which was not something immediate or innate but something that participants had to practise and learn to desire.

In this regard, the choreographer's work sought to reconcile the rigour, detail and repetition of dance with the actual technical and artistic capabilities of the participants, without ever giving up on taking them beyond their known limits.

*I want them to be seen as men who dance rather than prisoners.  
That's what dance is, I don't want to make concessions, but nor am I  
going to leave them vulnerable to their technical fragilities.*

OLGA RORIZ

Learning to sustain desire through free, responsible practice, internalised by each of the participants (including the team) regardless of the threat from the punitive, moralising law, daring to overcome the reward/punishment dichotomy and embracing the unbreakable spiral between effort and pleasure with every nerve and tendon will, perhaps, turn out to be the most meaningful adventure in this creative project.



## Working Notes 11 - Olga Roriz

It was already late and I started the rehearsal without realising what had happened. Finally, I found out that they had called his number to go and talk to the education officer.

Without J, we began to polish the bags sequence. Then, I did four falls and added in some steps. We did it gradually in stages until they were ready to improvise. That's when the power of facing the unknown began to emerge, during the composition in real time. The tune "Horse power" helped them.

These men's bodies are disarmed, devitalised.

These men are unable to walk with strength, unable to run.

These men are caged.

Despite being aware of the dangers of continuing the project beyond the climactic moment of the show, an additional four months were added with the REFLECTIVE BODY cycle (Sept-Dec 2022).

Peaks of physical and emotional intensity are often followed by feelings of dullness and emptiness, which can lead to a state of decompensation.

For obvious reasons, this risk is greater still among the participants. The exceptional nature of their forays into freedom, plunging them straight into the limelight, the spotlights on stage, the applause and widespread recognition contrasts starkly with their abrupt return to the restrictive, gloomy normality of prison life, requiring support as they "land" to bring order to this turbulent succession of events and round it off in a meaningful manner. In this phase, artistic practice remained present in the gatherings but they took on a more psychosocial character. The aim was for each participant to establish symmetries between the PARTIS initiative and their life plans, identify the skills they had

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acquired and those they had yet to acquire and draw up a choreography for life, a choreography not only for resistance but also for (re)existence. This was a new phase of dreams, goals and investigations.

At the time of completion of this chapter, the COR was working on a new strategic plan for the next four years, including the continuation of the project in its plan of activities for 2023/2024. It is now designed in a format that encompasses collaboration with artists from outside COR and investment in specific themes relating to masculinity, with the aim of preserving the legacy of an artistic practice that is deeply rooted in relationships of care and in the psychosocial approach.

The cards are on the table, but it will only become apparent how to interpret them in a future chapter.

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## CHAPTER II

### Existence

Important events leading to a change of direction for the project, discovery of new creative forces and *modus operandi*.

Identity issues affecting the participants, team and prison institution. Listening, observation and potential response to the group's idiosyncrasies.

Learning to let go: irreconcilable differences between the social and artistic teams.

Replacement of the social partner. Search for solutions.

Touch: importance of contact improvisation in challenging stereotypes and redefining the concept and experience of masculinity.

Impact and effects of the pandemic. Dead ends and opportunities to develop a more committed, concerted political action in the quest for poetic justice.

### A prison in black and white

- *Prison. What have you gained or lost?*
- *I've gained patience.*
- *I've lost my dreams.*

NELSON VARELA, PARTICIPANT

We entered Linhó Prison for the first time on 1 April 2019.

This difficult high-security prison was built in 1954, during the Estado Novo<sup>1</sup> regime.

The prison population is primarily made up of young, racialised adults, most of whom have been convicted of drug trafficking, burglary, theft and homicide.

Older inmates describe how Linhó used to be like a neighbourhood, but now things have changed and it only looks like a prison.

With slight variations, the men who have participated in the project fit the same trans-generational mould. Most of them come from disadvantaged, dysfunctional families, are immigrants or children of immigrants from the former colonies and dropped out of school early. Many have already been through juvenile detention centres. They oscillate between two languages (Portuguese and Creole) and find themselves suspended between two cultures, two homelands. They remember their childhood as poor and traumatic, but rich in freedom.

1 Totalitarian regime deposed by the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974.

An image of a woman, a matriarch (mother, grandmother, aunt), represents the material, affective and spiritual foundation of what is almost always a large family. The paternal figure (or male role model) is invariably violent or absent.

The prisoners' daydreams are humble, dignified.

- *What do you hope for in the future?*
- *I want to get out of here, find a job and be with my family.*

WILSON RIBEIRO, PARTICIPANT

Their dreams during sleep are restless, incomplete.

*I had a recurring dream, it was me all alone with nobody else around.  
I'd walk for hours and nobody would appear and I'd cry because I  
was all alone in the world... soon after, I would wake up.*

CLEIDER CARDOSO, PARTICIPANT

Racial issues are frequently referenced by the group and have naturally become an integral part of the project's mission.

At this prison, like elsewhere in Europe and America, black bodies are criminalised and incarcerated while white bodies embody power and authority.

By welcoming psychologist Nelson Vieira Lopes (who is interested in Africanity, racism and masculinity) to the team and extending the workshops by Afro-Cuban teacher Yonel Serrano (neither of whom were included in the original plans for the project), new connections were nourished in the group's perceived identity. As the team and the direct participants shared cultural (linguistic, affective and spiritual) fragments, border territories were complexified and expanded and complicities were exchanged more frequently.

With explicit subtlety, this helped to disrupt the "socio-chromatic" order at Linhó, destabilising the predominant, narrow perceptions of black men.

Regular attendance of the dance sessions by intern Andreia Marinho and sociologist José Carvalho (often invited to join the sessions on the basis of Beckett's maxim "dance first, think later") proved fruitful for the group dynamic, diversifying their stimuli and connections and contributing to a more Creolised experience<sup>2</sup> of the work space and relationship.

Gradually, the conceptual line between agents of artistic and community intervention and direct participants was redrawn and replaced by an intricate cartography in which everyone was able to locate and recognise themselves from the perspective of their objective singularities, reinforcing the spirit and mission of the project.

The dance floor is on a horizontal plane. We are all in a position of exclusion and we all, without exception, have some form of privilege that we can share.

### Setbacks relating to the social and artistic teams

*Retracting in order to expand. Inner peace that may or may not be used in life, letting go of something that prevents us from expanding, tolerating in order to be tolerated. Purifying the essence and uniting.*

MÁRCIO CONSTANTINO, PAULO BARBOSA AND FÁBIO CORREIA,  
PARTICIPANTS

Ironically, the greatest tensions and challenges in the first stage occurred within the team rather than between or with the participants. It was concluded that some of the social functions initially outlined in the application did not correspond to the true needs of the project and the interpretation of the way in which artistic practice and psycho-social intervention should be managed gave rise to major conceptual and methodological differences between the members of the social and artistic teams.

2 According to diaspora philosopher and poet Édouard Glissant: "Creolisation seems to be a limitless métissage, its elements diffracted and its consequences unforeseeable (...) [It] carries along then into the adventure of multilingualism and into the incredible explosion of cultures. But the explosion of cultures does not mean they are scattered or mutually diluted. It is the violent sign of their consensual, not imposed, sharing."

It is true that

*"CORPOEMCADEIA" has a strong social dimension, but that in no way negates the fact that it is an eminently artistic project in terms of its intervention (...) this is a hybrid object, a third thing (...) It is an eminently artistic project in its practices, but an eminently social project in its results (...) to be insisting on matters that have never been a genuine issue, such as whether we address the prisoners formally or informally or whether they began to perform massages and contact improvisation in the 13<sup>th</sup> or the 24<sup>th</sup> session (...) We cannot enter these territories obsessed with our academic baggage as it creates an unhelpful burden, preventing us from fully diving into the experience as the compass for building relationships with the Other. Theories applied without nuance cloud our feelings and prevent us from perceiving the whole, the true design of the puzzle (...) touch in the therapeutic space has a very different impact to touch in an artistic context (...) This is also why artistic practices are so useful and productive in these contexts (...) they enable more direct, secure access to experiences of intimacy and connection, without us having to put a label on them (...).*

EXCERPT FROM AN EMAIL SENT BY THE ARTISTIC COORDINATORS  
TO THE SOCIAL COORDINATORS DURING A PERIOD OF TENSION

With hindsight, the issue was not the efficacy of the dance and Gestalt psychotherapy programme, but rather the lens through which this methodological alliance would be implemented by the team. Understanding the use of Gestalt psychotherapy as part of an artistic project aimed at bringing about social change in the prison environment or approaching it from a clinical psychology perspective, depending on the therapeutic positioning and normativeness, opened up two different pathways for action with irreconcilable objectives, results and procedures.

These irreconcilable differences led to the departure of the social partner Associação Portuguesa de Gestalt [Portuguese Gestalt Association], which was replaced in June 2020 by the Instituto Gestalt Firenze (IGF) [Florence Gestalt Institute] whose director Paolo Quattrini took over as project supervisor from 2020. These sessions, which were based on critical, constructive dialogue, opened up new ways of discussing and evaluating the project's dynamics and problems (i.e. managing expectations and conflicts with the group and between



the team/partners, adapting intervention strategies). A more decentred, rhizomatic vision of the project began to emerge, with fresh perspectives that proved providential in interpreting past events and redefining action plans.

The social team was joined by clinical psychologist, Gestalt psychotherapist and artist Valentina Barlacchi, IGF's representative on the ground, who visited the project and Linhó Prison regularly from 2021.

Three years into the project, we can confirm that the combination of artistic practice and Gestalt psychotherapy has proven extremely useful and adaptable in response to setbacks and opportunities arising during the work, due to the ongoing focus on care and more targeted, timely interventions (conflicts within the group, breakdowns in relations and grieving processes, pandemic) based on a more technical, direct application of therapeutic instruments.

### On Touch and Contact Improvisation (CI)

*I had a problem with F.C. and we solved it together by dancing.*

PAULO BARBOSA, PARTICIPANT

*It's a challenge. I'm breaking down prejudices about dance, barriers (...)  
We can be ourselves here. We can touch one another without being judged.*

IURI SEMEDO, PARTICIPANT

Touch is particularly revolutionary in the prison environment, where any expression of contact is monitored and stamped out by the canons of a rigid, oppressive, paralysing masculinity.

CI was a constant practice at every stage of the project and was perhaps the best-received intervention and the most suited to the participants. In it, two or more bodies interact spontaneously, communicating with one another through touch, skin, smell, weight, rhythm, sharing and opening up axes, using the other person for support in an endless interplay of (im)balances, dismantling and reorganising patterns of movement, caring and letting themselves be cared for.

CI encourages processes of self-regulation between the ability to run risks (creating new movements) and the need for self-preservation (automatic movement). In a highly organic manner, participants relinquish familiar, recurring gestures and venture into collaborative creation, guided by the pleasure and novelty of the encounter. An ephemeral, absolute dance between two or

more people who always recognise one another for the first time, even if they meet a thousand times over.

In essence, this anti-heroic approach to dance represents a body politics based on horizontal, non-polarised relationships (men and women, professionals and non-professionals execute the same techniques and all body types are legitimate).

The practice of CI provided the opportunity for a heated debate around performances of masculinity, giving rise to observant insights and ideas about the human condition: What does it mean to be a man? What do I allow and what do I avoid in contact relations? How do I experience touch? How can I reinvent masculinity in order to feel freer and more complete?

### Pandemic setbacks and other manifestos

*The world turns and turns  
But we always end up  
back at the start  
like the sun and the moon  
come and go each day  
like the seasons of the year  
are always changing  
but always come back around  
like the land and the sea  
are linked for all eternity  
our love is the same  
with all our ups and downs  
we remain united  
joined at the hip...*

FÁBIO TAVARES, PARTICIPANT

The period of compulsory seclusion imposed under the state of emergency led to the suspension of face-to-face activities, which were replaced by online sessions and correspondence between the artistic and social coordinators and the participants, keeping the project alive and creating a space of containment and care.



The lockdown closed the doors to Linhó but opened up pathways to a dimension that had already been planned as part of the project's mission and was fuelled by the state of emergency: more energetic political engagement and greater commitment to civil society activity. Examples of this include active participation in platforms, networking, debates on the issue of prisons (e.g. REDE-ENTREGRADES platform), more regular training sessions with academic institutions such as the Escola Superior de Dança, Universidade Católica, Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém and Florence Gestalt Institute, organisation of and participation in the first Annual Prisons Forum (Dec 2021) and more exhaustive research on prison issues.

We know that prison is like the mirror in "Snow White". It is incapable of lying and reveals the most basic societal structures, unveiling deeply entrenched social and cultural models, such as patriarchal hegemony, structural racism, punitivism, dogmatic rationalism and the supremacy of a neoliberal language in which the body is reduced to a transactional object and relationships are regulated by dynamics of consumption and disposal.

It is the anti-dance that obeys a polished discipline of control and coercion over bodies.

The processes of (re)socialisation proposed by the institutions are based on a tedious, gruelling choreographic repertoire, docile and dangerous.

The distribution in time and space is carried out without passion or grace. Bodies interact in a technical, automated manner.

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They must (re)learn to dance.

*How do you, Mr. Director, combine weight and lightness?*

*How do you occupy and vacate the space?*

*How do you allow yourself to be affected by others' rhythms?*

*Do you like creating new movements or do you always repeat the same choreography?*

*How much do you allow yourself to overbalance or do you remain stable on your axis?*

*Mr. Director, we could spend our whole lives performing the same gestures. That is the real death.*

EXCERPT FROM A LETTER SENT BY THE PROJECT COORDINATORS TO  
THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF REINTEGRATION AND PRISON SERVICES

We are driven by the urge to establish a political and poetic discourse that, together with other organisations and institutions, will contribute to *defetishising* prison, condemning abuse and rights violations, raising awareness of the issues underpinning the prison system and proposing alternatives to existing judicial frameworks.

The analogical language of art, with its metaphors, evocations and provocations, can build bridges for dialogue, strengthening and repairing communication between the different occupants of the criminal-legal palace. Resocialising the language of connection to learn and comprehend the face of the Other in our own face.

Contemporary dance pursues this same utopia. It aims to be inclusive and flows into a huge cultural melting pot where different styles of dance, body techniques and artistic areas flourish and influence one another.

The first main constraint (and freedom) for contemporary dancers is the removal of mirrors. Dancers correct and appraise themselves based on their perception and awareness of their movement in the world rather than their own reflected image. This crack in the mirror allows the body to open up to its own story and new discoveries to be made<sup>3</sup>.

3 In the words of Laurence Louppe, in dance "the body in movement is the subject, object and medium of its own knowledge and can lead to the emergence of a new awareness of the world" (Louppe, 2012, p. 69).

*For me, dancing is like writing a poem with my body that only makes sense in my soul. In movement, I am the extra-world, the extra-life, something that is part of nothing, and that's why it fulfils me so much. How many dreams can there be in a body? (...) I dance when I'm happy. I dance when I'm sad. I dance while I'm alive.*

PAULO BARBOSA, PARTICIPANT

We know that the movement of dance is equivalent to the motion of life and this is what enriches "CORPOEMCADEIA".

At the rehearsals for *A tua história não é igual à minha*, there are times when the bodies are meticulously distributed throughout the space, episodes of unison where the participants organise themselves on the basis of a common desire for order and harmony, performing the choreography freely and responsibly.

In this regard, the statutory duties of the DGRSP (Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services) stipulate that the use of prison sentences and other measures depriving people of their freedom is intended to integrate offenders in society and prepare them to lead their lives in a socially responsible manner, without committing crimes.

But if freedom entails responsibility and we can only be responsible if we are free (as any responsible act is the result of a choice), how can individuals who have been deprived of their freedom test themselves in this game of life?

This question brings us to a crossroads, causing us to catch our breath and come to a halt. It brings the weight of gravity to our attention.

But, as we dance, we defy the natural laws of men of law. We defy heavy-footed codes.

By dancing, we invent a new path and new steps.

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# Como Desenhar uma Cidade?

Between hope for the future and an unpredictable present



From January 2019 to July 2021, a group of people used artistic practice to reflect and take action on the city they inhabit.

For two and a half years, we explored the concepts of access to culture, artistic diversity, representativeness, freedom and democracy. We sought to revisit everyday life by transforming reality into fiction, with the hope of finding a happier city in the process.

Cities are complex fabrics. I always imagine them as a jumble of threads that we gradually try to tease out and organise.

But this process of organisation is intrinsically linked to listening. The hands organising these threads must be all that inhabit the city, not just some of them.

So, this becomes a tricky, time-consuming task, interwoven with tensions. A task in which the act of moving the threads must be balanced with moments to stop and look at them. Like a musical score that prompts us to speed up, stop, play more softly, turn up the volume.

For more than two years, the city was a complex score that we played carefully, listening to all the different instruments so that every musician would find their own identity reflected in our piece.

# — COMO DESENHAR UMA CIDADE?

Project logo © Lucas Pena

**A Terra Amarela – Plataforma de Criação Artística Inclusiva** is an inclusive artistic creation platform that was founded in 2018 and works on reflection, research and creation in the area of theatre, based on three key dimensions: access, diversity and freedom.

In collaboration with **Lumiar Parish Council** – a relatively heterogeneous parish in terms of residents' socioeconomic status –, **O Circuito – Serviço Educativo da Braga Media Arts**<sup>1</sup> and **Acesso Cultura** – a non-profit organisation that promotes physical, social and intellectual access to cultural participation – we challenged ourselves to think over "Como Desenhar uma Cidade?" [How to Design a City?].

We brought together a group of artists from the areas of theatre, music, literature, photography and cinema and a group of people with and without

1 The new Braga Media Arts Education Department, which establishes multiple connections between creation, media arts and community.



disabilities who lived, studied or worked in the parish of Lumiar to reflect together on the idea of diverse, accessible collective space from a realistic, symbolic and poetic perspective.

The process was designed in three stages: **listening** – identifying different ways of interpreting the dynamics of a city through community assemblies; **research** – exploring individual positions on the themes of the project using different artistic languages; **construction/composition** – participants used their newly acquired experience and worked with the artistic team to create a multidisciplinary final show compiling the facts and issues arising throughout the process.

*During my long journey with the Partis initiative "Como Desenhar uma Cidade?", I learned a lot about the word "accessibility". I did a school project on accessibility and it went really well because I attended the talks by Acesso Cultura and Arquitetura Acessível and I used examples from them in my project. I also learned a lot from the group. For example, when Nelson told us stories about his life. Working with Nelson showed us what accessibility is. The conversations we had as a group opened our minds to the issue. (...)*

*It was really important to me to join this project because it was a topic that interested me and I can say for certain that this issue of accessibility really stuck with me (...) I loved getting to know these wonderful people. Every single one of them! From the director to the actors. I loved them all. **Partis is now my middle name. We're a family!!***

GONÇALO ALVES, 18 YEARS OLD

## Artistic outcomes of the project

The "Como Desenhar uma Cidade?" project led to three public artistic outcomes:

1. *Como Desenhar uma Cidade?* – Theatre show
2. *Como Desenhar uma Cidade?* – Documentary by Mário Melo Costa
3. *Desenhos de Uma Cidade lá Fora* [Drawings of a City Out There] – Photography book by Paulo Pimenta



© Paulo Pimenta

*Being accessible, is it accessible?*

*In the "Como Desenhar uma Cidade?" project by Terra Amarela, with all my friends and neighbours, I was able to participate in a game that changed my perspective for good and made me more caring. I feel that I was very accessible to the project although there is still a major lack of accessibility in many places, but this Terra Amarela does not allow a lack of accessibility! The topic was never strange to me, it was present every minute and day of my life, but during the project I felt that I had the opportunity to give my opinion on incidents that happened in my day-to-day life, while always helping others. I think that I'm much more accessible these days.*

RAFAELA BARRETO, 17 YEARS OLD

## From the first to the last day

When the project was launched, the main challenge we faced was the diversity of the target group.

The presence of different age groups made it necessary to hold an initial event for the group to get to know one another and build relationships of trust.

The group came from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds and had different physical and intellectual characteristics. As soon as a sense of trust and belonging was established around the project, the group's heterogeneity became a great asset.

Knowledge was exchanged, cultural and social experiences were shared based on each individual's experience of the area and awareness was raised within the group of the importance of designing a city that would represent the different needs and expectations of its inhabitants. The project quickly opened its doors to the rest of the community, participating in public activities with awareness-raising campaigns and artistic interventions.

Exactly one year after the project began, the world was struck by a pandemic and went into lockdown. Suddenly, the city was taken from us.

The pandemic and the lockdowns that we experienced up to the end of the project (March 2020-October 2021) forced us to rethink our relationship with the city and look more deeply at the bonds we had formed as a group. While we were all struggling individually with problems and limitations in our personal and professional lives, we realised that the group we had created during the project would end up being more important than the purpose for which it had been created. We were no longer just a group of people who had come together for a project funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. We were a strong chain of friendship, care and concern, asking after the other members of the group every day on WhatsApp and coming up with strategies to care for those who were out of our reach.

*Morning, guys! Are you all doing OK? Hugs, miss you.*

PEDRO RODRIGUES, 56 YEARS OLD

In truth, the intensity of our relationship and the content of our work owes to the Zoom meetings that we held during the lockdown.



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We switched on our laptop cameras, looked into each other's homes and wrote letters to the future, imagining our living rooms transformed into huge gardens, redefining the size of the buildings and writing manifestos for the future. We made our imagination the answer to our ideal city. We broke down barriers and transformed a pandemic into freedom.

*Rafaela – Lisbon. Day 483 of March, two thousand and twenty something. Hello to my future self. I want you to remain open to meeting new people. I'd also like you to look after the people you like and have in your life. (...) You need to feel good and to do that, dear Rafaela, it's very important not to set your expectations too high because you might receive a lot or you might receive nothing. People are very important, but you have to prioritise yourself. (...) Attachments have never been as important as they are now. (...) We've never been so afraid of harming others, we've never wanted so badly to do good. (...) Rafaela, think about the world, but think too about what's really important to you.*

EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT FOR THE SHOW "COMO DESENHAR UMA CIDADE?"



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## Main reflections

*Margarida – New World: people have discovered the privilege of being connected and have begun to act based on mutual trust and participate more.*

*In this ideal city that we will build one day, one that is not based on consumerism, there will be a concern for the environment, for others. Above all, the principle that I am responsible for transforming each person's day will take root. One a day. A happy day is the starting point.*

*Mariana – The perfect city is any day before all this began: the weather is perfect, the windows are open, the police are absent from the streets and it's sunny. Children and animals play outside and it smells of lavender. We go to the theatre, a concert, a garden, or we can take a train and cross different cities. But come on, try to remember. Before all this, were we really together?*

EXCERPT FROM THE SCRIPT FOR THE SHOW "COMO DESENHAR UMA CIDADE?"

Over the course of the project, we began to question why what we identified as entropy as regards to access, democracy, freedom and the plural landscape we wished to see in our areas was so clearly identifiable and amenable to action and change, yet so nebulous and difficult to grasp or discuss for the system responsible for making decisions. Will we be able to break away from this dichotomy between those who make wishes and those who can make their wishes come true? Is this even possible?

While art showed us that desire could be poeticised, it also made us aware that places of effective change require a compromise between the oneiric and the objective, between the poetic and the concrete.

Yet, amid the constant dichotomy between one and another, we found a third place: experience. The place we called process.

We spent most of our time in this place, interacting with the diverse individual and collective experiences of our participants and partners and questioning the real world by elevating it through art.

When the focus is on mediating the encounter and the quality of the encounter between those who wish and those who decide, to the extent that the boundaries between these two acts are blurred, what emerges is empathy, an understanding of different environments, a desire to reformulate vocabulary and accept poetry, for example, as a way of raising specific issues, designing actions and bringing about change.

Perhaps the perfect city is one that absorbs different identities, building upon them and reconfiguring forms and content.

When we collectively grasp the pleasure of reinventing ourselves as a society, every one of our open windows will embody other people's happiness.

## "Como Desenhar uma Cidade?"

### 10 wishes to transform utopia into reality

1. 100% physically accessible public spaces and services
2. Subtitles on all TV programmes for deaf people who do not know Portuguese Sign Language
3. Portuguese Sign Language translation on all TV programmes
4. Audio-description service on all TV programmes
5. Public transport network equipped for use by people with reduced mobility at any time of day, on any route
6. Simple, accessible signage (format and content) on public roads and at organisations and services (people with intellectual disabilities, D/deaf people<sup>2</sup>, blind people, people with reduced mobility, illiterate people)
7. Physically accessible cultural and artistic spaces for audiences and artists
8. Introduction of Portuguese Sign Language and Access, Diversity and Citizenship as subjects on primary school curricula
9. Participatory programmes at public and private cultural organisations
10. Greater artistic diversity in cultural programming in all creative languages


2 Deaf people (upper case "D") are those who have Portuguese Sign Language as their first language; deaf people (lower case "d") are those who do not have Portuguese Sign Language as their first language.

Santa Maria da Feira Municipal Council  
Clara Andermatt, João Albano, Lisete Costa




The body and  
its interior





"LaB InDança" is an artistic training project that aims to offer the general public, especially people with disabilities, a series of training opportunities and performance experiences in contemporary dance, promoting the idea of accessible artistic experiences as a right and an asset.



Led by Santa Maria da Feira Municipal Council since 2015, with Clara Andermatt as artistic director, the project has received support from the PARTIS initiative run by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation since 2019. It is aimed at people with or without disabilities, aged 16 or over, who reside in the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira.

Over the last few years, we have worked to give the community new insight into the potential of sharing the act of creation and the way in which art, or inclusive dance in this case, can be used as an important tool in the development and recognition of disabled people's abilities. We hope that inclusion through art will be more and more widely recognised and, as Henrique Amoedo (2002) said, that its "outcomes will be valued artistically, in such a way that its practitioners, whether or not they are disabled, are viewed solely as artists".

This has been an unforgettable journey with moments of genuine learning and discovery, which has reaffirmed our belief that art is not only essential for human development but can and must also be enjoyed by everyone and that the open, equal participation of each and every individual can make an important contribution to the construction of a fairer, more democratic society. According to Matarasso (2019), the artistic act is a way of behaving in the world and when professional and non-professional artists come together to make art, it becomes an "expression of shared humanity", an endorsement of the idea that "we have more in common than separates us, not least in our common human dignity".



## Time and space to experiment

Using dance to overcome the social stigma surrounding disability, we developed activities based on experimentation and reflection in order to improve the performers' artistic skills. This has proven to have a considerable impact in transforming individual lives and the community as a whole. With her unique, innovative vision, choreographer Clara Andermatt focuses her attention on the specific characteristics of each individual and her approach, while also being socially aware and objective, is essentially artistic. Her work aims to dissolve barriers, set challenges and raise situations that encourage reflection on "Myself and the Other", which are crucial to this type of project.

The project is based on a series of artistic residencies, supplemented by regular weekly workshops, which are delivered by dance professionals with vital support from carers at the partner institutions, such as CerciFeira<sup>1</sup> and Cerci Lamas<sup>2</sup>.

The group of performers, comprising 15 people, was divided into two sub-groups: the advanced group and the beginners' group. The advanced group is made up of participants who joined the project at the start, while the beginners' group is open to new participants who are keen to experience the practice of dance.

The residencies are led by artistic director Clara Andermatt, with guest artists<sup>3</sup> from different artistic disciplines, and conclude with two different types of show: a large-scale show in which everyone participates, including professional performers; and a show with a smaller cast, mostly comprising participants with more advanced artistic skills, which is intended to tour cultural spaces around Portugal.

The residencies include workshops and open rehearsals, allowing experiences to be shared directly with the audience and raising awareness of the group's work. These events have been very important for the group, as they allow closer, more continuous contact to be established with trainers, carers and friends, forging lasting affective bonds and enabling more in-depth artistic exploration.

1 <http://www.cercifeira.pt>

2 <http://www.cerci-lamas.org.pt>

3 Jonas Lopes, Félix Lozano, Luís Pedro Madeira, Gil Dionísio, Mickaella Dantas and Liliana Garcia, among others.



We know that this project is based on a desire for sharing and transformation, but there must be a process of continuity and growth behind it in order for it to have a significant impact. It is this work that makes "LaB InDança" such a special project. The pedagogical approach is developed over time and entails individual support for the performers, catapulting the group to levels of quality and dedication that embody the challenge and enthusiasm inherent to this experience.

*Dance is a process and a tool for perfecting learning, so "LaB InDança" benefited this target group in many ways, especially in terms of their concentration, memory, creativity and bodily awareness.*

ARLINDA MENDES, SOCIOCULTURAL ACTIVITY LEADER  
AT CERCI LAMAS

In the choreographer's words:

*When I embark on a project, I need to feel empathy and willingness and it is the people involved in the project who constitute its essence and influence the creative process. Alongside the performers, I set off on a far-reaching exploratory voyage in search of an experience, an event rooted in each person.*



## THE BODY AND ITS INTERIOR

The fact that the performers are not professionals or have some form of disability does not affect the quest for artistic quality, not least because we see great potential and improvement opportunities which have stimulated this collective work. The demand for artistic rigour is present because the performers have the capacity and it drives us to aim for the achievements that bring us such pleasure.

*I am demanding. I am proof that although some people struggle to conform and even accept, others enjoy overcoming their limits. I trained in classical dance and I grew up overcoming limits, not only those of my body, but also unblocking resistances, understanding the importance of the discipline and the edges of the impossible.*

CLARA ANDERMATT, CHOREOGRAPHER



For Clara Andermatt, the creative process is emotional in essence: "I'm interested in the body and its interior translated into a choreographic language. Music and sound are inseparable in this exploration and constitute an inherent part of the performative discourse. The arts are interlinked to a greater or lesser extent, like life happening around us, what we see, think and feel".

Thinking of art as a distant, mysterious universe, accessible only to the few, is a myth that we are constantly striving to refute and our experience with this group has shown us the extent to which this belief is unhelpful. Participatory art is essential to widen access to the arts, but it depends entirely on reciprocity. We view this process with great respect and open-mindedness, believing that everyone has the ability to learn and contribute to the creation of new artistic experiences, so the interpellation is always mutual.

*In the approach taken in "LaB InDança", inclusive dance has the ability to work directly on the elements of dance and to accommodate each participant's unique characteristics (physical and behavioural) simultaneously. This relationship between straightforwardness and accommodation brings ideas, creativity and physicality into contact with one another. From the start of the project, the participants in "LaB InDança" seemed to me to be very insightful in their interactions with teachers, artists and the questions raised in the studio. The frequency of workshops and residencies, the choice of artistic teams and the formation of a group of participants who were present throughout the process enabled the development of a movement that is inherent to dance, as well as the everyday movement of each participant, which forks out beyond the studio and the stage.*

MICKAELLA DANTAS, GUEST ARTIST AT THE  
"LAB IN DANÇA" RESIDENCIES



## Art, inclusion and connections

The work carried out during the project is based on the director's artistic proposals, exploring themes and practices as varied as music, poetry, painting, masks and humour. Pluridisciplinarity is a central characteristic of Clara Andermatt's work and this encounter of different languages, methodologies, techniques and their respective dynamics, serve to boost a choreographic discourse. These starting points are important as they influence the performers and allow their personalities to be revealed via different media, providing vital material for investigation and reflection.

Whether it is through a question – what is an intention? What is ground zero? –, a drawing, a sound, a song or a prop, challenges requiring observation, reflection and awareness are set. The stimulus triggers a turbulence that elicits feelings and thoughts on what is seen, on the self and the Other. When movements emerge, the aim is to feel and explore them, finding the creative act in the rejection of repetition.

Creation occurs amid this dynamic exploration, amid individual and collective questioning, amid the discovery of the rhythm and pulse of words, movements and music, and amid the instincts sensed in the group's motivations. When one of the performers looks in the mirror at length, perceiving the fascinating potential of dance in her own body, or when another performer, his hands covered in ink, is overwhelmed by the power emanating from his drawing, the choreographic direction is led by the group's intuition.

*As a performer in the group, my life has been enriched by improving my ability to share and to wait and by accepting the need for us all to be equal, emphasising our best, most impressive abilities rather than our struggles. Dancing with the group has been an invigorating breath of fresh air.*

SARA OLIVEIRA, SOCIAL EDUCATOR AT CERCIFEIRA  
AND "LAB IN DANÇA" PERFORMER

It is in this mutual, implicit agreement based on sharing that constructive motivations are sought. Rather than leading, the artistic director and the trainers allow themselves to be led, proposing and incorporating topics that emerge through exploration, fending off the power relations that tend to be present in participatory art projects and giving the performers the freedom to be co-creators of the artistic object.

The success of "LaB InDança" can be measured in several different ways, but what interests us most is the performers' desire to remain part of the project. The project has been running since 2015 and the group has remained practically intact since then. The resonance of the project in the participants and the community encourages us to continue and shows how participatory art can have a major impact on people's lives, helping to reaffirm their identities and fighting for the far-off yet admirable goal of cultural democracy. The support received from the PARTIS initiative between 2019 and 2022 was very important, as it served as a stimulus for the entire group by acknowledging the quality and potential of the work carried out so far.

### Time for waiting - on the creative process

In the "LaB InDança" project, which is primarily performed by people with disabilities, it is important for both performers and audience to understand that dance goes far beyond technique and virtuosity and that it is the intensity of thought that sets it apart and causes a sense of awe. Each performer has their own unique characteristics, their own body, their own experiences and their own way of combining, feeling and relating to things; "I like this diversity that represents the world, it's inspiring and it's this potential that I'm keen to discover and convey artistically", says the choreographer.

Over time, our work has come to focus on rhythm and sensitivity to listening, on the notions of the body in movement, space/time, imagination and creativity, on a playful yet serious atmosphere, somewhere between waiting and action, unhurried and constantly challenging ourselves and other things.

The processes employed in the project are so rich and breath-taking that it is very difficult or even impossible to share or reproduce them and the experience is limited to those who are directly involved; nevertheless, the shows are fundamental in fostering artistic motivation and growth and offer a time to share and enjoy the results obtained. The audience witnesses this vibrancy and strong ties are forged, new sensibilities are awakened and prejudices and barriers are broken down.







## Chronicle of an experience

*Take risks*

*Risk is inherent to creation*

*improvisation inherent to survival*

*adventure essential for discovery.*

*The gap between me and the other is a void,*

*the pause is a laborious suspension,*

*and the hollow becomes excessive.*

*What if we get used to hiding away?*

*To indifference...*

????????????????

*Don't ask, don't ask, Clara!*

*Be present!*

*Invent simplicity.*

CLARA ANDERMATT

However much we may be tired of the topic, given its fateful presence in our lives, we cannot overlook the influence of the pandemic on the "LaB InDança" project.

The restrictions imposed made it necessary to rework the project in a manner that we had not anticipated. Face-to-face workshops came to a halt and, forced into lockdown in our homes, we had to find ways to keep our work processes going.

This challenge required considerable effort in terms of skills and access to new technologies. The need to produce relevant content that could be accessed by the participants, some of whom lacked the necessary technological resources, while others had little knowledge in this area or poor internet connections, required the way in which the activities were run to be completely restructured.

Despite attempts to equip participants with the resources that they needed to participate in workshops via videoconferencing, not all of the performers were able to participate and this weakened the group emotionally. These participants were offered short films by leading choreographers to watch and asked to complete physical and exploratory exercises within the confines of their homes. Individual tasks were also set, although the response was less enthusiastic and the participants were less engaged.

The social distancing imposed by the pandemic affected us all, but its impact was especially negative in this group because social distancing is the ultimate contradiction when it comes to participatory art.

*I like the dance workshops because of the social interaction and because they make me feel good. The lockdown was tough because, even though we were in contact online, I felt the need to be with people in person.*

EVA LEANDRO, "LAB IN DANÇA" PERFORMER

Despite everything, we look back on this period as an experience that marked us deeply and brought new ways of looking at the world, which were subsequently explored in the creative process.

*The sense that the pandemic had reconfigured everything was forced upon us, but it encouraged us to revive exercises that we had worked on previously and bring forward content that we would be looking at in the future. Now, as daylight grows closer, there are signs of a new beginning and of the reunion that the group, as a human essence, is*

*seeking. It is also a safe haven for those who appreciate dance and corporal expression, as the lockdown allowed the working methods used in this project to be relearned and adjusted further still. It has proven to be an opportunity to change certain actions, methodologies and outcomes, opening up a space in time to ponder at length on tolerance, understanding and kindness to others.*

SUSANA FIGUEIREDO, TEACHER OF  
REGULAR WORKSHOPS FOR "LAB IN DANÇA"

In these circumstances, "LaB InDança" produced a new creation: the experimental film *Retrato* [Portrait], directed by António Gil with artistic direction by Clara Andermatt, which emerged out of efforts to rethink the project's activities and develop a new medium to record some of the traces that remained of this experience. A show was planned for 2021, but the restrictions in place made it necessary to re-evaluate the dynamics and format. *Retrato* is an inner journey, following the performers as they question themselves and exteriorise thoughts and emotions that derive from different ways of looking at their own image.

The film restored our hope and revealed the generosity and resilience of the "LaB InDança" group and those who gravitate around them. It also allowed us to discover methods and have experiences that gave rise to positive dynamics that we will adopt for the future. This year, a new creative project is planned and we hope that the whole group will come together to share the creative process both physically and emotionally – our aim is not to recover lost time but rather to embrace the times to come with a different joy and wisdom.

"LaB InDança" is a unique experience that has taught us a lot. It demonstrates how participatory art, when implemented with respect, freedom and love, can be an important vehicle for the genuine social change that only Art can effect.

*For me, dance is something really special! It makes me feel like people might like me. I'm really enthusiastic about it.*

EUGÉNIA ALMEIDA, "LAB IN DANÇA" PERFORMER

## Final reflections

*As well as there being no age to dance, there are no limits on dance. Anyone can dance, not just professional dancers. Movement is inherent to animals, so dance is inherent to human beings.*

PINA BAUSCH

Dance plays a central role in promoting the arts and boosting talent. By enhancing people's intellectual, emotional and psychosocial balance, it improves skills such as critical thinking, innovation, critical reflection and communication, making an impact on anyone who engages in the discipline.

In the choreographer's words:

*(...) the progress we've seen since 2015 is incredible. We've been having two workshops per week and we go into greater depth in our work during the intensive residencies. It was a difficult process initially, there are basic things we have no idea of, such as (the participants) not knowing where the middle of the room is, what an ankle is or where the calf is. It is that awareness of the body and of the body in the space that we also work on here (...). It's important to present our work to the public, as it instils a sense of responsibility.*

Our aim is to encourage the non-professional performers to develop a reflective, questioning stance to improve their awareness of the activities proposed and their learning trajectory, ensuring that they have opportunities to express themselves and give their opinion on the proposals. Based on the different experiences in which they participated and collaborated, the majority of the 15 people involved in the project have shown improvements in terms of concentration, discipline, group work, performance of the proposed activities and enthusiasm for the creative process.

The arts have a key role to play in comprehensive training for individuals, but have too often been used as a mere indulgence and their importance in education has been overlooked.



## Acknowledgements

The different learning experiences we received, the repercussions of the project in terms of engaging with technicians and partners, the various supplementary activities carried out and the relationship with our peers, which allowed us to share ideas and thoughts, were fundamental to the project's success and were all thanks to us being part of the PARTIS family.

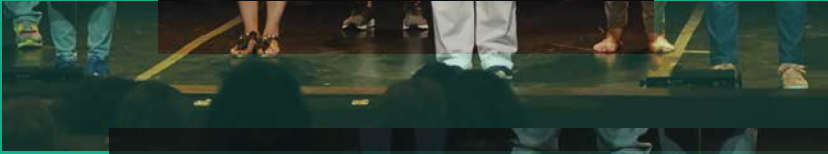
We are particularly grateful to the PARTIS team for their openness and understanding as they guided us through the process and for offering us their enriching thoughts, which contributed to the growth of the project.

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Beira Serra - Associação de Desenvolvimento  
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# VELEDA – mulheres e monoparentalidade





"VELEDA – mulheres e monoparentalidade" is a project developed by Beira Serra – Associação de Desenvolvimento, with artistic direction by Quarta Parede – Associação de Artes Performativas da Covilhã, in partnership with the municipal councils of Belmonte, Covilhã and Fundão, MDM – Movimento Democrático de Mulheres and UBI – Universidade da Beira Interior. Over a three-year period, the project created artistic objects relating to issues of motherhood and single parenthood with a group of 33 women, which formed the starting point for a support network and campaigning space for single-parent families.



## I. "What is the purpose of the project?" and "How can it help me make my dreams come true?"<sup>1</sup> - the private and the common

"VELEDA – mulheres e monoparentalidade" [VELEDA – women and single parenthood] is a project developed by Beira Serra – Associação de Desenvolvimento, with artistic direction by Quarta Parede – Associação de Artes Performativas da Covilhã, in partnership with three municipal councils in the Cova da Beira region (Belmonte, Covilhã and Fundão), MDM – Movimento Democrático de Mulheres and UBI – Universidade da Beira Interior.

"VELEDA" focuses on the everyday lives of a group of women and the difficulties they face in bringing up their children alone and experiencing economic, social, racial and gender discrimination. Drawing on the women's lives and the inspiring story of Maria Veleda, we combined community work and artistic practice with 72 women from the three municipalities. This is a depopulated, economically disadvantaged region, with high unemployment, low salaries and few public services, which heightens the vulnerability of working women especially, who represent more than half of unemployed people and the majority of poor and single-parent families in Portugal. These were the women we were trying to reach, so we contacted social partners such as Social Security, RLIS – Rede Local de Intervenção Social and Ação Social dos Municípios. Our invitation letter brought more women to the project but it also made our call for participants more institutional in nature, associating it with those who investigate, tax and police the actions of mothers and of a population that feels vulnerable. We observed the fear and subservient relationships that are often present between public institutions and families, and the shame and embarrassment that some of the women experienced during the introductory sessions when they had to publicly admit to forming part of this group, as one of many diverse women with similar difficulties. We heard comments like:

*If I don't participate in the project, I won't lose my RSI benefits, will I?*

*I need you to sign to show that I was here, please.*

*I was so happy when I received the invitation letter, I thought it was for a job...<sup>2</sup>*

1 The titles used throughout the text are based on questions posed by participants during the project.

2 Participants in the sessions organised to present the project.





© Luis Baptista

In this project, our aim is to develop close relationships that bridge these divides in a more human, present manner. With this aim in mind, artistic experimentation through theatre in particular is used as a way of encouraging meaningful encounters between women (with themselves and with others), institutions and organisations that touch upon artistic, political and social dimensions. This acts as a springboard for reflecting on, challenging and highlighting topics that are relevant to the experience of being a woman, mother, worker, citizen and single parent, drawing on first-hand experiences and acknowledging that issues associated with these roles can have ramifications for society as a whole.

## II. "Can we think and talk about our lives through theatre?" - the close-up and the big picture

During the first few introductory sessions for the Laboratórios de Pesquisa Social e Artística [Social and Artistic Research Laboratories] [LABS] (2019-2020), we wrote our personal dreams on the back of a card showing Ana Jotta's work *Monoparental Uma* (2002). Some of the dreams they wrote were:

*My greatest dream is to be a photographer. / I've got a disabled son who would love to go to the Estádio da Luz to watch Benfica play. / To have better living conditions, such as a new roof. / To find a job. / To get my driving licence. / To not have to work at night after a day at work. / To have a car. / To finish my marketing course. / To have my own house. / To have enough money to get my teeth done. / To travel across Europe. / To be able to move without limitations. / Time. / My dream is to go to the beach and have a nice time there.*

At the end of these sessions, the "dreams" were passed out at random and read aloud. These unforgettable moments had a confronting, poetic quality that laid the foundations for the "VELEDA" artistic and social intervention process, a manifesto of wishes and needs that reflects not only the personal lives but also the social and political aspirations of a diverse group of women, all of whom are single mothers living in interior-central Portugal.

These "dreams" form part of the archive for the project and are present in the show "Pulsações" [Pulsations] (2021), a collective creation based on dramaturgical and performative materials of a biographical nature collated in the LABS with the 33 participants. This archive, which contains all the materials produced, includes textual and oral records that were gradually transformed from the LABS into a show, until their original context was lost.

"VELEDA" archive of textual/oral records



TIRAR UMA  
CASA

Ter um  
trabalho


"O MEU SONHO É QUE OS  
MEUS FILHOS SAIBAM  
ESTAR PREPARADOS  
PARA AS VICISSITUDES  
DA VIDA"

- Personal dreams;
- Lists: appraisals of motherhood that we heard during our work, excuses, phrases we often say to our sons and daughters; phrases we use to justify our children's problems;
- Life stories: birth, childhood, youth, motherhood, romantic relationships, work and everyday challenges;
- Stories of women who inspire us;
- Stories about obstetric violence;
- "VELEDA" notebooks: logbooks that circulated around the participants' houses during the LABS and the creation of the show;
- Lullabies;
- Texts from performative exercises: "I am...", "Manifesto-Poems", etc.
- Texts written during the lockdown;
- Messages from the WhatsApp group;
- Confronting questions;
- Interviews with participants.

Não me lembro de estar grávida. Lembro-me de me sentir "uma borriça de alugue". Lembro-me de planejar a saída de casa no dia em que soube que estava grávida, quando ele me disse com sorrisos irônicos "onde vais com três filhos?"; "se fores embora nunca mais vais os filhos?"

o gozo: "Oh! é filho de mãe solteira!"  
a pena: "Oh... é filho de mãe solteira..."  
o desprazo  
a justificação  
o julgamento

Não, não há apoio suficiente (nem pouco mais ou menos) do Estado.  
Não, não se aborda este assunto de inoperabilidade na medida que ele merece.  
Não, não é fácil fazer esta gestão sozinho.

-chegado o fim-de-semana, entre limpezas, trabalhar, cuidar das refeições   
constato que começa uma nova semana e metade ficou por fazer e  
o **DESCANSAR**, não mora nesta casa!

The LABS offered a time and space for reflecting, questioning, sharing and experimenting in a safe, comfortable, free environment. Drawing on participatory, relational performing arts methodologies of a corporal, interdisciplinary, democratic nature (McNamara, Kidd, Hughes, 2011, p. 201), the LABS combined theatre, movement, poetry, gender equality and family and labour law, promoting research, dialogue and experimentation, with close collaboration between participants, team and partners. The technical physicality and voice exercises fostered listening, presence and care for oneself and others, giving rise to greater empathy, energy and collective strength. They also encouraged participants to abandon comfortable stances and embrace questioning and deconstruction. Against this backdrop, the project sought to enhance expressive and creative skills and enable experiences and knowledge of family, professional, social and civic life to be shared.



© Bruna Kievel

Among the methodologies that inspired us, we identified the conceptual and practical field of ethnotheatre "as an option for exploring and transforming information into a shared experience, confirming that we are all co-performers of our lives and returning this experience to our interlocutors or the audience" (Salgado, 2013, p. 35). We also valued the quality of the encounter, a focus on depth and detail, artistic practice as an affective, political and social action, horizontal relationships, respect for diversity and freedom, and the exercise of compassion, care and absence of judgement.

Amid "calm and troubled waters"<sup>3</sup>, we created a dramaturgical web with life stories relating to motherhood and single parenthood, producing an onstage exploration that revolved around the idea of "women who carry houses". Firstly, this dramaturgy was condensed into two performative exercises, which were presented at the end of the LABS (August 2020). From life story to scenic language, from the LABS to the show's creation and performance (second part of the project, 2020-2021), there was a lengthy process with many stumbling blocks, moments of doubt and frustration, as well as times of joy, achievements and breakthroughs. Often, all of this happened at once.

### How can we get through Hurricane Covid?

The pandemic imposed further limitations and challenges on the project. Telephones and computers replaced our meeting spaces. We were forced to be close at a distance. We searched for words to compensate for the absence of physical contact. Online, we let off steam, laughed, cried and networked. Through live online sessions with women from different countries, who shared their knowledge and experience of topics raised by the participants, we expanded the VELEDA groups both nationally and internationally. We embarked on creative challenges such as the *Caderno de Quarentena*<sup>4</sup> [Quarantine Journal] (video made using photographs from everyday life in lockdown, 2020) and playwriting sessions to write the script for the show. This all took place amid bills, accountability and the demands of being the only adult to share the pandemic with children and teenagers. We were left with multiple records of this time, including pages of online conversations, diary entries and poems like the one below:

3 Script from the show *Pulsações*.

4 <https://projetoveleda.wixsite.com/veleda/post/caderno-de-quarentena>

*They're always there/ they stop doing/ they do everything/ they never refuse/ they struggle/ to allow themselves/ to be/ they are the son,/ the daughter, / the sons,/ the daughters,/ the parents,/ the boyfriends,/ the girlfriends,/ the mother,/ they are the worst/ they are the best.*<sup>5</sup>



© Elisabete Gonçalves

When face-to-face gatherings resumed, it all became apparent: the participants' sense of belonging and dedication, as well as the constraints on their participation. It was impossible to meet all the participants' needs and the difficulties and demands placed upon them by rehearsals and performances meant that some were forced to drop out of the project, while others became even more committed. At the start of the creative process with a group of 10 women, questions filled the air:

5 Poem by Laura Garcia, participant in the project.

*How can we move from a problem, feeling or need to a collective artistic expression? Does the collective uphold, legitimate and promote the personal? We know what we want to achieve by sharing these stories, but will we really be able to? Do the issues relating to gender, class and geography that affect single-parent families apply to everyone?*

We have now come to realise that the difficulties we faced as a group helped to cement our courage and drive to transform life stories into artistic material. Zooming in to our biographies, we used extreme close-ups to create our long shot. In the process, our biographical narratives moved beyond the personal sphere and emerged as a plural dramaturgy, "conveying an aesthetic, ethical and political stance" (Salgado, 2013, p. 35).

### **III. "Can I inspire others by sharing my story?" and "What am I taking away from this in the end?" - the private and the public**

*I don't allow myself to be treated that way. I don't allow it. It's happened to me before, back then I was unable to speak out... It happens a lot in hospitals. It's like "I'm not going to speak out, I'm not going to say anything"... out of fear! And the fact that me and other women have begun to speak out can reach people on the other side and bring about change.<sup>6</sup>*

Throughout the project, we drew on statistical data, historical facts, legislation, scientific articles and journalistic articles describing the situation of single-parent families in Portugal to inform ourselves. The majority of the participants were able to illustrate the data with details from their daily lives, their life stories and their realities. This growing awareness fuelled the inseparable union between the artistic and social dimensions of the project, whereby each woman's story, no matter how personal and intimate, forms part of a broader historical, political and social context and their demands gain strength within this context, as part of a collective that is made public.

6 Excerpt from the script for the show *Pulsações*.



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*Theatre groups offer an excellent setting for cultural and artistic participation, and, more broadly, for civic and political participation at this point in the lives of non-professional artists, and this participation is perceived as effective, which appears to enable a support network based within the group but extending beyond it to take root.*

CRUZ, 2021, P. 304

Although the artistic objects created during the project highlight the gender and class issues raised by a specific group of women, discussions with audiences at the shows confirmed that these issues are not limited to individuals or to this group alone, but resonate with other people.

*I didn't come here to watch, I felt like I was experiencing something with you.*

NARCISA, PERFORMANCES LABS

*Although there was a whirlwind of characters passing by, (...) what we heard was silence, the silence of the audience.*

PEDRO, PERFORMANCES LABS





*I was listening to the words and they all challenged us, perhaps because I'm a man. (...) I think I'm going away with many more questions but also with many more certainties regarding what we all need to do to change things.*

RUI, PERFORMANCES LABS

*Often, when I was sitting there watching and listening to them, I felt like part of the script and the setting.*

ALICE, PULSAÇÕES, CGF

*Your work (...) not only presents your stories, which are also our own, each in their own way, but also moves the rest of the community, your families or the cashier who was rude to you once at the supermarket (...) who might think twice about her behaviour next time.*

PAULA, PULSAÇÕES, CGF<sup>7</sup>

7 Statements from audience members.

In these conversations, we discussed the relationship between aesthetic experience and life experience. We talked about how encountering other people's difference and vulnerability brings us face-to-face with our own. How important it is to accept the weaknesses of the group, the team and the project to identify possible paths forward. We spoke of courage and drive in life and on stage. Of inequality and violence, silenced and normalised. We discussed how artistic creation enables projects not only to nourish the group but also to reach the public sphere with their poetry and demands. How important this public sharing and the personal, collective and social responsibility it entails can be.

Showcasing our laboratory work and creative process was vital to foster debate on the topics explored in the project and to encourage the group. The quiet ambitions voiced by the women who had just heard of "VELEDA" for the first time became collective demands in *Pulsações*. This documentary theatre show took the form of a manifesto by a group of women, all single mothers, which underpins the stories recounted and the questions used to challenge the audience:

*How many women relinquish, postpone or sabotage their own dreams, achievements and ambitions just because they are mothers?  
What about the state? How has it looked after single-parent families?  
Why, as a single mother, does everything take on a different dimension filled with stereotypes and social criticism?  
Why is nothing that happens to my children comparable with children from traditional families?  
Why are single mothers perceived so negatively? Because they challenge everything, from the notion of family to labour law?  
What is a normal family? What is family?<sup>8</sup>*

Once again, this question hanging in the air is inspired by another from the book *Novas Cartas Portuguesas*<sup>9</sup>. Are we twenty-first century women, so diverse in character, status, desires, needs and geographies, aware of the ongoing need for revolution from within, from ourselves and our relationships with other women?

8 Script from the show *Pulsações*.

9 "Where is there a place to reinvent gestures and words? Everything is permeated with time-hallowed meanings, including our own selves, down to our very bones, our very marrow."



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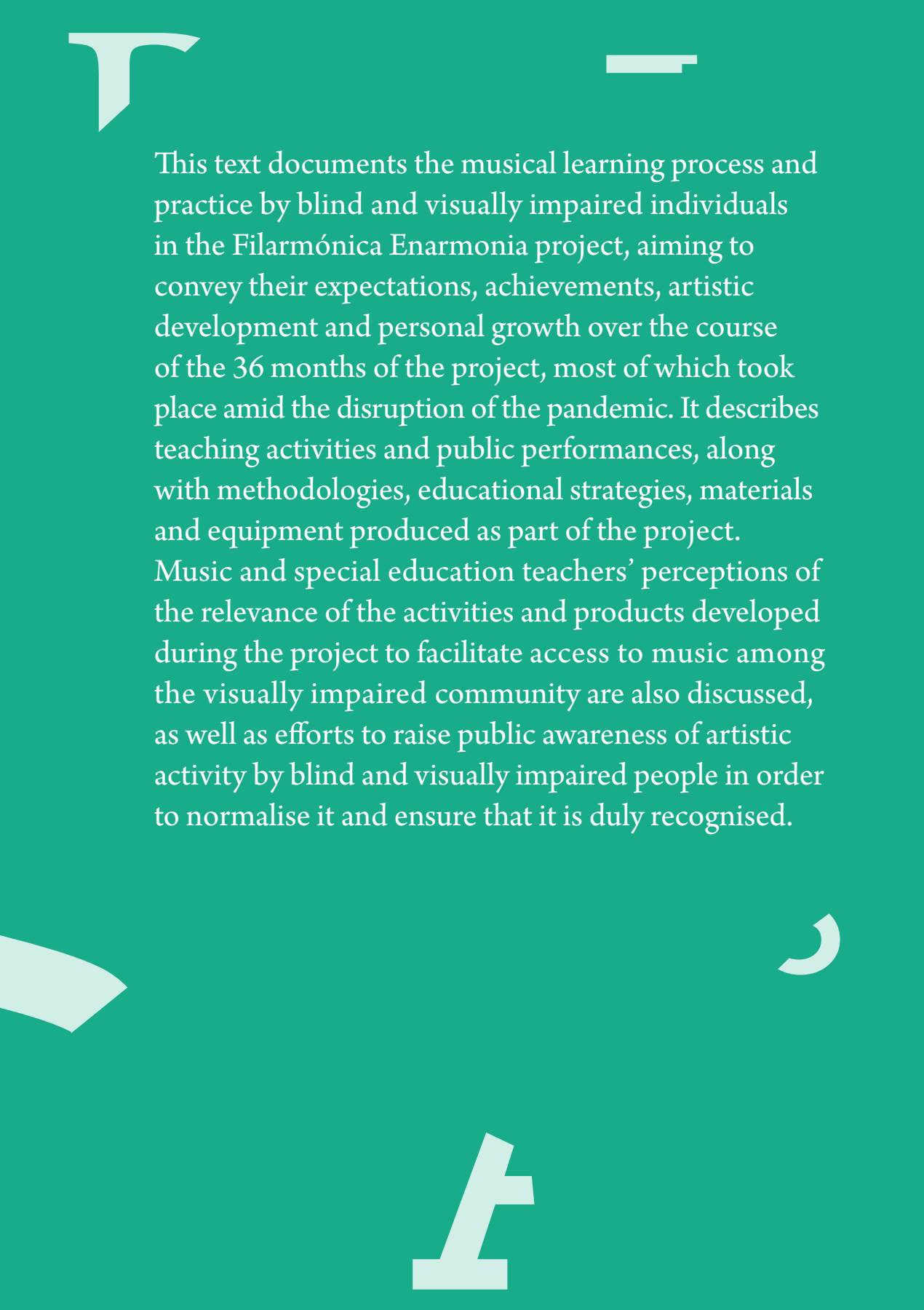
**Filarmónica Enarmonia**  
Patrícia Paiva, Rui M. Pinto



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"The music (...) that  
others don't see as I do"

Towards an Enharmony



This text documents the musical learning process and practice by blind and visually impaired individuals in the Filarmónica Enarmonia project, aiming to convey their expectations, achievements, artistic development and personal growth over the course of the 36 months of the project, most of which took place amid the disruption of the pandemic. It describes teaching activities and public performances, along with methodologies, educational strategies, materials and equipment produced as part of the project.

Music and special education teachers' perceptions of the relevance of the activities and products developed during the project to facilitate access to music among the visually impaired community are also discussed, as well as efforts to raise public awareness of artistic activity by blind and visually impaired people in order to normalise it and ensure that it is duly recognised.

For the blind, visually impaired and sighted musicians who gather at the Academia de São Domingos in Benfica on Saturday afternoons, music has become part of everyday life. At regular classes held every week for the last two years, they learn music theory, standard music notation and Braille music notation. They train their ears and memorise the notes to the pieces that, a few moments later, they will practise on their wind or percussion instruments before performing them at the philharmonic band rehearsal. They are all committed to playing their part in creating a unified sound for the band, drawing inspiration from a common artistic purpose, a sense of enharmony – the concept by which notes with different names produce an equivalent sound. Despite their different backgrounds and circumstances, their joint efforts produce a harmonious sound every Saturday. They set off carrying their instruments, thinking about how they must try to study more at home so that the Filarmónica Enarmonia can grow through their progress. They smile with satisfaction as they reflect on the little successes that every Saturday brings, content in the knowledge that they can express themselves through music whenever they wish to do so.

### Before...

Like so many other people, their access to music was delayed for many years and although the memory of that time persists, it now serves to remind them of their progress. When the classes and rehearsals are over, amid the hubbub, the musical passages studied can be heard as they are sung by Z. As the oldest of the students on the project, Z admitted that he had been waiting for an opportunity to learn an instrument for several decades. Enrolled on the project by a tutor, who saw beyond his cognitive impairment to his extraordinary ear, Z's late father was his biggest fan and always nurtured and encouraged his son's dream. Z was never able to play for as long as he wanted because of his neighbours, so he always prolongs the class and shows us how important music is to him. M, who also signed up during the first few weeks of the project, explained that "since I was little, [I have been trying] to learn an instrument" and described the numerous times that she was denied the opportunity: "In many places, we're rejected for being visually impaired or almost blind or even completely blind". There are also instances where the most excellent self-taught students are admitted to specialist music training but stumble when it comes to learning music theory: B attended a private music school but was only able

to learn his instrument, receiving no music education or other theory classes in five years of training. It is true that the state school curriculum establishes Music Education as a compulsory subject in primary school years 5 and 6 and the essential skills learned are included in the Exit Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Education (Order no. 6478/2017). For many students in Portugal, Music Education at school is their first, and often only, contact with musical education and practice. In the case of blind students specifically, the situation is even less encouraging. "I didn't like it much because I didn't do anything [in Music Education classes]. I'd just sit there listening [while the other students played the recorder]" – explains C, one of the project's new percussionists. Many of the other students tell similar stories. Other teachers focus on musical practice and overlook theoretical content, which perpetuates exclusion. This occurs because music teachers either in mainstream or special education do not receive any specific training to work with disabled students: they are not taught Braille music notation or given any other guidance to teach music to blind and visually impaired people. According to teacher Claudino Pinto, Braille music notation classes have been absent from the curriculum at the Conservatory for the last thirty years and the lack of training in this area prompted him to create several (sporadic) initiatives to teach music theory and Braille music notation at institutions and state schools. Some of his students attended the open classes, displaying an excellent knowledge of Braille music notation and an extraordinary musical talent that enabled them to improvise several pieces on different instruments. However, some students – like A and R – were prevented from attending the project on Saturdays and meeting the other students to learn and practise music together by issues such as a lack of transport, which is only provided on school days.

The opportunity to play a wind or percussion instrument, which are less common at mainstream and special needs schools, and to learn music theory and Braille music notation encouraged some of the students to sign up to the project after the open classes held during the first few months of the project and at the start of every school year. Every one of these sessions prompted a new group of students to sign up to the project. For many of them, it was a chance to return to music and learn an instrument. For the younger students, who are still attending music lessons at school, the project offered supplementary training. Some of the parents found the project appealing because it enabled their children "to learn music in an educational environment adapted to their needs". E, P's mother, explains:

*We thought that a normal music school would be a bit more limited (... ) and that the alternative would be private classes. We hoped that he would be able to learn music in a project like this, with a team who are sensitive to his physical limitations.*

O, the father of L, a trumpet player in the band, hopes that the project will help his daughter with other instruments, like the piano, where she has shown talent since she was little. For Q, H's father, the most significant benefit of the project was the opportunity to learn Braille music notation and to practise reading Braille more regularly, as his son was just starting to learn it.

The project did not only appeal to those looking to practise a musical instrument. Special education teachers like K (and X) signed up to the project to learn musicography and music education, and above all, to discover some of the methodologies used to teach music to blind and visually impaired people. Music education teachers, community music teachers and musicologists also sought a detailed understanding of the curriculum, methodologies, good practices, instruments, materials and equipment used to allow them to teach music to the visually impaired community more effectively.

### during...

From the open classes held during the first few months of the project and at the start of the school year, which were organised by the Associação Bengala Mágica at their headquarters with support from São Domingos de Benfica Parish Council and at several inclusive state schools – Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho School Cluster, Olaias School Cluster, Sebastião da Gama School Cluster and Centro Helen Keller – and prepared with partner organisations such as the Associação Boa Vizinhança, Associação Nacional para a Inclusão de Cidadãos com Deficiência Visual [National Association for the Inclusion of the Visually Impaired], Associação Promotora de Emprego de Deficientes Visuais [Association for the Promotion of Employment among the Visually Impaired], Associação Mão-Guia and Centro de Reabilitação de Nossa Senhora dos Anjos da Santa Casa de Misericórdia [Rehabilitation Centre], the students began to attend the regular sessions held on Saturdays. They were keen to learn the instruments that they had got on with best during the open classes and that the teachers had recommended for them. As envisaged in the application for the project, the children's parents, relatives of the older participants and other



mediators from partner organisations accompanied the participants for four consecutive classes and, when they were invited to join the Filarmónica band – which would include blind, visually impaired and sighted students –, some of them accepted enthusiastically. Q, who was a musician in his free time and hopes that H can become one too, really appreciates this "[new] way of [spending] time together" and emphasises how important it is for him that his son is able to benefit from artistic practice like he once did. I, an amateur saxophonist, and N, parents of Y and F, who are among the sighted students, also believe that the project will allow their children to improve their soft skills, as well as their artistic skills and enjoyment of music:

*[they'll improve] their interpersonal relationships, self-confidence, self-esteem and belief in their abilities; [they'll learn] how to overcome frustration, because in this [artistic] discipline they're sure to encounter multiple difficulties, which might give rise to moments of discouragement that they do not yet know how to handle, but that will be part of their lives later on; [they'll grasp] the importance of hard work, practice and focus in achieving positive results; and [they will become] more responsible because they will need to look after their instruments.*

J, another amateur musician, was eager for his blind son S and his sighted son D to have an opportunity to enjoy learning music because he thought – with painful lucidity – that it could be a potential professional alternative (or rather, only possibility) in the future. G, who is visually impaired and discovered the project at one of the open classes, was accompanied by her father U, who is blind, and her sister V, who learned the clarinet at Orquestra Geração. G is hoping to replicate her father's talent for percussion, while U, who has shown promise in several different instruments, chose the saxophone so that his daughter could learn a different instrument at home with him and attend the classes and rehearsals to help the younger participants who had started learning the clarinet more recently. With surprising dedication, these parents behave like fellow band members and home teachers, and this mutual quest for improvement results in greater family cohesion and stronger family bonds.

Every Saturday, children, teenagers, adults, elderly people, sons and daughters, parents, brothers, sisters and friends gather in small groups to attend the different classes. While the sighted participants attend the music education

class, the blind and visually impaired band members head to the Braille music notation class with the sighted students who are interested in learning this subject; meanwhile, the new students embark on their first practical classes in their chosen instruments.



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In the following time slot, a series of different auditory training and memorisation sessions are held and new groups are created on the basis of the different instruments and the part they play in the band (melody, countermelody, bass): flutes [oboes and bassoons] (in C) and percussion; clarinets, cornets and soprano saxophones (in B flat); alto saxophones (in E flat); horns (in F); tenor saxophones, euphoniums, piston trombones and tubas (in B flat). Each group learns to play their part of the music to be performed by the band. This methodology is used because the notes played by the various transposing

instruments are not the same and the students must train their ears to their specific instruments: the effect of a C played by flutes, oboes and bassoons is equivalent to the sound of a D played by clarinets, cornets, soprano and tenor saxophones, euphoniums, trombones and tubas, while the G played by the horns is akin to an A from the alto saxophones.

After a longer break, often taken in the nearby garden (Quinta da Alfarrobeira), the practical lessons are held. In groups – flutes and saxophones; clarinets; cornets; low-pitched instruments; and percussion –, the participants develop their agility and expression in the instrument. After a warm-up, they complete technical exercises before practising the pieces for the band.

Finally, it is rehearsal time and the participants come together to work on the band's growing repertoire of pieces compiled and arranged from folk music, traditional children's songs, classical music and pop music: familiar pieces where everyone has already learned the melody come first, followed by new pieces (some of the participants play the first melodic voice, some the second voice, some the accompaniment and others the bass). On other occasions, the rehearsal begins with some improvisation exercises to allow the students to express their musical creativity.

Every class is used to prepare for the rehearsal, with every activity designed around the Filarmónica Enarmonia. The pieces gradually become more difficult and enable students to accumulate knowledge of music theory: from pieces with few notes using the same rhythmic figures in simple meter to more complex pieces in scales by steps and by intervals, with different rhythmic figures in simple and compound meter. Melodic monophony is gradually substituted by polyphony and different melodic lines. These basic concepts and musical content are learned and reviewed in the musicography and music education classes, memorised in the auditory training classes and practised in the instrumental lessons. The aim of this method is to prevent any anxiety and frustration that may arise and transmit knowledge and confidence so that the young musicians can polish their skills in their instruments at the rehearsals and contribute collectively to the best possible artistic outcome for the Filarmónica band. But the project does not only seek the best artistic quality; instead, it is the sense of participation, team work and dedication that prompts each participant to perform their part (more or less difficult, depending on their level) better and better each time that is prioritised.

The way in which the sessions are organised differs from the usual dynamic of the classes and rehearsals held by philharmonic bands and from

the artistic criteria used by these bands to admit new musicians, who are often already trained. Rather than teaching solfège and instrumental skills individually through basic theory, reading exercises and methods involving the technical study of the instrument, the Filarmónica Enarmonia favours learning through music throughout the school year: the practice of study is always guided; the rehearsals, in which everyone – from old and new students to their teachers – participates, are always carefully planned; special education teachers and psychologists from the social team monitor each class and rehearsal to incentivise students to improve their skills, help them handle frustration, prolong the applause that encourages them to continue along the path they have embarked on and promote harmonious relationships between students, between parents, or rather, between musicians and their audience, at the Filarmónica Enarmonia.

Although many of the students initially found this approach unappealing, as they were keen to learn an instrument, they later came to understand the importance of learning theory content and the usefulness of memorisation in individual study of the instrument and in group practice sessions, enabling them to become more skilled, capable musicians. Some of the more skilled participants found it boring to repeat part of the existing repertoire at each rehearsal alongside the new pieces, but they too have come to view this approach differently: it offers an opportunity to perform better and identify their progress in their instrument, as well as being their duty to perform well and help those who are taking their first steps in music and in the Filarmónica.

The results are encouraging: this approach allows participants to grasp musical concepts and contents, and, while the majority are now able to easily perform more difficult pieces on a one and a half octave scale, in the bass and middle register, others are exploring their agility in the upper register; it has also improved their memorisation skills and many are now able to perform secondary melodic lines (countermelodies), while others play the first voice. In this way, performance difficulties are overcome, frustration is persistently stamped out and ongoing study gradually makes them better musicians. The confidence and pride in being a musician triggered by this approach are apparent in the project activities and in the successive individual performances held for relatives and classmates at the schools and institutions attended by the participants. It also strengthens the participants' sense of belonging and some of them even add that they are musicians at the Filarmónica Enarmonia to their profiles on social media.

A sense of belonging and mutual responsibility is also present among those who accompany the students: at the children's playground in Quinta da Alfarrobeira, where the youngest children play during breaks, parents watch over all the children as they play. Some drive other children to the sessions as well as their own, so that nobody misses a Saturday, while social media is used to share personal achievements, arrange lifts and provide help with other aspects of everyday life. Many parents gather at the Mutual Support Group created by the association to discuss their worries, needs and expectations, find out about initiatives and share experiences and knowledge in order to ensure that their children are able to fulfil their potential.

Besides the general sense that music is an art that the participants are now able to practise, attending the project and interacting with blind, visually impaired and sighted students gave rise to other, more specific social responses. Those with conditions such as hydrocephaly or neurofibromatosis, in addition to visual impairment, were able to improve their ability to memorise, concentrate and manage the fatigue caused by their efforts. The choice of a wind instrument with greater sound potential by some students with hearing problems, as recommended by the teachers, also proved fruitful: as well as gradually training her ear, one of the students observed that playing the saxophone had improved her hearing impairment and that she could now hear sounds that she had never heard before, which was one of the most significant benefits she had obtained from the project. As a result of our careful choice of the most appropriate instruments for blind and visually impaired individuals – which led to the use of instruments rarely used in bands today, such as piston trombones rather than slide trombones, unsuitable for group practice by the visually impaired community – and the familiarity that grew week after week, one of the parents asked us about using a different, smaller (but more expensive) type of trumpet so that visually impaired students could more easily approach the stand: keen for his son to progress with Braille music notation and improve his memorisation skills, the father wanted to ensure that he could read enlarged print music whenever possible and gradually learn to overcome his visual impairment. Following this pertinent suggestion, the Filarmónica now prefers cornets over the usual trumpets.

The interaction between blind, visually impaired and sighted students and members of the social and artistic teams with blindness and visual impairment during several of the teaching sessions and breaks helped those who struggled most with their blindness and demonstrated that the condition did not have to

limit their daily lives. Despite her severe visual impairment, W refused for a long time to accept her condition: beyond her constant attempts to read enlarged sheet music, she was not interested in Braille music notation because she could manage to see and read. Music and special education teachers, psychologists and older students tried on several occasions to make her see how important it was to accept her visual impairment, but without success. It was only very recently that W began to move towards acceptance, when she spoke the words in the epigraph to this text. She told us that, as well as music, the project had taught her that "others don't see as I do". Having watched her grow, we believe she meant that she has realised that despite not being blind, she doesn't see like other, sighted students and that she knows that, like them, she will succeed in making progress in music and achieving her dreams and objectives, whatever they may be, despite her visual impairment.

### meanwhile...

The pandemic struck. The middle of the project was characterised by a prolonged suspension of face-to-face teaching activities. Compliance with the lockdown measures ordered by the Directorate-General of Health was followed by the resumption of face-to-face classes: the usual venue provided by São Domingos de Benfica Parish Council was unavailable as it was being used by the Academy for activities for elderly people and required stricter public health measures, so the Filarmónica used the premises of partner organisations such as Associação Boa Vizinhança, Sociedade de Instrução Guilherme Cossoul and Escola do Largo for the classes, which only returned to a regular schedule from the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

It was important to protect one another while ensuring that the participants in the project could continue to access musical activities. When classes were cancelled on 14 March 2020, the teams looked for ways to allow them to continue during the lockdown decreed several days later. Their main concern was providing the students, most of whom were children, with a sense of (possible) normality at a time of great strife. That same week, the project's social media accounts – which had served until then for occasional conversations between students, relatives and members of the artistic and social teams – became a forum for teachers and students to exchange presentations and fun musical challenges. Aware that the public health recommendations would continue to prevent the playing of wind instruments and music practice

even after the lockdown, the project teams and the directors of Associação Bengala Mágica established a series of measures to allow the project to continue during the pandemic: they reinvented methodologies and equipment and reformulated the project's goals with the aim of preserving the bond with music and the Filarmónica among the students and their families. Via different online platforms, including WhatsApp, which is the most accessible platform for blind people, as well as Skype, Zoom and Teams, the students received individual musicography, music education, auditory training, memorisation and instrument classes over the subsequent months. For several months, the syllabuses for the different subjects were juggled and new instrumental arrangements and methods were designed and distributed to the students so that they could continue to improve their artistic skills at the same pace and in the same manner during their individual lessons.

The social team aimed to provide the psychological support needed by direct and indirect participants by holding frequent informal conversations with the students, parents and mediators and ensuring that they had access to information and training via webinars and remote Sharing Workshops. In turn, the instrumental teachers regularly inquired after the participants' state of mind. Meanwhile, social media activity became even more frequent to ensure that the familiarity achieved did not dwindle: encouraged by the teachers, or on their own initiative, the students posted recordings of the band's pieces (sung or played) almost every day. At the end of each term, a virtual session was held for students and their relatives by members of the artistic and social teams, the directors of Associação Bengala Mágica and mediators from several partner organisations, where the band members presented the results of their instrumental study and performed the same pieces, one after another. However, group practice sessions were cancelled for several months and the Filarmónica Enarmonia's scheduled performances were postponed.

Meanwhile, face-to-face classes resumed with protective measures in place. Students, guardians and mediators were informed of an extensive list of rules, which were stricter than the general public health recommendations and had in some cases been implemented by the main artistic education establishments in Europe and North America: besides social distancing measures, which required regular reminders, frequent hand-washing and the use of masks in theory, memorisation (singing) and percussion lessons, the students had to use special masks to play wind instruments in their practical classes and *little suits* to cover the instruments and prevent aerosols from escaping through

the holes and bells; both of these devices were made by the artistic team. The resulting condensation had to be drained in the toilets and the instruments had to be cleaned individually in a different room; students were also advised not to swap instruments, accessories, materials and other equipment. Teaching resumed in a hybrid format: each fortnight, some of the students would attend face-to-face classes, while others would study remotely via Zoom or WhatsApp; this rotation of students, teachers and members of the social team took their face-to-face interaction at educational establishments and other networks of contact into consideration. The face-to-face lessons would be held at suitable venues (open or well-ventilated spaces) and would be shorter than usual to allow

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the space to be ventilated and cleaned between classes. The rehearsals would be carefully organised outdoors or in a large space to comply with social distancing rules and the aim was to use acrylic dividers to separate the students.

The usual practice of holding open classes for new participants in the project also had to be reworked: in these sessions, which were to be held once a fortnight (fitting around periods of quarantine) with rotating teams, participants were encouraged to play percussion instruments, which would be distributed in advance depending on the participants' attendance in subsequent online sessions. Wind instruments were allowed later on in face-to-face sessions. Since the rehearsals had been suspended, the concerts were also postponed and would be organised outdoors wherever possible. However, these recommendations were only implemented sporadically: as the usual venue for the classes was unavailable, it was considered preferable to continue to hold them online.

Holding two or three individual 45-minute sessions per week to continue to practise musicography, music education, auditory training, memorisation and instrumental skills quickly bore fruit. The success of this approach largely owed to the contribution made by parents, other relatives, guardians and mediators. Despite the fatigue of this increased effort, they all believed that the sessions had allowed them to consolidate their knowledge and, above all, understand new notions in music theory and improve their sound, expression and instrumental technique. Nevertheless, the absence of rehearsals had a considerable impact on the participants: "I missed playing all together", T said as they recalled their instrumental practice during that time. At the end-of-term group sessions – which were a poor substitute for the usual moments of musical conviviality – the fraternity between parents, team members and association directors was supplemented by a sense of profound admiration for the band members' artistic achievements, as their autonomy in playing their instruments had become more apparent in these troubled times.

### after...

The long-awaited resumption of face-to-face classes took place in October 2021. With some of the rules mentioned above still in place, lessons resumed and were eventually followed by rehearsals, where the students' artistic development was apparent. The time had come to prepare for the concerts, the first of which was scheduled for the Christmas period. The participants were very enthusiastic about this opportunity to show off their musical knowledge in public but they



also felt a great sense of responsibility, which provoked anxiety in many, if not all, of them: some became distressed before an audience; others were worried about forgetting the notes they had memorised; many participants did not believe they were capable of playing all the pieces without mistakes. The perception that they were required to memorise all the pieces and that the tempo would be set by the least skilled band members – basically, that the band's success depended on them all – prompted them to redouble their efforts and led to almost 100% attendance. Team work, resilience and a spirit of mutual support between the band members and all those who supported them in the project made that first performance a success. This success was repeated at the following performances in May, but the presentation of a new, longer, more demanding repertoire heightened many of the participants' anxiety: for this reason, the pieces were interspersed with brief descriptions of the pieces and the aims of the project to give the participants time to check the notes they had memorised and allow teachers and members of the artistic and social teams to quickly address bouts of frustration among the musicians and encourage them all to do their best. As well as the concerts, the students were also invited to participate in joint artistic sessions with music groups, which helped them to feel part of the music world as musicians rather than as learners of an instrument, as they had referred to themselves until then. With their "hearts full" and "proud of what they have learned", the participants enthusiastically embarked on individual study and group practice "in anticipation of the next" concert.

With these concerts, Filarmónica Enarmonia has taken a more decisive step forward in its contribution to raising awareness and encouraging recognition of the artistic skills of visually impaired people within society. The public response to the concerts was overwhelmingly positive. In their questionnaire responses, audience members confessed to being surprised by the talent of the blind and visually impaired band members playing more unconventional musical instruments and highlighted the merit of the project in guaranteeing full access to the arts among this community: "everyone has the right to [enjoy and obtain recognition] for their artistic practice" and "solutions must be found to ensure access" were among the comments made by the respondents. There was also a unanimous understanding that the project makes a positive contribution to the personal development, motivation, willpower, autonomy, recognition and integration of blind and visually impaired people. Although many people acknowledged that there are opportunities for this community to participate in artistic and musical activity, they also said that a large section of society is





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unaware of these opportunities and that they intended to share their impressions of the artistic progress and achievements of the visually impaired community more widely. "Blown away by sighted and visually impaired people sharing music together" and understanding that "art is [indeed] by everyone, for everyone", they went home with the sense that they had "experienced a better world (...) where the need for inclusion and active citizenship are taken into account". They said that they had been inspired by the participants' "strength and dedication", "resilience and faith" and "joy". Gradually, the compassion with which they had once regarded blind musicians was replaced by a sense of recognition and admiration for the artistic merits that these musicians had achieved as a result of their talent, willpower and dedication.

## in the future...

The teaching materials and other equipment developed as part of the project have gone some way to addressing the lack of or difficulty in accessing manuals on music theory and Braille music notation, wind and percussion instruments and group practice for visually impaired individuals, and these materials are available at the Associação Bengala Mágica Resource Library for anyone who wishes to use them. They were created by the artistic, social and technological teams, with help from direct and indirect participants. In addition to the countless recommendations that they shared with us, they taught us class after class how to better implement the artistic initiative upon which we had embarked, and their generosity in seeking to guarantee access to music for all inspired us all to pursue that same mission: our joint efforts gave rise to "Guidelines for teaching wind and percussion instruments to visually impaired students", available in print, Braille and Braille music notation, and audiobook format; transcriptions of music theory textbooks in the same formats; musical games; fingering diagrams and other adaptations of technological tools and prototypes for group practice.

It is now up to the members of the artistic and social teams to transfer this mutual learning to other arts and special education teachers as part of our planned training activities. The consistent, growing number of applications from trainees demonstrates the relevance of this final initiative. Some were unaware of the existence of Braille music notation and are now keen to learn the basics, while others are eager to hear recommendations on practising memorisation, teaching instruments and leading group practice sessions. They emphasise the usefulness of games and other playful methodologies, musical instrument manuals and equipment and advocate their adoption at art schools and inclusive school clusters. In their eyes:

*Access to art and culture is a right that nobody must be denied. Ensuring that disabled people have the tools they need to produce art (even if they do not do so professionally) [will be] a key step on their path to integration. [May] there be at least one teacher at every conservatory one day to help and support disabled people who wish to learn and make music.*



In addition to the training sessions, our aim is for some of the trainees to lead open classes for visually impaired students at local institutions under the supervision of the project teams. This would allow one of the dreams of the first band members to gradually come true: a series of Filarmónica Enarmonias around the country would guarantee full access to artistic practice and music education for all blind and visually impaired individuals.

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Sob o mesmo céu © InPulsar

# Sob o Mesmo Céu



This article is the result of multidisciplinary contributions from the various actors involved and offers a reflection on the different phases of "Sob o Mesmo Céu", a project that used artistic practices – architecture, audiovisual and visual arts – as a strategy to promote the social inclusion of children and young people in Quinta do Alçada, Leiria, a multicultural community identified as a priority zone of intervention.

It highlights the role of multidisciplinary artistic practices and collective interventions in the community space as defining elements for promoting greater awareness about the neighbourhood and the importance of co-constructing a physical and emotional territory designed by and for all.

"Sob o Mesmo Céu" is a project led by InPulsar – Associação para o Desenvolvimento Comunitário and supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's PARTIS initiative. InPulsar is a non-profit organisation in the city of Leiria whose mission is to promote the social and economic inclusion of marginalised, vulnerable populations through the lens of local proximity and participation, centring its intervention on citizens and the capacities of the community itself. As a tool for promoting social inclusion, artistic practices have been an integral part of InPulsar's agenda for many years.

With community as its focus, the project aims to amplify policies of social development and action in the public space, seeking to redefine spaces as places for collective gathering, social integration, learning and citizenship-building. The multidisciplinary artistic practices employed – architecture, audiovisual and visual arts – emerged as a vehicle for combating the social challenges identified in the zone of intervention.

Led by an artistic director and a social coordinator from InPulsar, the project sought to build artistic competencies through collective interventions in the community space, using multidisciplinary artistic practices to create a participatory space by and for all. This was done through workshops delivered by the arts collectives TIL<sup>1</sup>, Casota Collective<sup>2</sup> and UIVO<sup>3</sup>. Participants were invited to reflect on their territory and to think about how and in what ways public space might be used to serve the local population, the aim being to foster a greater sense of belonging among children and young people.

In parallel, a programme on emotional skills was implemented by Escola das Emoções to help the children and young people develop competencies in managing their emotions.

The project involved a wide array of partners, including: Leiria Municipal Council, the parish of Marrazes e Barosa, AMITEI, Escola das Emoções, Marrazes school cluster, Afonso Lopes Vieira secondary school, *Jornal de Leiria*, Festival A Porta and Riscas Vadias.

1 Coletivo TIL is a collective of members from different disciplines who have a common interest in both the materials and processes of co-creation, and civic and social intervention through critical thinking and valorisation of the territories.

2 Casota Collective is an audiovisual production team running a creative studio for video, audio and production.

3 UIVO is a project that promotes social cohesion, inclusion and active citizenship through concerted interventions.

## Participants bring the project to life

Over the three-and-a-half-year period of the project, our small but mighty artists created many of their aspirations with their own hands. We are grateful for the generosity they showed in opening themselves to new ways of learning, for challenging themselves and for bringing their stories, transforming some of their dreams for the community into reality.

The project involved 42 children and young people, aged 7 to 18, from the community of Quinta do Alçada, located in the parish of União de Freguesias de Marrazes e Barosa, Leiria. The group was very heterogeneous and culturally diverse. The neighbourhood of Quinta do Alçada is characterised by its multicultural nature, with Moroccan, Brazilian and Ukrainian residents making up a significant part of the diverse local community.

Participants face various challenges related to the poor socio-economic conditions of their families, the high prevalence of prevention and protection orders, the existence of deviant behaviours, idleness during leisure hours and outside class, and difficulties in managing emotions. Coming from a territory with a negative social image, these participants have limited access to cultural activities.

## From theory to practice, the various phases

The arts workshops offered by “Sob o Mesmo Céu” took place weekly on Saturdays, usually between 10 AM and 1 PM. In the first phase of the project, the workshops were divided between the collectives, alternating so that each took turns leading a session; later, organisers saw that participants benefited more from extended blocks (6 to 8 sessions led by the same collective), allowing for more cohesive and productive work, and in turn, improving their motivation.

At its core, “Sob o Mesmo Céu” was a project produced by individuals who wanted to create spaces of convergence, where encounters and actions created the fundamental bases for community, leading to deeper and closer relationships, where the skills of all participants involved in the various activities proposed would be harnessed. As such, it sought to introduce a new dynamic to participants, allowing them to meet different people, artists, trainers and projects, and to challenge the conventional models of neighbourhood existence by providing access to social and cultural projects.

Over its three-and-a-half-year period of implementation, from January 2019 to July 2022, the project went through the following phases:

**Analysis of existing conditions** – Participants were invited to reflect on and describe their neighbourhood by exploring its pitfalls and potentials, what their feelings were about it and what representations and stories were associated with each place. This initial assessment was accompanied by a mapping out of the neighbourhood's public spaces. During this phase, participants were exposed to multidisciplinary artistic practices (Visual Arts, Architecture, Audiovisual Art) for the first time.

**Elaboration of ideas** – After participants became engaged and motivated, they were encouraged to develop initial ideas for interventions that might address some of the challenges in the neighbourhood. During this phase, participants were placed in direct contact with multidisciplinary artistic practices and given their first tools for developing and communicating an idea through drawing, photography and the written word.

**Learning creative techniques using simple, environmentally sustainable materials** – After working on their tools for developing and communicating their idea, participants were invited to create installations, exhibitions and artworks as a collective, using largely recycled, reused or natural materials.

**Construction** – Having acquired the multidisciplinary artistic tools, participants put their ideas into practice, aiming for the collective (re) creation of their ideals and proposals.

As a project of action and reflection on the fundamental role culture and artistic practices play in the development of well-being and quality of life, “Sob o Mesmo Céu” highlighted the importance of synergies and collaborative partnerships, lending validity to the maxim “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. The project promoted greater social cohesion among its participants by developing artistic practices and critical thinking on the notion that their actions could have a direct impact on public space and that they could be catalysts for change.

As a process and as a final outcome, “construction” was a bonding element that encouraged this transformation. Hence, children and young people were invited to participate in the creation/construction of a common

space, stimulating future interventions in the neighbourhood. A physical and emotional space constructed and designed by and for all. Through the encounter with and development of the various artistic disciplines included in the project (*architecture, plastic arts and audiovisual arts*), the offering of new pathways for exploration and the idea that many hands, hearts, stories and lives could turn dreams into reality, participants were invited to become creators of a collective memory in which artistic practices broadened their perspective on the possibilities for territorial, intergenerational and multicultural cohesion.



YouTube Channel  
"Sob o Mesmo Céu"

## Processes and outputs

We began by initiating contact with various artistic practices from distinct universes: architecture as a medium for visualising and constructing a real and imagined space; plastic arts as tools for imagination and creation; and audiovisual arts as a medium for portraying a present within which a past is held and a future memory created.

The first exhibition that took place in the community was part of *Festival A Porta* (June 2019), a moment marking the first steps of a long journey bringing various worlds together and pointing the way to various possibilities for the future.

A need and desire to occupy public space led to the creation of the first artwork in the community in December 2019: *caixas que contam histórias* [boxes that tell stories], which featured stencilled paintings on street-side electrical boxes.

In January 2020, we created the art installation *Sr. Alçada*, a large-scale sculpture installed in a public space, which showcased the "views and conclusions" of participants about their community.

In the final semester of 2020, workshops led by Coletivo Til encouraged the appropriation and creative exploration of public space in the neighbourhood through the creation of street furniture prototypes. This culminated in a public presentation of the prototypes to partners. These creations instilled in participants a greater desire and willingness to be involved in a common goal: that of improving conditions in the neighbourhood for the entire community. Hence, participants felt a greater sense of their role as active citizens, entrepreneurs and agents of change.

Following a process of mapping out, project planning and materials selection, the first prototypes and models were built and installed in a space the

participants dubbed *Cantinho do Alçada*, comprised of benches, play areas and a community garden. *Animário*, a series of "homes" for various animals in the community, was also created.

In the visual arts workshops, participants conceived and built *Galeria Efémera* [Ephemeral Gallery], an open-air gallery that was included in the event *Arte Pública: Leiria, Paredes com História* [Public Art: Leiria, Walls with History].

Audiovisual works included *SOBre Nós*, a documentary video of individual reflections from participants, and *A Curta*, a short film by children and young people in which all members of the group took on the various stages of production from conception to production.

The creative processes and outcomes were a reflection of participants' desires.

Sob o mesmo céu © InPulsar



## By the hands of those who build: Coletivo Til

Architectural activities developed with Coletivo Til sought to encourage the appropriation and creative exploration of public spaces in the neighbourhood through exercises involving the creation of public equipment by the participants. These emerged from earlier group activities involving identification, analysis, discussion and creation.

Over the course of the process, participants progressively developed a commitment to the challenge of thinking, planning and executing, culminating in an idea for occupying public space in the neighbourhood.

This generated a sense of autonomy in participants to think about the public space in their neighbourhood and how it could be creatively appropriated. The workshop process allowed for the transfer of basic skills on object design and construction, while offering a way for participants to reflect on their neighbourhood public space. Participants showed a clear progression in their use of tools, applications and details.

The public presentations to the community in the spaces of intervention incentivised participants to develop skills in composing, writing, organising and managing presentations.

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## Through the lens of Casota Collective

Through the provision of audiovisual challenges, a process of introspection and self-awareness took place on the part of the participants. Audiovisual activities implemented by Casota Collective engendered among participants a growing capacity for reflection and awareness of their lives, their feelings and their resulting social interactions with the community and neighbourhood.

In the activity *SOBre Nós* (individual documentary videos), participants were given the opportunity to not only express what made them happy or sad, but also listen to one another. It was particularly important that they got to hear about their friends' lives, concerns and joys. This aspect was truly enriching in that it enabled participants to have a better understanding of each other and to connect on a deeper level, thus gaining a greater sense of respect for their peers.



## The desire for change

We believe that by providing access to various artistic manifestations and cultural activities, by suggesting "pathways" and by offering new experiences and discoveries both within and without the community, we can encourage social participation, creating a sense of well-being linked to the notion of greater access to these activities. This in turn raises awareness of the importance of artistic practices as transformative tools for individual and community development.

The greater sense of responsibility and commitment, the heightened level of participation, the evolving spirit of teamwork, improved communication and the development of collective critical thinking were fundamental skills that revealed themselves over the course of the project. These changes within the groups also led to changes in the artistic dimension, which manifested in a greater level of proactive behaviour and a desire to bring art and culture into the community.

## The moment when the World changed

The main challenges encountered by the project stemmed from the global pandemic, which brought a wave of uncertainty and led to significant changes in scheduled activities. This situation forced everyone involved (artists and young people) to systematically reinvent themselves in order to stay focused on the project and the community at a time when physical distancing was imposed world-wide.

All activities scheduled between March and June 2020 were cancelled, disrupting the flow of the project. In response, the artist collectives sought to keep participants engaged by designing a series of challenges. One of the barriers that emerged at this time was the lack of digital access by participants, making it difficult to carry out activities at a distance. Adapting to this reality, the team designed a kit with three activities (each designed by one of the collectives), which was personally delivered to each of the participants' homes. The involvement and dedication of the participants was impressive, as shown by the elaborate and highly creative assignments submitted by the vast majority.

From January to April 2021, in-person activities were again suspended as a result of a new lockdown imposed by the government. This time, the challenges were substantially fewer as all of the participants had become prepared for working virtually. During this period, two activities were completed: a podcast and a fanzine.

While the pandemic brought changes to everyone's lives, those most affected were the elderly. “Sob o Mesmo Céu” was no exception in this regard, such that seniors from the IPSS partner organisation AMITEI had to alter their planned activities and challenges.

## Escola das Emoções - programme in emotional skills

In parallel to the artistic interventions, a programme in emotional skills was developed by Escola das Emoções. Its aim was to promote emotional well-being by teaching young people how to identify and understand their emotions, thus helping them orient their behaviour and thought processes to achieve better results both personally and at school. Sessions were conducted using group activities, games, storytelling, videos, movement and visual arts and other fun activities.

The pandemic and the resulting physical and social distancing had a major impact on the planning and execution of the emotional skills programme, owing to the experiential and experimental nature of interpersonal and social relations, which involve communication, self-regulation and conflict resolution skills.

Now, more than ever, emotional skills activities must be reinstated so that these skills can be absorbed by the young participants of “Sob o Mesmo Céu” and disseminated in their more vulnerable communities.

## Paths and diversions of a collective journey

One of the main challenges of the project at the outset was that it lacked its own space. This need was later met when the Marrazes school, one of the project partners, provided an adequate sized room to host arts workshops and store materials.

*I wished “Sob o Mesmo Céu” had its own studio. Being on a Saturday means that all of the kids have unique opportunities. I loved this project.*

ANTÓNIO, PARTICIPANT

Another difficulty was the fact that the project took place in public space, which often meant it was contingent on legal and official authorisations.

Throughout the project, keeping participants engaged was a challenge. Being a heterogeneous group in terms of age and interpersonal characteristics, levels of interest in the different activities varied, leading in some instances to behavioural and attendance problems on the part of the participants. To mitigate these problems, different strategies were used, including the creation of working groups and a focus group, and changes in scheduling so that workshops would be led in blocks by the same collective to ensure continuity and encourage greater engagement and motivation in the group.

*I identify with Coletivo TIL because I like to build things. I also enjoyed learning how to film with a camera. Psychologically, it helped me develop respect for groups.*

LUCAS, PARTICIPANT

*It helped me deal with my difficulties speaking in front of a camera.*

ISLAME, PARTICIPANT

In the first phase, participants identified the negative aspects of their neighbourhood, its pitfalls: the dirty streets, the lack of a football pitch and the lack of common space for residents, among others. Today, participants are demonstrating more concrete notions of what improvements might be possible in the territory.

Participants incorporated the notion of participatory art by identifying social problems, developing a critical sense and understanding the power of community transformation.

The impact of the suggestions, dedication and work will be felt by these participants, improving their self-esteem and sense of empowerment and leading to better social integration.

*I learned how to paint with different materials, to build beautiful things for the neighbourhood and to make a film.*

PEDRO, PARTICIPANT

*I liked making Cantinho do Alçada and cleaning up the litter there.*

VLAD, PARTICIPANT

*Quinta do Alçada is better because of "Sob o Mesmo Céu", it's more colourful now. I also learned how to use a video camera and make things with wood. I like this project and I hope it doesn't change.*

DAVID, PARTICIPANT

The experiences of the participants over the course of the project generated critical thinking and learnings on cultural heritage, diversity, education, public space, identity expression and civic participation, as well as the potential for cultural fruition and expression. The reciprocal learning that took place between participants and the artist collectives enabled the process to remain open and multilateral. This was particularly important when it came to using the tools acquired in the workshops; not only were participants able to build or create, they were also able to think critically about their public space and how people relate to one another within a logic of continuity.

*My parents think "Sob o Mesmo Céu" is incredible because we learn a lot and it's a good example for the neighbourhood.*

WIAME, PARTICIPANT

*I felt that people from the neighbourhood got involved in Cantinho do Alçada. The neighbourhood improved.*

LAURA, PARTICIPANT

*I liked Coletivo TIL, Casota Collective and Gui the most because it was really cool to hang out with them and do cool things. It was really fun and I'd like to keep doing all of this with them.*

MARIA, PARTICIPANT

*With "Sob o Mesmo Céu", I learned how to work in a team, how to listen and how to enjoy myself.*

FRANCISCO, PARTICIPANT



PELE - Espaço de Contacto Social e Cultural  
Inês Lapa, Janne Schröder, Maria João Mota



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# Enxoval: a poetic and political manifesto

“Enxoval – Tempo e Espaço de Resistência” was a project that brought together community groups from Porto and Amarante between 2019 and 2022 to explore a multi-territorial, trans-disciplinary and intergenerational approach to Gender Equality through artistic practices.

Exploring the trousseau (*enxoval*) as a social representation of the female condition and of a symbolic burden spanning multiple generations, it examined a heritage of objects, affect and conduct, and the transmission of an idea of the feminine passed down from grandmothers to mothers to daughters. Traditionally used for accumulating and storing this heritage, chests (in Portuguese, *arca*) were opened up as spaces for Action, Reflection and Artistic Creation (ARCA), and the collective construction of a new trousseau.

## The beginning: from bedsheet to banner

Enxoval was stitched together by many hands over the course of three and a half years. Initially, the idea was to bring together different generations of women and men across various territories and urban/rural narratives to reflect on, discuss and create art about gender equality and women, and concepts of community and participation. We knew where to begin, however, the path unfolded in a much more organic and multi-pronged way.

In 2019, we launched Enxoval with an empty chest, the one we had used when we presented our pitch for the project. In our meetings with the groups, we began by asking: What is a trousseau? What objects does it include? What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a man? What expectations do we carry with us? Are we equal? Have we achieved equality? What was it like in the past? And now?

That year, we began activities in tandem with a group of seniors from Marão and a group of young people from Porto. We listened to many stories, from women near the age of 90 to 12-year old girls. As we listened to them describe their experience of "becoming a woman" (getting their first period), we noticed that what these stories had in common was the sense of shame and

"Do lençol à bandeira" - tests for a graphic image of the project by Clara Não





taboo. These women, separated in age by 70 to 80 years, were told the same thing: "now, you have to be careful"; "you have to cover your body"; "you could get pregnant"; "you can't go bathing in the sea"; "you can't eat chocolate or oranges or figs, because they can make you ill". This revelation underscored what continues to be, in effect, a universal aspect of the female condition: the fear, shame and ignorance we feel over our own bodies.

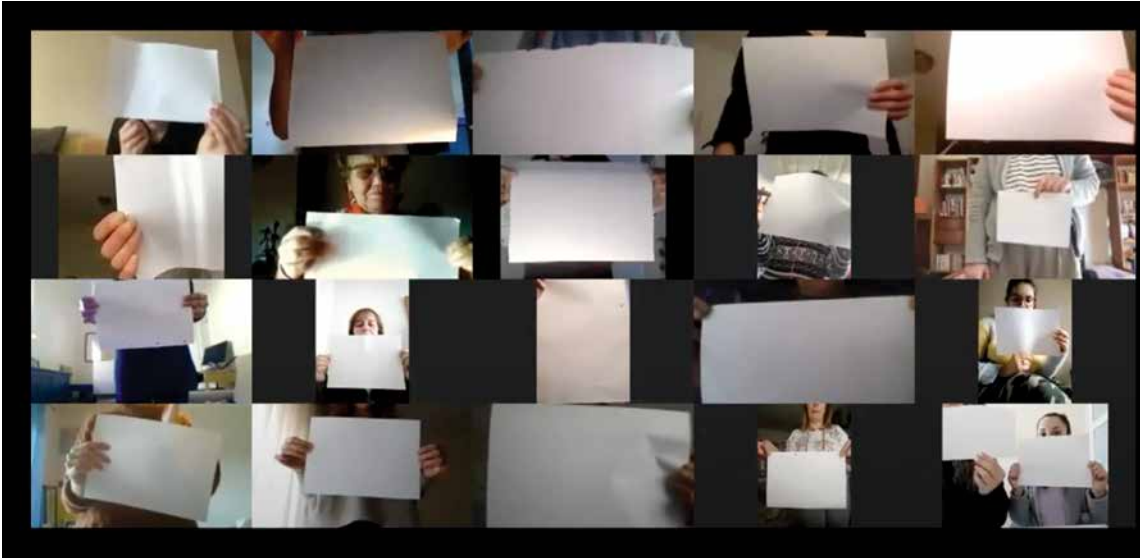
What is also passed down from one generation of women to the next is a code of survival – oftentimes through words or advice, but also through gestures, looks and complicit silences.

Out of this code of sisterhood and survival, we proposed the creation of another shared code: the fight for a new trousseau, turning bedsheets into banners and flags.

## The creation of a Manifesto

In 2020 and 2021, just as our most basic freedoms were being taken away, when we watched the world from our windows, fearful of the news that arrived each day, when the collective dissolved into individual bubbles, we invited the various groups of our project to a virtual meeting, the aim of which was to create a collective action for 8 March 2021, International Women's Day.

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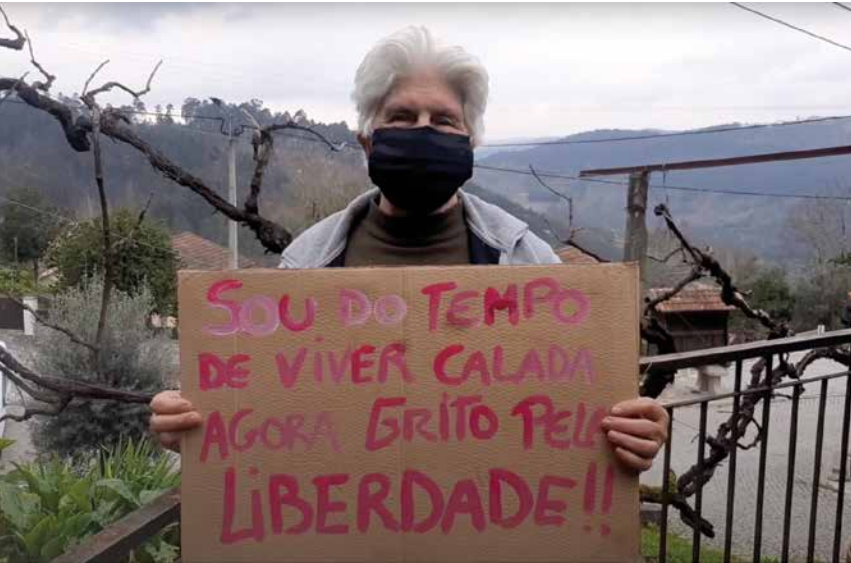


One of the first ideas we tried involved the use of a white sheet of paper. Initially, each person was invited to use it however they wanted – writing on it, tearing it, crumpling it... The next challenge involved writing protest slogans on posters for each person to take into the street. Based on these phrases of protest and urgency, a collective manifesto was put together and transformed into a video in which nearly 100 women took part (to watch the video, scan the QR code on the next page). Once in-person gatherings were allowed, the manifesto became the basis for the creation of a sound walk and performance piece presented in Porto and Amarante. To occupy public space, several phrases from the manifesto were inscribed on white banners and taken by the collective to the Women's Day march, where it was displayed as a front of resistance.



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At a moment in human history in which marching in the streets with a white poster can lead, in some cases, to imprisonment, it's pertinent to revisit the image of the group in confinement, each person holding up their white sheet of paper. Today, it seems all the more relevant to recognise how this individual, seemingly inoffensive act – made in an intimate and private space – was transformed into banners held by several generations of hands, bringing the struggles of private space into the public, turning a protest of one into a protest of many.



Video-Manifesto "Somos todxs Bravas"

## Bodies in the street: the private is political

In our sessions, as we shared our private lives, from how we organise our domestic chores to the ways in which we love, we realised that a private space is political, even if hidden away in our homes. We realised too that the experience of being a woman\* is a collective experience – even though the experience of a white woman is different from that of a black woman or a trans woman. We observed that through private experiences, the political becomes more tangible and we can change it through our individual actions and choices.

We live in a world in which the female body is colonised by the capitalist gaze: the body is seen as a territory on which its market value is projected and compared. Used as a tool to sell everything from furniture to cosmetics, the female body is treated as a service-providing institution – from the domestic to the sexual. In this market, there are norms and standards that women are required to fulfil, which enables the female body to be exposed, exploited and objectified. Reclaiming the female body as our own (of women\*) is thus an extremely political act (Penny, 2010).

*If consumer society is to continue to exist in the manner to which it has become accustomed, it is essential that this latent power be appropriated, tamed and made docile. The ways in which contemporary capitalism undermines women's bodies, from advertising to pornography to the structure of gendered labour and domestic conflict, are not private troubles with no bearing upon the wider world. They are necessary fetters in a superstructure of oppression that has become so fundamental to the experience of femininity that it is effectively invisible. This superstructure is vital to the very survival of the patriarchal capitalist machine. If women on earth woke up tomorrow feeling truly positive and powerful in their own bodies, the economies of the globe would collapse overnight.*

PENNY, 2010

In an economic system built on the devaluing of the female body, loving your own body is a revolutionary act.

Throughout the creative process, we analysed these markets as a group, examining not just the flood of images in the media, but also the images ingrained within ourselves. Together, we worked to create and transform our self-image into one of care, self-acceptance, pride and sisterhood. Together, we realised that "we carry our ancestors inside us" and that within our bodies there is a calmness borne of many years of survival, wisdom and beauty. Together, we looked behind us and saw that this was a path that our mothers and grandmothers had begun and that we were paving for all young girls to follow.



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### “And the men, where are they?”

Although women were the focus of Enxoval, we knew from the outset that the project couldn't be limited to women's groups and that it was essential that men be included in the process of reflection, discussion and collective action – not only in the creative process, but above all in the reflection on individual and collective stories of the everyday. Patriarchy, sexism, toxic masculinity and the ways in which men and women are socialised lead to rigid and formalised gender roles that make us repeat and (re)create power relations in both the private space and the public. For this reason, we tried to ensure that groups were heterogeneous in their makeup by opening up participation to all genders. However, whether it was coincidental or whether it was because projects of this nature tend to predominantly attract women, several of the groups ended up being exclusively female. Despite many of the participants being overburdened with domestic work outside of rehearsal hours, the conditions of inequality that continue to exist drive and motivate women to create and seek out these spaces.

This exercise proved to be one of the most challenging for Enxoval, for there were many moments in the discussion when it would have been



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"simpler" to focus only on women's stories and resort to an "easy" opposition to masculinity. However, it was essential that we involved men by creating sensitive and safe spaces where inequality could be challenged from a male perspective. Thus, a change in strategy led us to a meeting with *Asas de Ramalde*<sup>1</sup>, a group made up almost entirely of men from Eastern Porto. Our weekly rehearsals with this group were lively and explosive in their discussions of the themes, as we discovered how much is continually lost through the perpetuation of ingrained stereotypes.

In our first collective rehearsal, which brought together four of the project's five groups, one of the male participants interrupted a presentation by a women's group from Porto by blurting: "And the men, where are they?!" Throughout the rehearsal, other similar reactions took place, revealing the discomfort these themes and their aesthetic and political representations induced. This discomfort was then discussed and integrated by the groups,

1 In 2019, "*Asas de Ramalde*" approached PELE with a proposal to develop arts activities with one of its groups – adults recovering from addiction. Although our plans were disrupted by the pandemic, we renewed contact with the group in March 2021 during the production of the video-manifesto *Somos Todos Bravos* [All of us are brave]. Once it was possible to resume in-person gatherings, we began weekly rehearsals with the group, comprised almost entirely of men.

revealing how the bodies, actions and words of every individual carried a truth and a collective urgency – this is a movement that is inspiring and transformative for those who share and those who witness.

Over the course of the project and during these encounters/confrontations, the (predominantly male) group from Asas de Ramalde felt that it had an essential role to play in the transmission of Enxoval and its Manifesto, in showing that the feminist struggle includes both men and women. Following its première in September 2021, the group returned autonomously and on its own initiative to present the performance to various audiences at social events.



Video trailer for the Performance Piece "As Bravas: um Manifesto"

## A new trousseau

Owing to the diversity of the participants in the project, our approach to the themes (as complex and interlinked as they are) had to be broadened in order to meet each group according to its specific needs and context. With our seniors' group from Marão, for instance, discussions emerged out of the objects of the trousseau and the words of advice that were passed down to young girls (as opposed to boys). With the youth group, many of whom were unaware of the trousseau as a concept, our entryway was through questions about harassment (in the school context) before we arrived at the idea of resistance and colourful protest.

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In rehearsals with the youth group<sup>2</sup>, we realised that issues of the female body had a further dimension to them. We realised that issues of the female body had a further dimension to them. These girls posted on *TikTok* and went on LGBTQIA marches, they dressed however they wanted and used different pronouns. For them, the feminist struggle doesn't stem from an oppressive marriage or the writings of a Simone de Beauvoir. Their brand of feminism doesn't come from books or institutions, but from a popular culture that manifests itself on social media and is becoming increasingly relevant to younger generations. Nonetheless, this is a feminism built between contradictions, bringing a number of questions to bear, such as: whose interests were underpinning this type of feminism – the interests of capitalist industry or the interests of gender equality? How and in what ways do these interests interfere or not interfere, knowing that women are especially vulnerable to working conditions in this industry? Who is being empowered in *TikTok* videos – the young girls dancing or the sexist perspective clicking *like* or *dislike*?

- 2 Enxoval's youth group evolved over the course of the project. From 2019 to 2020, its members came through the organisation "O Meu Lugar no Mundo" and Lar Nossa Senhora do Livramento, a child and youth services institution. This group underwent a process of creation known as Forum Theatre, culminating in several public performances. In 2021, when we resumed in-person rehearsals, we invited the project "Sinergias do Bairro de Contumil" to join existing members from the 2019 cohort. In 2022, the group adopted a new identity under the name "Guerreirxs Coloridxs" [Colourful Warriors] and began actively participating in other political spaces.

New movements bring with them new questions and concerns, but they also bring new possibilities for a more diverse representation, a more expanded notion of love and a more colourful feminist aesthetic.

We'll continue to summon the courage needed to ask the questions that lead us to uncomfortable places.

We'll continue to march in the streets, turning shame into pride, turning markets into celebrations of body diversity, turning silence into song.

We'll continue to develop the strategies of protest created by our ancestors in a celebration of sisterhood.

We'll continue to occupy public spaces with our bodies, creating safe spaces for sharing the political in the private and the private in the political, making our invisible struggles known.

CONTINUAREMOS JUNTAS NA LUTA  
ATÉ SERMOS LIVRES E IGUAIS!

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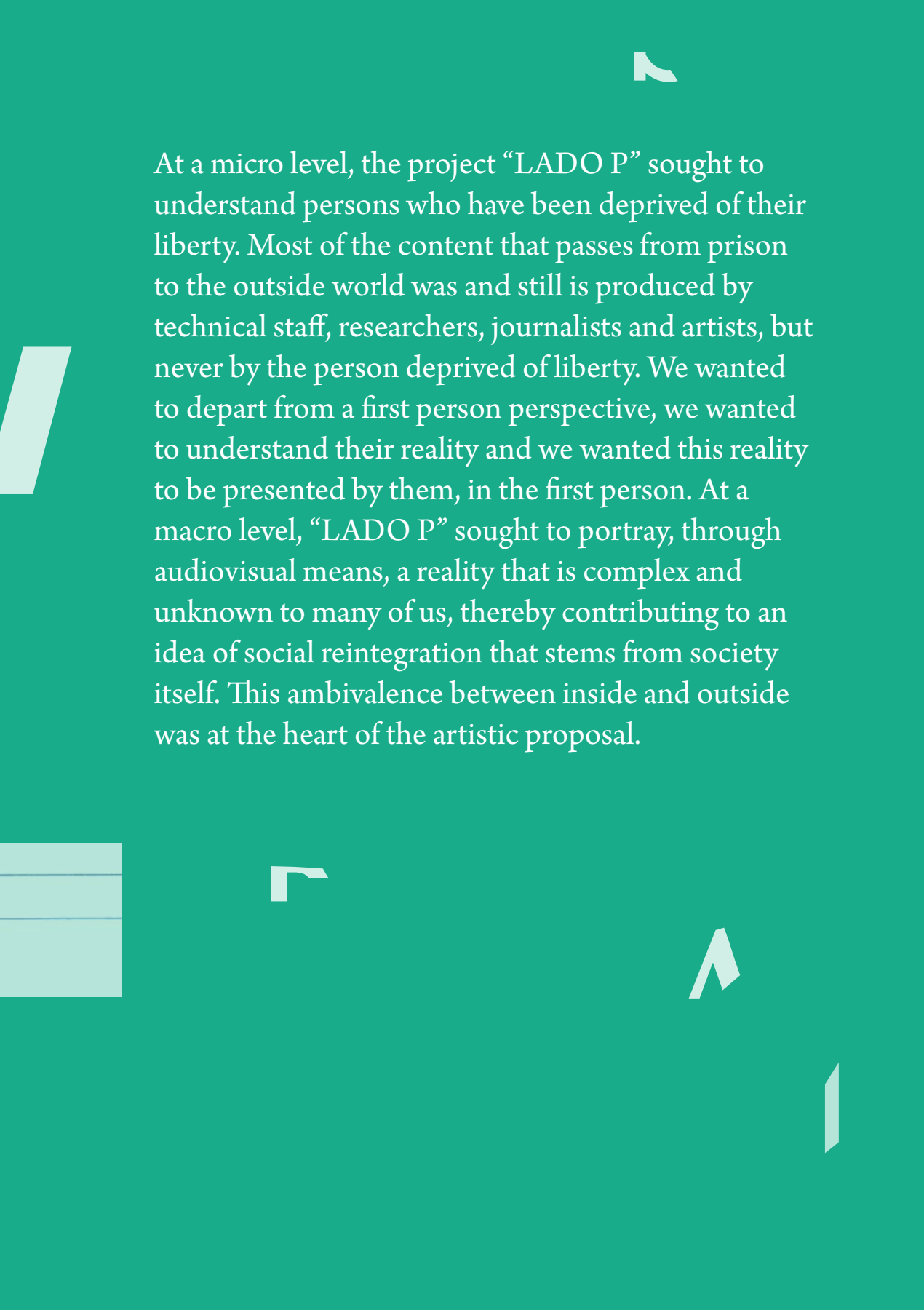


Teatro do Silêncio | Vende-se Filmes  
Maria Gil, Daniela Soares, Ricardo Loureiro

Pablo Santos - Caxias Prison-North enclosure



Lado P



At a micro level, the project “LADO P” sought to understand persons who have been deprived of their liberty. Most of the content that passes from prison to the outside world was and still is produced by technical staff, researchers, journalists and artists, but never by the person deprived of liberty. We wanted to depart from a first person perspective, we wanted to understand their reality and we wanted this reality to be presented by them, in the first person. At a macro level, “LADO P” sought to portray, through audiovisual means, a reality that is complex and unknown to many of us, thereby contributing to an idea of social reintegration that stems from society itself. This ambivalence between inside and outside was at the heart of the artistic proposal.

Filipa Reis, João Miller Guerra and Daniela Soares had worked on various projects with persons deprived of liberty and their families: *Li Ké Terra* (film, 2010); *BI* (documentary series, 2011); *Cama de Gato* (film, 2012); and *Liberdade* (documentary series, 2013). In these projects, they witnessed the profound impact prison detention has on inmates and those on the outside, the families that are both invisible and rendered invisible. This made them curious to know more about life inside prison from the perspective of the person deprived of liberty and to contribute something positive about that reality. Being filmmakers, they thought the best way they could contribute would be to film it.

This was partly what led us to apply in 2018 to the PARTIS initiative at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, whose three-year framework (2019-2021) and its foregrounding of the artistic process and experience seemed particularly suited to our project proposal. We knew we would need time to get to know people and for them to get to know us, as we wanted to co-create the content of what we would film. In our initial enthusiasm, we thought this would be possible – and reasonable – to achieve; this, plus a 13-part television documentary series and a full-length film. That was before we began, before we met the reality of the Portuguese prison system, before the Pandemic arrived, before our lives turned into a roller coaster. That was just the beginning. As Ricardo Loureiro, our social coordinator, exclaimed: “It's complex!”

At a micro level, the project “LADO P” sought to understand persons who have been deprived of liberty, nothing along those lines had been done. Most content that reaches the outside world from inside prison has been produced by staff, researchers, journalists and artists, but we never get anything from the perspective of those who are deprived of liberty. Beginning from a first person perspective, we wanted to understand their reality and we wanted this reality to be presented as it was, in the first person. At a macro level, “LADO P” sought to portray, through audiovisual means, a reality that is complex and unknown to many of us, thereby contributing to an idea of social reintegration stemming from society itself. This ambivalence between inside and outside was at the heart of the artistic proposal.

Our project began on 5 August 2019 in Caxias Prison. We began by offering certified training in audiovisual skills through our partner World Academy. While the goal was to provide participants with basic technical skills on camera operation, lighting, cinematography and sound recording and editing, we also wanted to jointly reflect on the implications of image use and how specific images came to be chosen. Knowing this was a sensitive issue, we wanted to address the elephant in the room from the outset. Hence,

we each participant to decide whether or not they wanted to appear in the documentary series or film, to join or quit the project at any time and to decide how they wanted to appear. Various possibilities were outlined. For instance, a participant's story could appear in the series or film but not the person to which the story belonged.

Nonetheless, the climate of instability created by changes in the Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRSP) and the resulting repercussions on prisons and detention centres, coupled with a prison workers strike and managerial changes, made a big impact on the initial phase of the project, which, having pre-allotted space in its schedule for an implementation phase, was able to recover by intensifying the pace of the World Academy sessions.

Our working methodology was never rigidly divided between the different phases of the project nor did it establish a hierarchy between areas (social and artistic); on the contrary, a music workshop was as important as a meeting with a partner or the preparation of a materials list. All areas were discussed by everyone on the team rather than the social coordinator speaking only for his area or the artistic coordinator speaking for hers. This had two immediate effects – since everyone was equally informed about what was happening, the project was constantly up to speed and it allowed for greater flexibility when adaptations needed to be made.

On 16 October 2019, we began workshops in theatre and writing, led by Maria Gil and Sofia Cabrita. These were attended by Daniela Soares, Filipa Reis and João Miller Guerra, who engaged as active participants rather than watching from the sidelines, thereby breaking down the barrier between "us and them". These workshops helped the group develop a sense of cohesiveness through games and theatrical exercises aimed at promoting self-awareness and awareness of others, and developing attitudes of cooperation, mutual support and trust. Building a team takes time and achieving it is not always a given. Sometimes, it isn't possible, and many projects succeed only when a group truly comes together.

The theatre and writing workshops were taught in tandem, each complementing the other. For instance, a writing exercise would be recreated for the theatre, or an improvisation would be extended into a piece of writing or a drawing. Every participant was given a notebook so they could continue their exercises outside of the working sessions. This aspect left a notable impression on us. Little did we know that something as simple as a notebook and pen would be so appreciated and regarded as a personal treasure.

“LADO P” consistently maintained an interdisciplinary approach to artistic practices to encourage a more enriching experience, adding complexity to the tools it employed. Arts disciplines do not exist in silos; they complete and cross over into each other. This perspective can be important when working with the reintegration into society of persons deprived of liberty, as it can help them imagine and conceive of other ways of being beyond the fixed categories of identity – “prisoner” or “ex-prisoner” for instance – imposed by the very institutions responsible for their reintegration.

In this text, when we use the term “persons deprived of liberty”, our aim is to deconstruct, through the symbolic dimension of language, a societal view that dehumanises human beings through the common use of such terms as “prisoner”, “inmate” and “criminal”.

As 2019 came to a close and Christmas arrived, we prepared a small theatrical performance for families, technical staff and partner organisations. We wanted to meet the children, the mothers, the fathers, the partners. This would be a key moment, an opening up of the project to families that would serve as a motto and bridge into the second year of the project, where a video exchange between persons deprived of liberty and their families would be the focus. But the families did not come. The invisible families were rendered invisible.

Aware of the gap that existed between our initial enthusiasm and what we could realistically achieve, we decided in January and February 2020 to embark on a collaborative writing programme with the participants to generate content for the documentary series. Sessions led by Daniela Soares, Filipa Reis and João Miller Guerra focused on the sharing and discussion of content. For instance, a scene about a conjugal visit was written collaboratively with Paulo, while an episode on health was written with Razta. We wanted the series to show moments of their everyday lives in prison. When we look at a prison for the first time from the outside, we see a place filled with the same people in the same situation. When we look more closely, we realise that the reality of each person is unique. That is, not all of them go to mass, not all of them pray, not all of them share the same religion. Though there may be a school open to all, not everyone attends classes, nor does everyone work or use the library. Hence, the episode on Paulo could only be filmed with Paulo. Although prison routines are alike and everyone is in one location, each person is unique. Some do things others don't. For us, it was important to rupture this idea of sameness, to turn uniformity into diversity – one that was distinct from a merely superficial plurality. We were against the systemic violence of sameness, but was diversity even possible if the system produced only sameness?



PAULO

*Paulo phones his girlfriend and schedules a date for the conjugal visit;  
Paulo fills out a request for the visit and delivers it to a guard/educator;  
Paulo receives a positive response.*

*Paulo and Carina prepare themselves for the visit;  
Paulo leaves the wing and goes for an inspection. After that, he  
reaches the door of the building;  
Paulo boards a minibus;  
It goes to Carregueira Prison;  
The minibus enters the prison;  
Paulo walks to the room.*

CARINA

*Carina enters her home and packs a suitcase for the conjugal visit;  
Carina travels to Carregueira;  
Carina enters Carregueira Prison and goes for an inspection;  
Carina walks to the room.*

This was how we prepared the first scenes of the series for filming. Our approach centred around individual interviews with the participants and recreations of the exercises we had done in the workshops, such as a reading of a "Letter to my 12-year old self" or a story about a scar or tattoo or a reply to the question "Who is the black sheep and who is the hero in my family?" It was our way of initiating participants contact with the cameras and presence of the crew.

Just as we were about to begin, we were informed that filming had been cancelled on the orders of the prison director. ~~Daniella Soares was summoned to the director's office.~~

A conversation ensued between the director and the project team, after which authorisation was given to film the exercises, but not the interviews. Until further notice. Two weeks later, we received permission to begin filming the interviews.

In the meantime, we submitted a proposal to film outside our workshop space, a request that went unanswered. Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. We waited for a reply. Our last day at the prison was 18 March 2020. It would be another year and a half before we returned on 3 September 2021.

Immediately, we knew that we could not afford to lose touch with the members of our group; despite the uncertainties, we began a letter-writing exchange, which produced a flurry of correspondence between March and December 2020. Letters were mailed every two weeks, which allowed sufficient time for them to be delivered through the postal service and prison circuit until they reached the hands of each recipient. In turn, replies followed the same route in reverse to Daniela Soares' home address. We were in total lockdown, with no possibility of working outside our homes.

The disruption caused by the pandemic gave us time to reorganise and it was then that we decided to restructure the project by abandoning the film, for we had neither the content we needed for two audiovisual pieces nor the time to develop them. Lack of time worsened under the pandemic and though it may seem obvious looking back, the decision at the time was not a happy one. However, it proved to be crucial, as it gave us the impetus to focus on the documentary series, consolidate content, invest resources and energy and fulfil the commitments we had made, namely the contracts signed with RTP (Portuguese national television) and ICA (Institute of Cinema and Audiovisual). During the pandemic, four episodes were filmed with project participants; however, some of them were later released from prison or transferred to house arrest. Those that remained kept in touch through letters and Skype calls and occasional scheduled visits.

While deprivation of liberty as a theme may not be anything new, those in prison were not immune to the effects of the pandemic. For them, confinement was far worse than it was for us, as all of the pleasures that had previously been available during the week were removed: visits, classes and workshops, including ours. It was like a double confinement. Perhaps this explains why our proposal to start a letter writing exchange drew so much interest, as if it represented the possibility of externalising a reality that had become suffocating and lonely. The material we received turned out to be so compelling that we decided to invite artists from other disciplines to dialogue with what was produced. The results of these artistic collaborations will later form part of the documentary series. At the time, we managed to attract new partners to support and finance the proposal, namely the Oeiras Municipal Council and the Lisbon Municipal Council.

When we returned to the prison on 3 September 2021, we discovered that the group had disbanded, as nearly all of the participants had been released or transferred to other facilities. We had to take a step back. Our group had dissolved and the prospect of filming was now in doubt. We had to re-evaluate

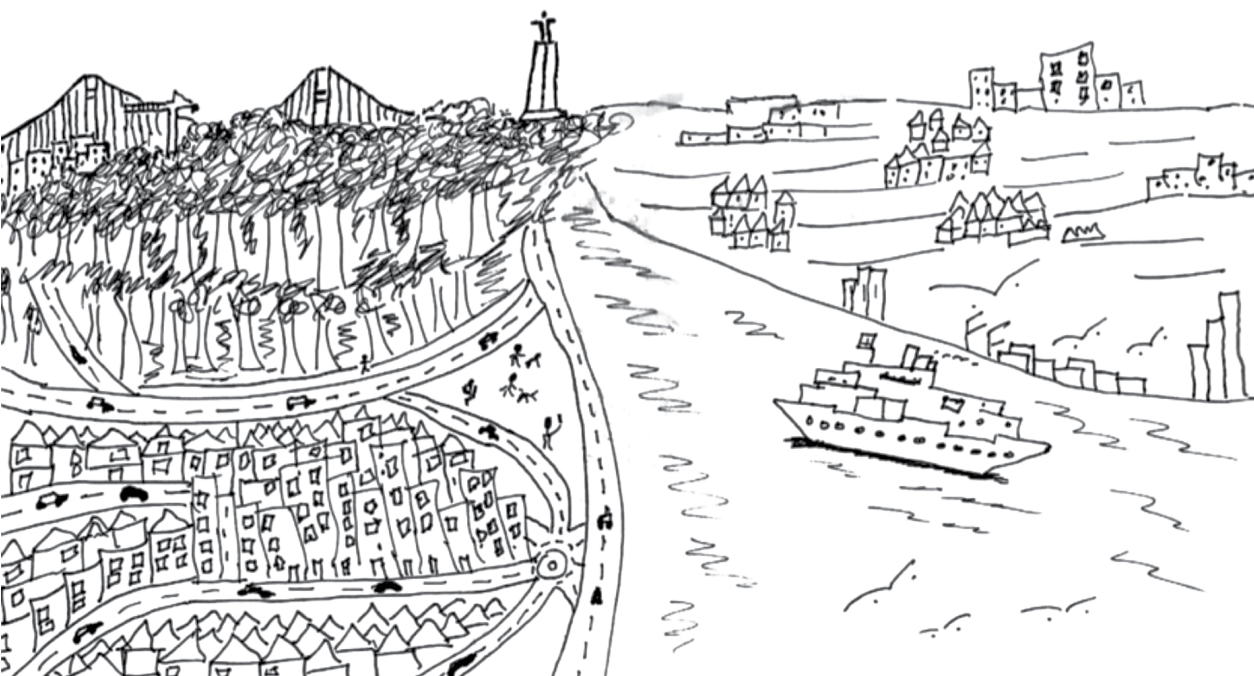
the project and come up with a new strategy. We decided to create a new series of workshops, this time with music as the theme. We invited artists Ricardo Jacinto and Margarida Mestre to lead and facilitate the workshops, with Maria Gil, Sofia Cabrita and Daniela Soares in regular attendance. We knew music had the power to bring people together, especially a group of younger participants, many of whom were musicians with their own personal projects. The workshops took place until 21 October 2021. Several of the pieces produced and recorded that day were incorporated into the series soundtrack.

While we were delighted by the creation of a new working group, we had much less time to create than before; consequently, this had a major impact on the depth of the material produced.

visão da minha janela da cela

Dia 3 - ~~QUINTA FEIRA~~ 30 de ABRIL de 2020

Desenho sobre o meu futuro



Fernando Ribeiro - Caxias Prison-North enclosure

Primeiramente pensei em prisão  
penitenciária presidio portão  
perém pareceria pobre pueril pecado partido  
por prozar pensei em publicar uma poesia  
poema pra promover a paz  
parrei pro papel  
pedidas perdais uma procura paixão  
perdido pagando de parvão  
poder perder e perder poder  
partes da partitura poética  
páisar plantar parar e prosseguir  
processos pertinentes a pertencer permanecem  
pessoas pecados a pagar o preço  
perpetua-se o plano  
preconceitos paradigmas o paradoxo  
percepção periférica piora  
partindo os pedaços prejudicamos as partes  
Priorizando as pessoas  
proporcionamos possibilidades  
Projeto Partes  
permeando os percalços  
memoreando preciosa publicidade  
Progresso para População  
patrimônios perecem  
pessoas padecem  
pedimos PAZ



Pablo Santos - Caxias Prison-North enclosure

From 11 November 2021 to 8 June 2022, we returned with workshops on content development, led by producer Pedro Cabeleira and actor Tiago Costa. The introduction, by Tiago Costa, prepared participants with speaking, character creation, and exercises to improve concentration and explore different group dynamics.

As new content for the series became available, we sought authorisation from the prison administration to start filming. However, filming permission would either be denied or artistic choices constantly questioned. We would then have to restart the implementation process by holding meetings with the

Outline of a cell, to scale





Drawing of a patio by Nilson Ramos

administration to discuss content, justify our artistic choices and renew our intentions and goals for the project. Unable to smooth out the process, prison administrators and the “LADO P” team began to question the validity of the documentary series, given the lack of sufficient footage obtained. Following a request for the project partners to intervene, namely the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and DGRSP, the project was put on hold. As of this writing, we are still waiting to hear back about a new request to film.



Drawing of a cell by Saturnino Ramos

In the meantime...

Filming on the patio

not allowed

not allowed

Filming of a consultation with a Senior Expert

Filming of an inmate weighing himself in the infirm

not allowed

Filming of a cell-mate saying goodbye and leaving prison

not allowed

not allowed

Filming of inmates doing physical exercises in the outdoor patio

Filming of an appointment with a lawyer

not allowed

Filming of inmate's routines in a cell

not allowed

Filming of prison guards opening doors

not allowed

Filming in an inmates' common area

not allowed

Filming of an isolation cell

not allowed

## CODA

- #1 When we enter a prison, we carry with us a range of representations about what such a place is, representations associated with our personal experiences and what society transmits, especially through media, television series, films and books. Not only are we totally ignorant of what a prison actually is, we carry within us an accumulation of prejudices about it before even setting foot inside. As such, the exercise of looking at a prison from the outside is, by definition, a complicated one.
- #2 As a self-contained social institution, a prison is characterised by the degree to which it is closed off from the external context of communities, organisations and dynamics. That is, a prison is inward facing rather than outward facing. Any project that seeks to go against this will encounter resistance.
- #3 There is no consensus on whether the societal reintegration of persons deprived of liberty is possible within prisons given that these same institutions entrench distancing and withdrawal from the dynamics of sociability outside prison. Any project that aims to bring the two closer together will have to ask itself if this is even possible.
- #4 A growing number of organisations, including charities, are gaining access to Portuguese prisons to provide cultural and/or artistic projects, religious support, education and professional training, as well as for-profit organisations, whose activities focus on access to employment through paid remuneration. On the latter issue, it should be noted that few companies who hire employees in prisons do so in compliance with the Labour Code when it comes to salaries or employment rights.
- #5 Prison is an eminently masculine space. The vast majority of persons in prison are men. These contexts are characterised by mechanisms of oppression and violence. Prison is also, in practice, a mechanism that entrenches male hegemonies, where relations of power are established between men (among persons deprived of liberty and with staff, including prison guards). The very fact that the world outside prison



remains highly resistant to the idea of men displaying their emotions, affects and feelings means that a prison setting is all the more restrictive of these manifestations.

- #6 In prisons, we find in the vast majority of inmates stories of lives subjected to various vulnerabilities, such as lack of access to jobs, education, training and housing; but we also find stories of adults who, at different times in their lives, have been victimised, many of whom become aggressors themselves.

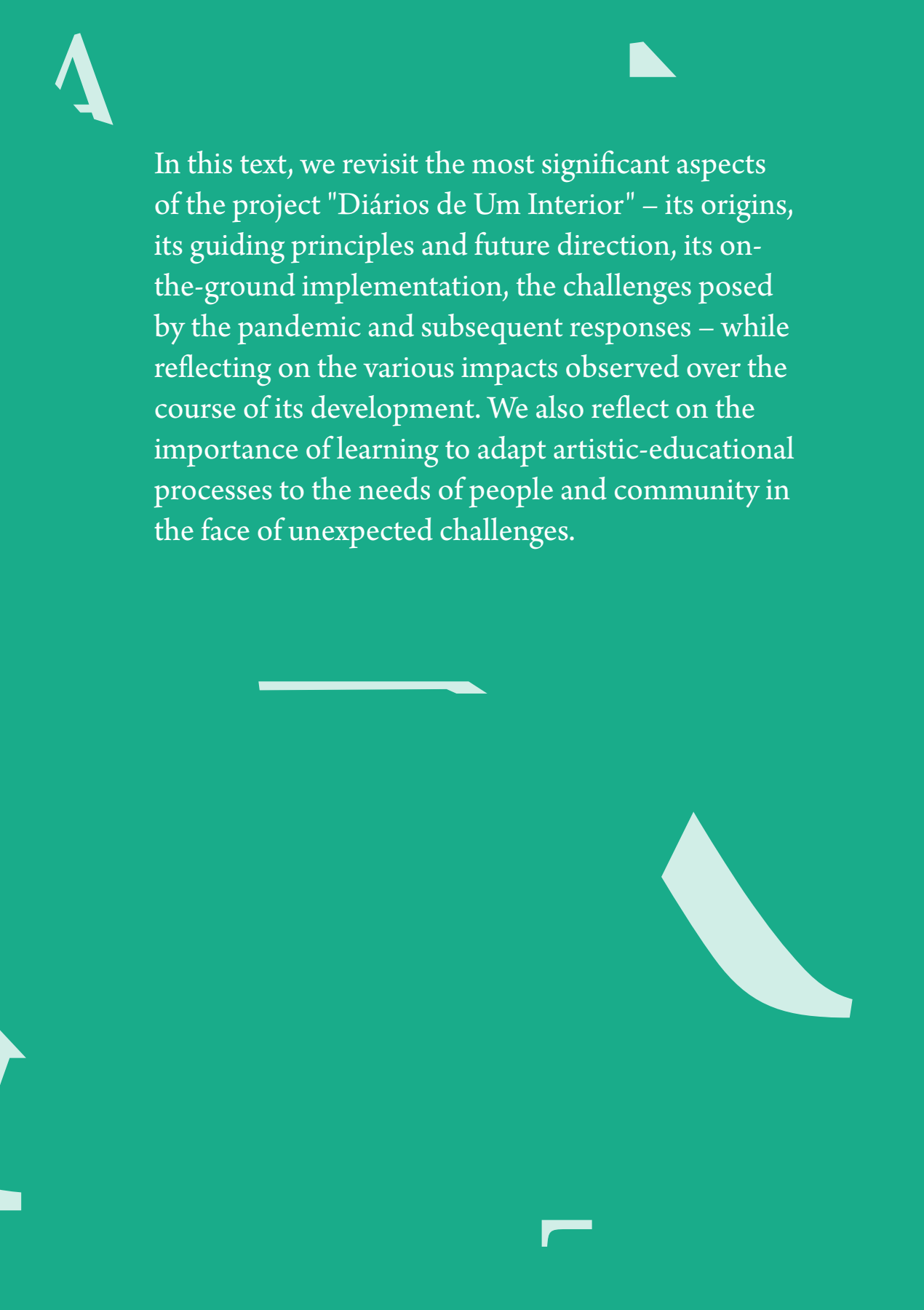
As a result of “LADO P” ’s intervention and in response to the effects of the pandemic, a meeting was convened between various PARTIS projects aimed at strengthening relationships and minimising institutional isolation, particularly in the context of prison interventions. Owing to the scarcity of bridging resources outside of prisons and the lack of institutional responses to the practical needs of people deprived of liberty, an informal network known as Rede Entregades 1 [Entregades Network 1], co-founded by “LADO P”, was created. The Entregades Network is a collaborative, inter-organisational space for civil society organisations, initiatives and individuals working in the prison system. Following an invitation issued to other organisations and projects, a number of partners have joined the network and developed closer connections, including the “Corpoemcadeia” project. At a national level, the creation of the Entregades Network represents an innovative step, enabling information exchange between people, organisations and projects and addressing the need for a more articulated response to situations involving persons deprived of liberty.

Since 2019, “LADO P” has been working in Caxias Prison (North enclosure), one of the foremost prisons during the dictatorial and authoritarian Estado Novo regime and still operational today.



© Luis Rocha

From the bread we  
used to make to the  
bread we have come  
to make



In this text, we revisit the most significant aspects of the project "Diários de Um Interior" – its origins, its guiding principles and future direction, its on-the-ground implementation, the challenges posed by the pandemic and subsequent responses – while reflecting on the various impacts observed over the course of its development. We also reflect on the importance of learning to adapt artistic-educational processes to the needs of people and community in the face of unexpected challenges.

## Who we are and what we were for

“Diários de um Interior” is a participatory art project developed in the district of Sardoal in partnership with the Municipality of Sardoal and the Sardoal School Cluster. It combines two fundamental but inter-related and mutually complementary dimensions: an artistic dimension and an educational dimension derived from the former. Both were conceived with the aim of furthering a common objective: the social inclusion of individuals and communities in the interior of Portugal who are at risk of losing their identity, history and culture. By seeking to expand artistic, cultural, and educational competencies through a reflection on processes, capacity building of individuals and greater social cohesion, the project aimed to foster the development of the whole person as a citizen and fundamental actor in their social context.

The artistic dimension, developed by the Movimento de Expressão Fotográfica (MEF) team, involved the creation of a documentary video project in which local residents of Sardoal, namely children and their families, collected and recorded visual narratives based on their memories and day-to-day lives.

These images were used as a form of community expression to promote the preservation of its traditions and revive its customs and knowledge. By producing and harnessing media to build communicative citizenship, the project opened up the possibility of portraying and presenting the day-to-day life of the community. This was an experiential process of observing, gathering and conversing *with* and *about* the community, creating within this methodology an atmosphere of collective creation, a co-production in which participants were (and are) involved from beginning to end, and it was through this close relationship that reflections emerged in the form of images whose final selection was left to the participants themselves. Thus, video became the chosen medium for this process.

The educational dimension of the project, led by a team from CLIQUE (Associação EPSEDUSA), centred on expanding the individual, social and cognitive competencies that had been developed within the artistic dimension. This was done through the creation and implementation of educational programmes and materials adapted to the specific needs of the participants – children, parents and teachers from the Sardoal School Cluster – and consequently, the community as a whole. With the children, the underlying idea was to bring art and artistic competencies to schools as a way of enhancing individual and collective development and from that basis, build up a repertoire of strategies that when applied, could leverage learning, reflection and the





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methodology used earlier for creating artistic products, one that was identical, in fact, to those needed in the school context. With the parents, we tried to highlight the importance of mobilising parental competencies in the artistic context (cooperation, sharing, autonomy, solidarity, capacity building) so that these could be applied to other situations in life. In our trainings with teachers, we sought to encourage an appreciation for the artistic products created by the children and their families by transforming them into educational materials that could be replicated and become an integral part of the curricula in the future. The goal of these programmes, ultimately, was the creation, at the local level, of study rooms for reflection/creation, led by pupil tutors; parents' associations who would meet to strengthen their parental competencies; and programmes of local significance that could be applied universally.



© Tiago Santos

## First steps

You could say that this project was *heroic* in the Ulyssean or prodigal sense of having been born from a place of craving. But a positive kind of craving – does that exist? A craving derived from an enormous desire to grasp, or even steal, in order to give back. This project saw itself as an alchemist, taking something of little apparent value – the *quotidian* – and returning it, in the form of gold, as *memory* in the form of art, a kind of *ready-made*: “(...) *my art is about living; each second, each breath is a work that is inscribed in no particular place and is neither visual nor cerebral*” (Duchamp, in Cabanne, 1987, p. 72). When participants were initially invited, they were not yet aware of the gold they already possessed. In this sense, our starting point emerged through our many discussions with parents in which we tried to make them see, to reveal in fact, the richness of what they could show and how important it was for their children and their community to record it. This dyad between children and community lay at the heart of the project. A balance between umbilical affect and a sense of belonging to something both outside and inside of us, a way of marking our identity. In

essence, the starting point consisted of demonstrating that sharing what one has is almost an obligation, for it is only in sharing that something can be preserved in perpetuity.

Here, preserving in perpetuity also meant preserving the people insofar as the cross-generational component of “Diários de um Interior” facilitated the preservation of not only traditions, but also relationships. (Re)Creating a repository of identity.

As a starting point, the challenge for a community situated in the interior of Portugal was precisely to have every participant – children, parents, schools, municipality, artistic team – be on the same page in order to begin the journey. Such a journey only takes place when professionals and non-professionals unite their differences in a moment of joint artistic creation, mobilising their skills, interests and different sensibilities that, by themselves, would otherwise never be produced (Matarasso, 2019).

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## As we walk, the path unfolds

After initial doubts and insecurities were overcome, *Diários* began its work in each of the dimensions; over time, our presence was recognised and appreciated in the community or communities, as it were – school, parents, etc. – which allowed us, despite our status as outsiders, to actively start participating in them.

What were our initial challenges? One was providing support early on to the families. Not only did we have to validate the stories they had chosen to tell, but we also had to guide them in shaping their narratives and address any concerns that the act of selecting always implies. The process of creation and performance itself was often difficult, arduous and anxiety-inducing, as most participants were not used to speaking in front of cameras, microphones and lights, and felt nervous about being recorded for posterity.

Working with the teachers was equally challenging. Despite having quickly grasped the potential of the project we had proposed – the programming of arts activities that both enriched students' development and eased the teaching workload (Kowalski, 2000) – they initially welcomed us with apprehension. Before long, however, and with the natural flair of a good host, they began inviting us to participate in other dimensions of school life where they felt we could offer added value. All started advancing, growing and flourishing.

## Pandemic: starting over from scratch?

Then in March 2020, the world was brought to a standstill. A training session for teachers scheduled for the following Monday was cancelled. The launch of a new study space with the Parents' Association (APEEAES) was suspended. Everything was put on hold – documentaries, filming schedules, final photography. Across the globe, life in community was suspended – the "other" who could potentially kill, destroy, corrupt and contaminate had to be kept at a distance. The fragile bonds we had developed through face-to-face contact, physical presence and constant nurturing were suspended. It wasn't that the pandemic brought challenges. It was that it forced *Diários* into a comatose state. The most vulnerable population – the seniors with their stories, customs and traditions – were cut off from the world. Their grandchildren denied the ability to record their stories, schools forced to maintain a delicate balancing act. Participatory art? Community intervention? Truthfully, that spring and early summer turned into a dark winter.



## Pandemic: turning weakness into strength

How did we overcome these challenges? We didn't! We hooked *Diários* up to a machine and initiated palliative care. That is, from a community standpoint, we bolstered our relationships and meetings with the municipality and maintained open communications with teachers and the parents' association. Taking advantage of that moment, we decided to live the pandemic in the interior, in the Hinterland of *Diários*. In a sense, we fought to overcome the distance the pandemic had imposed.

Faced with the inability to intervene on the ground, we created supporting materials to encourage participants to continue on their own with respect to the project. Study rooms were created to enable the community to access our materials any time it wanted and to create a support structure for children attending school. Learning materials contextualised by the artistic products that had been completed with the teachers prior to the pandemic were amplified so that educational resources were further broadened and made more accessible. The documentary videos, fewer in number now than before, were transformed into a book of children's stories, adding a further dimension to the oral history that was being returned to the community. It wasn't that challenges were overcome. It was that we learned to live with them, keeping our original focus on returning to the community what was theirs. The question was no longer whether we would reach our original goal. The question had to be: when will we reach our goal, which is ours alone, neither impoverished nor inferior, but just different? To quote Matarasso (2019), "*Community art is not a score to be conducted. It is improvisation, like jazz. Its players agree themes and boundaries at the outset: after that, art emerges as they pay attention and respond to one another*" (p. 52).

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## Reflections: from old to young *Diários*

In a very empirical sense, we could say that Art, through its symbolic power, is a unifying force – those who make bread in the documentary make all of the world's bread; the shepherd who speaks of his pasture speaks, in that moment, both for himself and for all shepherds. Those who tell the stories about their profession(s) narrate the future we want to have. As such, these stories that mark a community mark all communities, projecting themselves as one among many, giving those who do not belong the pleasure of belonging through identification.

The title of this article is an exact reflection of this: when we began this project, a woman who baked her own bread represented an image from another era; all of a sudden, a pandemic arrived and the whole world was baking bread and swapping recipes and tips on breadmaking... (*Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life*, Oscar Wilde).

The Covid-19 Pandemic was in itself an *antithesis*. We had postulated that art and the community production of artistic resources would be a unifying process that would enable us to work with the community in other areas beyond artistic production. The break imposed by the pandemic exposed the difficult re-initiation of *Diários*. This was not a project that could be rooted in the One, but in the Many. Not in the singular but in the plurality that formed this communitarian unity. We made a point of refusing to compromise on the plural dimension of the project and in this sense, *Diários* was reborn, reinventing itself and re-initiating its proposal. Keeping its objectives intact but needing new resources and more time to achieve them.

*Note: A special thank you to the community of Sardoal for receiving us – and continuing to receive us – with such warmth. Thank you so much.*



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Associação das Orquestras Sinfónicas Juvenis Sistema Portugal  
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# Orquestra de Afectos

For a more positive communication





Orquesta de Afectos' (OA) goal is to improve affective communication in the Kindergarten setting by exploring the relationship between music as an artistic language and the universe of emotions in communities with socio-economic vulnerabilities. In this text, the foundational principles of the initiative are presented and reflections made on the project's implementation from 2018 to the present day, based on the lived experiences of three communities where OA's work was developed.



## EXPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

Orquestra de Afectos (OA), a project of Orquestra Geração (OG), works to improve affective communication in Kindergarten settings through musical expression. Promoted by Associação das Orquestras Sinfónicas Juvenis Sistema Portugal and supported by the Oeiras Municipal Council and the PARTIS initiative, its partners included the Carnaxide-Portela school cluster in Oeiras and the Almeida Garrett school cluster in Amadora, incorporating 9 kindergarten classrooms<sup>2</sup>.

OA based its intervention on the practice of the musical ensemble, articulating three axes of action whose principle rested on an expanded concept of the school community – that of children, education professionals and families.

Artistic approaches lend primacy to the voice (songs, nursery rhymes, and rhythmic and melodic patterns), which serves as an aesthetic and strategic anchor for strengthening affective bonds between peers and with adults. Memories are invoked and provide a communicational bridge within a wider spectrum of musical and expressive resources drawn from different cultural contexts<sup>3</sup>. The body, in addition to the voice, is invoked, individually, in pairs and in groups. Participants are encouraged to see and listen to themselves and each other. Sound objects and small musical instruments are passed around. These dynamics and methodologies were developed specifically for different contexts at OA<sup>4</sup>, whose premise lay in the central importance of affect in the bio-psychosocial development of the child and their integration into the school context, leading to brighter academic futures and better social outcomes<sup>5</sup>.

*Affect* is also the motto to focus attention on the issue of aggression in schools, which according to staff<sup>6</sup>, is often caused by the transfer of violence from situations occurring outside school.

1 This article is written in the form of a sonata.

2 A tenth classroom was added in 2021/2022.

3 Nettle, B., 1992.

4 Gordon, E., 1997.

5 Walgrave, L., 2000.

6 Carnaxide-Portela School Group, 2016.



"Ground Zero", a drawing by the project coordination team

**As members of the school community, it is important that we ask ourselves in what ways our actions may or may not be responsible for maintaining this violence, be it in the form of resistance, prejudice, or the perpetuation of mechanisms focused solely on what happens inside the school, not to mention automatic patterns of communication.**

Putting a focus on altering patterns of communication becomes all the more relevant, given that the contexts in which these interactions arise are disadvantaged, both on a socio-economic level and in terms of access to other educational and cultural resources.

OA's sessions are developed in the context of the classroom, where teachers, operations assistants and children (aged 3 to 6) actively participate under the guidance of musicians. These sessions were linked to other activities

(including with families), as well as programmes with Orquestra Geração, primary school groups (years 1-4), field trips to cultural spaces such as museums, workshops offered by Lupa Grupo de Teatro<sup>7</sup> for families and educators and a children's play brought into the Kindergarten space.

One of the central aspects of the project is the cultivation of relationships with families, who are invited to attend weekly sessions and extracurricular activities, including school events OA gets invited to participate in.

## "Ground zero"

If one had to name a "ground zero" for the project, the image of a volcano would come to mind. The most immediate impressions evoke a landscape seething in dreams, relationships, conflicts, children, families, teachers, stigmatised and unequal spaces...

But if a volcano is often associated with destruction, the energy that feeds it also germinates landscapes of contemplation – seeds that grow and support new ecosystems.

Eruptions that appear at first to be stigmatised, reveal, over the course of the process, their potential for fertility and transformation. The volcano remains, but other natural elements grow around it and from it, sown by all its inhabitants and brought into bloom by Orquestra de Afectos' artistic ideas.

## The path

The context of the project and the nature of its protagonists presented potentialities and challenges that pertained to some of its structural elements.

From the outset, our choice was to work in the school setting, given its place as the epicentre of the educational community, comprised of teachers and supporting staff, children from various grade levels and families. While the school was central as a space where all of these elements converged, it limited OA's autonomy insofar as activities and contact with children and families were dependent on the conditions and permission from the authorities involved, including coordinators and school cluster administrators.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/Lupa-Grupo-de-Teatro-399007020225908>.



Another aspect intrinsic to Kindergarten and its context pertains to the constant fluctuations that occurred every year in the groups – children aged 5 and 6 who leave and new ones who enter. These fluctuations and the age groups we work with influence our intervention, from the content and modes of communication we use to bureaucratic issues, the result being that the project has to continually adapt to the different phases of development in the children who attend.

While these aspects are inherent to the context in which OA works, others stem from factors that can hinder the project's implementation (or sustainability), particularly those relating to the instability of educational staff. Among the nine classes that joined the project in the first three school years, seven saw changes in educational staff. Although the work we had done in the years these teachers were present provided us with a basis for other contexts and we had factored in the possibility of these changes by incorporating teaching assistants from the outset and preparing legacy materials for the schools (guidebook and songbook), this instability affected the project in terms of its implementation at the start of each school year and its sustainability in the school settings where OA focused its work.

In its proposal, the project had also highlighted the difficulty or even lack of ownership on the part of the teachers as one of the external factors affecting its objectives. The data, however, shows that in 100% of the cases, ownership did occur both during and after OA sessions with the children, as shown in the cooperation and interest expressed in sustaining them on the part of school administrators and municipal authorities.

Amidst these changes and characteristics, OA kept a constant focus on adapting the strategies defined in the project – artistic (maintaining a central repertoire alongside new materials and practices); pedagogical (integrating different times for acculturation and integrating proposals from teachers); and communicational (the presence of teaching assistants, information meetings to explain the project).

With regard to teaching assistants, the importance of their active presence in the sessions was not always recognised during the process. In some cases, this was requested by the project, often in collaboration with a teacher, or during moments of reflection when the musicians asked for their views on subjects. In other cases, an awareness of their importance grew over time and in a spontaneous manner as it became clear that their role was not merely functional or dispensable.

The pandemic was, of course, the most destabilising factor for the OA programme and its goals, principles and activities. The Covid restrictions limited the physical aspect of relationship, of facial expressions, the sharing of objects and instruments, cultural outings, visiting musicians, interactions with OG and other school grades, and logistical and organisational issues.

The most pernicious impact, however, was felt in the relationship with a central pillar of the educational community – families. Kept away from the school space, they were confined to digital communication, a medium of which a vast majority were excluded.

## Reflection and reflectivity

From the start, and throughout the course of the project, OA put in place a number of mechanisms that enabled it to deal with the fact that the reality on the ground was a living and constantly evolving organism.

During this process of adaptation, growth and relationship to emerging challenges, several key ideas took root, namely time, flexibility, communication and reflection.

### *time*

Confidence felt in the principles and practices of the projects often leads them to imposed pressure on the ground in order to quickly obtain support for their proposals.

The fact that this adequacy does not happen in the desired time or manner can be seen as an obstacle. However, a lengthening of temporal and physical spaces to integrate ideas, ways of being, relationships, trust and ownership, adopting a more "passive" stance that did not impose the pressure of "adequacy" on OA's principles and practices, proved to be an important strategy. This expansion of time not only allowed each actor to find their place; it also allowed the seeds from within each individual and relationship to emerge and germinate within the project. A greater presence of corporal movement, the creation of environments with sounds and lights or "special" objects, the incorporation of a story about absence and distance, which in the context of the pandemic took on a special relevance, were some of the seeds that time and vicissitudes offered to Orquestra de Afectos.

*flexibility*

The adjustments that were made depended on a flexible posture that allowed us to adapt, react or simply receive whatever emerged from the sessions and their multiple actors, keeping activities open and not limited to their original format. Naturally, the pandemic was one of the challenges that tested this flexibility, forcing the project to abandon several of its basic practices in order to maintain the spirit of its principles. During periods of lockdown, OA offered synchronous sessions online. While demanding for anyone who participated, these posed additional challenges in the musical realm due to issues with sound quality and the impossibility of working with sound in a collective manner. In this sense, ideas had to be adapted to a new communication format that privileged the visual, the individual and solo singing, amongst other strategies.

During the pandemic, one of the pillars of the educational community – families – were relegated to the background, as their access to the school space became virtually non-existent. Amidst this enormous challenge, synchronous sessions allowed OA to "invade" the domestic space, with some families members invited to participate. While these sessions were highly enriching, they failed to adequately bring families into the school space.

This proved to be the biggest challenge and the greatest loss that the pandemic brought to OA.

Also, not all teachers offered synchronous sessions, as they were not a requirement in pre-school education. In such cases, audiovisual content was created and delivered to homes, although it was not always possible to measure the effectiveness of this approach.

Both in the synchronous sessions and audiovisual content, as well as in face-to-face sessions after the lifting of the lockdown, OA activities involving touch, experimentation with instruments and physical proximity, were drastically curtailed and have only recently begun to be restored.

The absence of these practices meant that the principles underlying them – especially relationship and affect – took on new forms, leading to more intense explorations of other expressions, such as the gaze and new gestures.

### communication

In every phase of the project, communication was a central element of OA, whether with members of the team or education professionals. The central role of time and flexibility stemmed from the perceptions that were gathered, transformed and constructed in multiple moments of communication – meetings of coordinators, musicians, teachers and teaching assistants, and moments with parents. All of these were fundamental to this exchange, and to reflecting on and even highlighting the most silenced voices, including those of the teaching assistants.

### reflection

Reflection does not end with communication. If the latter can incorporate the former, the latter must be intentional, empowering, critical and participatory. It was in these aspects that reflection was encouraged in moments of communication, but it was also incorporated into the sessions themselves through the "Hora do Tapete" activity (inspired by Morning Time) with the children.

The central role of questions (so often removed from school life in lieu of answers) posed a challenge not only for the children, but also for the adults who, from their grown-up perspective, are so often focused on finding the right answers.

All of the challenges cited here should not be viewed only as difficulties, however. In truth, they establish an intimate relationship with the principles of OA, that is, the premise that any kind of social work, not to mention relational and communication-based, must be based on the specificities of the context and relationships established in each moment.

## RECAPITULATION

### The foundation of Orquestra de Afectos

Our observations, based on a systematic review of sessions, interviews and inquiries by our social and artistic coordinators, as well as informal communications, confirm that our practices were consolidated in many of the children who participated for at least two years in the project.

In a number of groups and students, in particular, OA's relational principles were more thoroughly incorporated, namely those to do with sharing, demonstration of affect, mutual support, joint reflection and attention paid to colleagues.

We also saw consolidation in the use of musical repertoire, tools and musical-social strategies by the children, as shown in their use of songs, nursery rhymes and musical dynamics for relational purposes outside of the sessions, whether in the classroom, during recess or in the external community (neighbourhood)<sup>8</sup>, as well as their integration of some of these dynamics in terms of their form of expression and integration of external inputs.

### Voices of participants

*(...) sometimes we get into certain habits, which is really bad. These sessions with OA are also good for this reason (...) every week, being there, we end up relighting the candles that get snuffed out (...) it's a wake-up call for us (...) wait, you can also do it like this and it makes us aware that we don't have to do things a certain way, we can do better.*

TEACHER

Sessions with OA offered teachers and teaching assistants an opportunity to be and interact with the children as an ensemble: to be with a group in a different capacity than leader, to take time to pause, change routines and bring in new perspectives on children and their practices.

*For me, it was always really important. I come away feeling light, happy, "straightened out". Yes, I loved participating. It made me feel good, both in body and spirit (...). It's really important that we're able to participate.*

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Also noted were the benefits OA offered to educational staff at the level of their well-being, which naturally influenced how they related to the children.

8 "I know that N. has brought many things to the neighbourhood, she's brought a lot of good things from OA (...) These lower the tension in the neighbourhood, which has an effect on the school (Teacher).

Teaching assistants were particularly important in this respect; as professionals who provided continuity in the school clusters, by and large they remained from year to year, providing crucial support in maintaining relationships between the school, the children and families.

These observations echo OA's principle of working with the network of actors that make up a school community.

*It's projects like these that our little ones need in order to dream and to love. I'm leaving with a full heart. I loved watching them interact with each other (...)*

PARENT AND SESSION PARTICIPANT

*(...) It awakened in parents a great interest in their children's lives here at school, and this was mostly because of you, the activities you did with the parents (...) I really felt the parents were participating, they showed curiosity (...) and they felt proud. For me, at least, I felt a sense of pride in taking part (...), to see that we're not here just to watch over the kids or clean up the classrooms at the end of the day (...)*

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Although the connection to families was disrupted by the pandemic, the moments that preceded it underlined the importance of OA's relationship with the school in helping strengthen the school-family bond.

Within the nexus of school-children-family, teaching assistants also saw their professional role being validated.

*I think internally, they [the kids] feel your kindness (...) and you try to pass this on to the adults, this kind of care in the relationship is really important (...), it's what I think needs to drive relationships between people, the affects. People need to feel a sense of calm, to give others time to express themselves (...).*

TEACHER

*The brothers C and J are highly aggressive, but after a class with OA, they calmed down completely. I even became calm. Our whole day is different.*

TEACHER

These testimonials illustrate the success of OA's fundamental objective, which is to harness the power of music to strengthen communication and create more positive and affective relationships in the school environment.

*I use OA techniques. The nursery rhyme "chega p'ra trás" is so helpful for organising the group in a stress-free way.*

TEACHER

*(...) the one that goes "iam para ram pam pam" – doing these kinds of vocalisations quickly gets their attention (...) and they follow me (...) For example, when I want to begin a group activity and they start chatting with each other, I begin singing "À espera" and they stop right away.*

TEACHER

Illustrating one of the goals of the project regarding the sustainability of results, the following testimonials exemplify the strategies teachers applied from OA to their classroom activities.

*[On field trips] It wasn't just an opportunity to get out. (...) It also helped us to improve our approach to the arts, it gave us new possibilities for exploring the arts. And the [classroom] reflections after the trip [with OA]. It brought meaning to everything. It's a model for: 1) field trips 2) quality and 3) thoughtful, prepared reflection. If it were on TripAdvisor, it would be rated "Excellent".*

TEACHER

The cross pollination of different artistic languages – from those explored in museum visits to the theatrical ideas of Lupa Grupo de Teatro or the introduction of a story into the structure of the sessions – proved fundamental not only in “showing the world”<sup>9</sup> to children in a “free and creative” way<sup>10</sup>, but also in enriching the work done later in OA sessions, the threads of which could be further developed in the classroom by teachers, reinforcing the importance of artistic expressions.

*I feel lovely. It fills my heart with colour.*

A CHILD, COMMENTING ON ONE OF OA'S SONGS

*We just share...our heart.*

A CHILD, RESPONDING TO THE QUESTION "WHAT IS ORQUESTRA DE AFECTOS?"



Photograph of an OA Open Session at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation on 28-29 May 2022, marking a reunion with families; a comment left by a parent.

Primeiramente quero agradecer a toda equipa de Orquestra de afectos que tiveram essa ideia magnifica e maravilhosa para os nossos filhos. Para mim foi uma experiencia inesquecivel, alem de ser a primeira vez espero ser mais vez porque foi não e só a Kelly Furtado mas sim tambem a Kiana Furtado. Fiquei muito emocionada porque não esperava ouvir a musica da minha terra onde nasci e foi ouvida até a minha vinda a Portugal. 29.05.2022

Hoje uma vez obrigada a todos de coração  
Anita Furtado

9 Interview with a teacher.

10 *Idem*.



## CODA

*If I were to sum it up in one word, it would be affects. It was a great delight for students, families and teachers. Only OA with its big heart could pull this off!*

TEACHER

In the school setting, all stakeholders must work towards the formation of an affective community. Orquestra de Afectos contributes to this work by introducing the potential of artistic practices to Kindergarten in relation to children, in seeing and listening to what they have to say and bringing along everyone who has a hand in tending this *Garden*. While the nature of the work is never-ending, we can point to the numerous seeds that sprouted over the course of the project due to the *quality* use of artistic languages, namely aesthetic care, relationship and the internalisation of ways of being and communicating, in which eyes and ears were awakened from the slumber of mechanised relations. By providing access to quality artistic practices, we deposit seeds for the future emergence of an affective space where children can be welcomed into the *Garden*.

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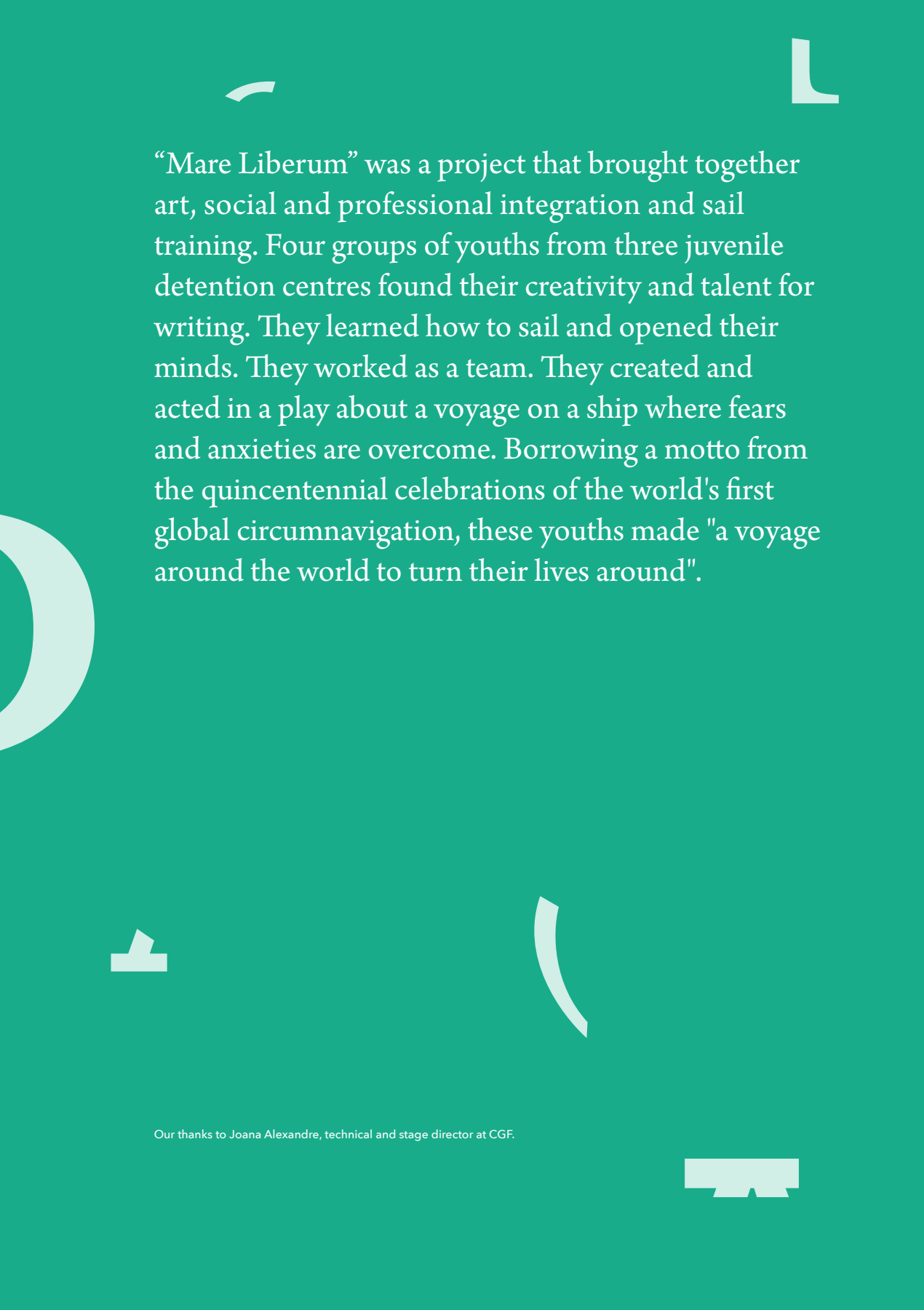
**Aporvela**  
Catarina Aidos, João Custódio, Rui Santos

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# Mare Liberum

"A voyage around the world to turn our lives around"



“Mare Liberum” was a project that brought together art, social and professional integration and sail training. Four groups of youths from three juvenile detention centres found their creativity and talent for writing. They learned how to sail and opened their minds. They worked as a team. They created and acted in a play about a voyage on a ship where fears and anxieties are overcome. Borrowing a motto from the quinquennial celebrations of the world's first global circumnavigation, these youths made "a voyage around the world to turn their lives around".

Our thanks to Joana Alexandre, technical and stage director at CGF.

The motto was the easy part: "a voyage around the world to turn our lives around". On the patio of a nondescript café in Lisbon, three people met to discuss the somewhat out-of-the-box application proposal for a project involving nearly 100 youths from three juvenile detention centres in Lisbon. Three people, experienced and interested in the cultural and social fields, each with the idea that through art, artistic practices and sail training, lives could be changed forever.

The project time span, 2019-2022, coincided with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the world's first global circumnavigation by Fernão de Magalhães and Juan Sebastián Elcano, and a thread emerged, linking art and ocean, creative writing and caravel, theatre and video. This was how "Mare Liberum" came into being.

With a partnership that included Associação Portuguesa de Treino de Vela (APORVELA), Cusca – Cultura e Comunidade and the Directorate-General of Reintegration and Prison Services (DGRPS), and support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, we began our work in the juvenile detention centres of Navarro de Paiva, Bela Vista and Caxias.

From previous experience, we knew more or less what we were in for: groups of young people lacking in ambition or angry at the world outside (as well as inside) and, by and large, completely uninterested in participating in extra activities.

## Opening up minds through writing

The first few days were always the hardest. Presentations, conversations, planning, description of activities and the start of creative writing. The first exercise: describe in words how a lemon might feel from the moment it falls from a tree until it is turned into lemonade – write from the lemon's point of view, as if the lemon had a voice, feelings and reason, as if the lemon were you. Or an exercise in aspirin:

*I'm shivering. Suddenly, I hear the sound of something being ripped apart. I'm afraid. I have a fear of water – it's a secret I used to keep from others. I gulp drily. All around me is silence, the only sound the one I never wanted to hear: the sound of them coming into my home and taking me away from the only place I know. It's cold, every part of me wants this to be over and done with. Every part of me wants to disappear. All of a sudden, I'm wrapped in the embrace of a soft, warm hand. I can sense the end coming, but my fear begins to wane*

*with the first view of light. That exact moment, that first second of life when I saw the light, so tiny and brilliant, before the light of the world washed over me. Lighting me up like a bright star. The fear begins to fade and slowly melt away.*

*And now it's time to jump in. My body, floating. I'd always heard people go on about freedom but I never knew what they meant. All of a sudden, I dive to the bottom. I discover the depth of the sea and the depth inside me. I dive down again and again. Immersing and submerging. The sun high above me, brilliant, warming up my wet body. I see now that my life is finite, and yet experiencing the darkness and finding light and freedom has been worth it. Now I know why I'm afraid of water, it's because it's foreign to me. I've always felt safer and happier living in the darkness I know. My great big lovely darkness.*

A., A FEMALE PARTICIPANT FROM NAVARRO DE PAIVA JUVENILE  
DETENTION CENTRE

More exercises followed: write with your eyes closed; write as many U's as you can in a text; make up characters; create stories from movie posters; create storylines from a single phrase; play Exquisite Corpse (some drawings were truly bizarre). Invariably, mistakes were made. Invariably, we adjusted exercises that didn't run as smoothly or weren't accepted. Invariably, we'd talk to teachers and staff to understand why things went well on some days, and not so well, or even disastrously, on others. As in: "there was a fall-out between youngsters this morning"; "two are in detention and won't be coming today"; "they didn't receive any visitors".

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Often, creative writing would be merely that: creative. If no one felt like writing, it wasn't worth insisting. We'd talk, converse, draw, transpose our bodies in any which way, open our minds, imaginations and creativity and discover things we never dreamed existed. That is the purpose of creative writing.

### To sail is necessary

And then there was the sea, the great big sea.

We held sessions in which we talked about circumnavigation. Experts gave guest lectures on maritime careers. The young people visited the caravel *Vera Cruz* and toured the Lisbon Oceanarium. They talked about hitching rides on sailboats and took workshops on safety and survival at sea. Then it was time to sail!

For eight hours, we cruised the estuary and mouth of the River Tagus aboard APORVELA's caravel *Vera Cruz*. Eight hours aboard the replica of a ship from the time of Bartolomeu Dias, Vasco da Gama and Fernão de Magalhães. Eight hours sailing in the steps of ancient mariners.

Stepping timidly at first as they gazed at the paraphernalia of ropes and cables on the deck, the youths quickly sprang into action, hoisting the 1,000 kg sails up two 18-meter masts in 15 minutes with the brute force of their arms. As they worked, they learned how to "arrow" by relying more on gravity and less on arm strength, and how to lower a sail and stay on course.

Like in any sea training boat, there are no passenger on this caravel. Everyone is a crew member, pitching in to steer the 100-tonne wooden ship, whether at the helm, on the lookout, behind the radio, cleaning up or making lunch (invariably spaghetti bolognese: cheap, easy to cook and liked by most).

## Expressing oneself through theatre

Across the three juvenile detention centres, our artistic process remained the same. However, the reactions, energy, rhythm and impact were always different. This is the story we will now attempt to tell, knowing that everything that happened, the most important aspect, cannot be expressed or translated into words. Rather, it endures as a legacy, a transformational force that will hopefully live on in the young men and women who found the strength to face the fear of being seen, of confronting themselves, of extending a hand to the Other, of looking within and ahead of themselves. It endures in the project's artistic team as an affective memory, as a learning experience and a solid belief in the power of Theatre to transform lives.

In terms of the process, it consisted of two meetings a week with each group, with participants engaging through theatre games and joint reflection. Developing a critical gaze: working mostly through improvisation – individually and in groups – we explored the idea of journeys, horizons, freedom and dreams, followed by discussions on the ethical and aesthetic implications of the artistic choices made in each improvisation. Characters tended to repeat themselves: aggressors, victims. Stories invariably ended in situations of crime.

We pushed the young people to reinvent themselves: we wanted stories they had never lived, stories they didn't believe were possible to live.

From that point onwards, it was different with each group.

## THE TRILOGY

### Navarro de Paiva Juvenile Detention Centre

In March 2019, following the completion of the creative writing phase, we burst into our first Centre. We had two groups awaiting us: a Female Unit and a Male Unit. Neither of the groups were there (in the Centre or in the project) because they wanted to be. While this was a challenge, there was no way around it. We knew it would be hard but we forged ahead.

The first step was crucial: we had to open our hearts so that the young men and women would trust us. There was no room for complacency, paternalism or moralism. No talk of crime or guilt. These young people were there to learn how to act in a scene together. That in itself was hard enough for everyone.

The girl's unit was initially more receptive, cooperative and committed, except for I., who rarely joined in until the day when everything changed. The director of the detention centre suggested experimenting something new that had never been done there before – having the boys and girls together in joint sessions. We had to reinvent everything. Two stories we had been developing in parallel now had to be merged into one. The circle of trust that had been built within each group had to be developed so that each would be willing to receive the Other.

In the midst of this upheaval, one of the girls left the detention centre; by then, we were too far along in the process to start over again. It was at that point that I. spoke up: *I've studied the part. I think I can do it.* And she did, seizing this and other parts by the horns, realising over time that something deeply magical could be discovered there.

I. completed her juvenile detention training and is now in her second year of a professional theatre course. As participants completed their juvenile detention trainings, entries and exits were a constant.

Hence, scripts had to be written and theatre productions treated as works-in-progress, in keeping with the rhythm of the stage direction. Though a script would be written for each individual actor, it was constantly fine-tuned.

The first chapter of the trilogy was *Monstro em Mim* [Monster in Me]: a group of mariners embark on a voyage to capture a monster wreaking havoc on ships, only to discover on the journey that the monster is in fact the fear that lives inside them. They learn that they can conquer it, they speak of courage and trust as a permanent metaphor for their lives and the story they tell.





The dress rehearsal took place on the caravel *Vera Cruz* on one of the first cool days of Autumn, a cold we were oblivious to: 23 October 2019. A day when 12 young men and women who had put their trust in us, and we in them, realised that they could defeat the monster and build a future.

What we didn't expect at the end of the performance was this: applause and tears. As M. shared with us: *Nobody had ever clapped for me like that before.*

*I – They say the monster has been spotted in the South Sea. We need to set sail. Let's go after it.*

*J – This boat isn't big enough.*

*I – It's fine, there's enough room in the back.*

*J – No, the monster is a lot bigger.*

*I – I'm not sure I'm ready to face the monster.*

*M – We need to go, we have to save ourselves. We won't save ourselves by running away from monsters. They'll only go away if we fight them.*

*JA – You've heard all those stories about the Discoveries.*

*The Adamastors don't exist.*

*D – Yes they do, they've always existed. I just don't know what the monster is called.*

*T – Is it Death? Darkness?*

*Ma. – Is it the Shadow?*

*JS – Loneliness?*

*W – No. It doesn't have a name. The monster who is attacking us doesn't have a name.*

*I – Untie the ropes! Let's go!*

J. CUSTÓDIO, 2019, *MONSTRO EM MIM*



On 25 January 2020, we made our *début* at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Modern Art Centre as part of *Isto é PARTIS!* [This is PARTIS!].

The hall was packed, the stage covered in water, the anxiety palpable. Ropes in hands symbolised the passage of time. Squeegees and water pails stood in for the rain the day we had gone sailing. The young performers felt tense and uncomfortable, as if the moment of truth stood before them. Looking the audience in the eyes, they gazed at the "world" head on, for something that hadn't seemed possible before was now happening and tangible. The grand finale arrived, the audience's words showing them they were capable, that their triumph could not be reversed.

A hall aglow in normalcy. In that moment, they ceased to be juvenile detainees completing their training. Instead, they simply became joyous actors.

### Bela Vista Juvenile Detention Centre

The second chapter of the trilogy, *Latitude Zero*, began in March 2020. Soon after, it was interrupted by the first Covid-19 lockdown, delaying the project until May.

Confronted with a completely unfamiliar reality no one was prepared to respond to, we found ourselves in a new centre, implementing a new model in a new universe – male only – in a new era. Summer arrived and the youths left for the holidays. Quarantines were lifted, a month and a half was lost. We had to start from the beginning.

The artistic challenge was the same: initiation into theatre as a practice, training in voice, body and movement, character development, interpretation, improvisation. A process of progress and setbacks, of resilience, of believing and almost giving up. Another lockdown arrived and with it, a new group as some finished their training and left and others entered afresh. By now, we had become used to the initial resistance; we accepted it, recognising that only through experience and shared resolve would it be defeated. Later, when the script emerged, when the characters revealed themselves, we rediscovered the brilliance and enthusiasm we had witnessed earlier.

At last, we were ready for the show; our group had come together, refined by the highs and lows of the process.

It was time for us to perform.

At the ISCTE's Grand Auditorium, we found a stage that was quite different than the one the Gulbenkian had offered us in the auditorium of the Modern Art Centre. Another obstacle.

Again, we chose to do something different, using a minimal set where materials and bodies merged into one. Trusting in ourselves, we stepped onto the stage.

In the opening scene, the young men realised what had taken place and the magic returned.

They had become actors in a play, performing a spectacle.

*Latitude Zero* told the story of nine mariners on a journey home and the struggle for power over who would lead and who would try to take their place. A story about human nature, about what each person is willing to do to throw off their yoke, about how easy it is to fall back into old habits. A story that makes us question why humanity invariably betrays itself: *what is to be done, then?*

*Latitude Zero* is now a piece of history that endures in the memory of those who witnessed it on 25 July 2021, reminding us of our need to be good.

*S – Men, it's no use sitting here waiting for Zephyr to wake up and summon the wind to push us forward. We need to leave this latitude where the horizon never moves. Lower the boats and board. Take us out of here.*

*V – Come, men, the calm is no better than the vilest storm, if we don't feel the fear now, we will never forget the soul-scorching sun.*

*T – Yes, let's row with such speed that our captain will feel the breeze on his face as we stretch our muscles in the sun. Can someone leave a bottle of Port on the poop deck to make the time go by a little easier?*

*S – There there, comrades, we're not here to save the captain, we're here to save ourselves. The ship isn't the captain's, it's ours. We're going to save our own skins, there's no way we're going to die without seeing a soul on land.*

J. CUSTÓDIO, 2021, *LATITUDE ZERO*

## Padre António Oliveira Juvenile Detention Centre

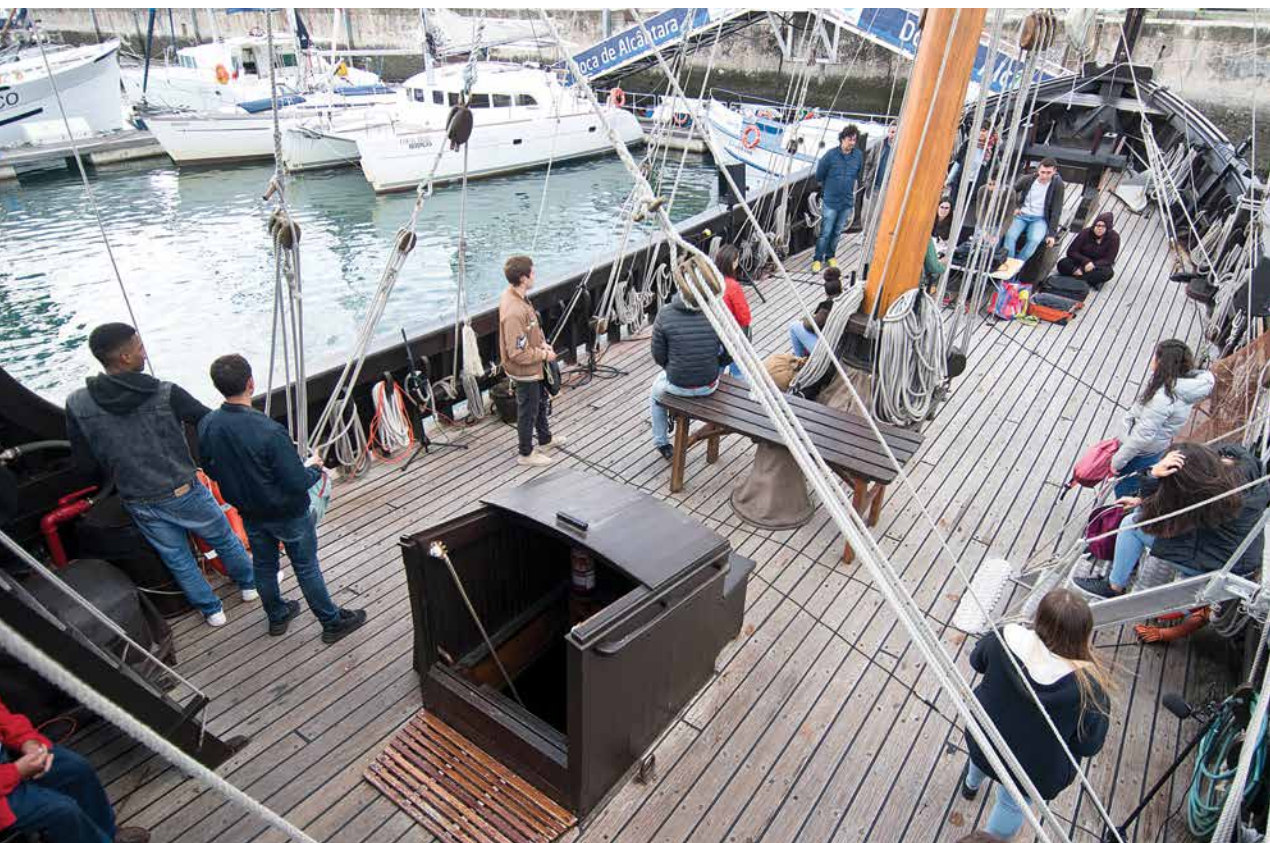
The third and final chapter of this trilogy no one wanted to end, was *Entre Dias* [In Between Days].

This time, the preparations were different for dealing with the pandemic; by now, everyone had been briefed on the eventualities: ourselves, the juvenile detention centre and the youths themselves.

In Caxias, we were met with a smaller group that was more stable on account of the youths being closer to the start of their juvenile training period, which resulted in fewer fluctuations in the group. However, these youths were not as receptive, for those who had seen the show *Latitude Zero* were not part of this group and the others were not aware of what was to come. Starting over, we had to break down their initial resistance, bit by bit, enticing them to our side until they understood what it meant for them to step onto the stage.

As the closing performance of the trilogy, *Entre Dias* established a metaphor for life and human nature through a drama pitting mutineers against their former captain. The drama takes place in a tribunal in which scaffolds serve as an allusion to different levels of power; later, the courtroom is transformed into a boat in scenes that take the story back to the sea.

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There, nine young men recognise that there are no good or bad people, that both exist within us, depending on how we are seen by others and how we see ourselves.

Held at the ISCTE's Grand Auditorium, the performance took place on the eve of World Theatre Day on 26 March 2022, where the following words were shared with the audience:

*Tomorrow we celebrate World Theatre Day. Tomorrow, all over the world, in every country where theatres are not being bombed, the World Theatre Day Message will be read out loud. Tomorrow, when Theatre is celebrated, its creators, actors, technicians, playwrights, stage directors and producers will hear it.*

*But here, we dedicate our message today to the young people who are about to begin. Because today is about beginnings. Theatre is a metaphor for life, where anxiety and insecurity imperil us, yet here on this stage is a collective that reawakens us with applause.*

*A free Theatre is a place where mistakes happen. The eight months spent with these young people have been about failing and starting over.*

*But a free Theatre is a place of hope.*

*Eight months later, today is about believing.*

*Every week, we virtually forgot that the doors were closed, because a free Theatre is a place where we can imagine ourselves outside the walls and think of ourselves in the world.*

*Today, in a world growing ever darker, a free Theatre is all the more urgent. The faith these young people have in themselves is all the more urgent.*

*No matter what happens, our faith in these young people today cannot be defeated.*

*Happy World Theatre Day!*

TEXT READ BY CATARINA AIDOS



Captain – *Yes, these were the human dregs who took over my ship.*

*Who mutinied and tied me to the deck.*

*Who left me with nothing but bread and water.*

*Who kept me in the dark for months.*

*Who forced me to live in my own faeces.*

*Who stripped me of my dignity.*

*Who wanted me dead.*

Judge – *Let us hear from the other side.*

*Do any of the gentlemen here whom the captain refers to as human dregs have anything to say?*

Vizzy – *Yes, this tyrant wanted to douse us in brine, he put us in danger.*

*Wind, waves, inclement weather of all kinds.*

*Blinded by pride and deaf to others, he plunged ahead, putting the whole crew in danger.*

*This man is not only a tyrant, he is mad.*

Captain – *[screams] Liars!*

Judge – *Silence. I am the authority here.*

Ricas – *This man is incompetent and insane and should not be allowed to skipper even a boat. Why he was put here is beyond me.*

*A captain's primary mission is to safeguard his ship, then his crew, never his pride or irascible genius. At the table of the sated, one never lacked for pheasant.*

Judge – *Mariners, this is a tribunal, it is not a syndicate or a theatre, much less a committee of residents.*

*One should not use poetry to speak about what happened. Here, we accept only prose and in telegraphic speech.*

Nino – *My Lord, we spent days towing the ship, days of stormy weather, days upon days without water. We journeyed to where the reaper spends his holidays.*

J. CUSTÓDIO, 2022, *ENTRE DIAS*

## Register

Each of the groups (from the three juvenile detention centres) opened their performances with a short film comprised of a mix of documentary, biography and fiction. In it, youths talked about life, their aspirations and their regrets, a kind of purgative accompanied by images of themselves sailing on the caravel *Vera Cruz* (Navarro de Paiva and Padre António Oliveira Juvenile Detention Centres) or spending an afternoon in the pool at the Bela Vista Juvenile Detention Centre. Water and ocean as ever-present metaphors for freedom. The sea as a liberating force.

Despite the pandemic and all the challenges of working in double confinement, “Mare Liberum” achieved its stated aims: to free up creativity, to awaken team spirit and lift it from the burden of reclusion, and to empower youths by giving them a sense of purpose in life and developing their self-confidence. Knowing that some of these youths, now released from detention, would go on to study theatre and acting is the finest proof that artistic practices are indeed a means for social inclusion. And to have received support near the end of the project from Sail Training International – a world federation of accomplished seafarers – reassures us that the model of intervention and work plan we proposed can be replicated not only in juvenile detention centres in Portugal, but in other countries as well.



*Monstro em Mim*



*Entre Dias*





MARE LIBERUM



Latitude Zero







# Biographical notes

## Alexandre Dias

Alexandre holds a degree in Philosophy from Universidade Católica Portuguesa and post-graduations in International Relations (ISCSP) and Economics and Management in Non-Profit Institutions (IDEFE/ISEG) from Universidade Técnica de Lisboa. He is the co-founder and executive director of the Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa (OCP) and Jovem Orquestra Portuguesa (a member of the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras – EFNYO). Since OCP's inception, he has overseen the orchestra's strategic direction and management, including fundraising, artistic and corporate product development, corporate outreach and business plan development.

## Carlota Quintão

Carlota is a sociologist, founder member and director of Associação A3S. With 25 years of experience as a researcher, consultant, evaluator and trainer, she is an expert in anti-poverty work, entrepreneurialism and social economy.

## Catarina Aidos

Catarina has a degree in Artistic Studies from the University of Coimbra. Over the course of her academic career, she has studied in Greece and the Czech Republic, where she attended the Theatre Conservatory and focused her research on mechanisms for theatrical creation based on memory and autobiography. Since 2009, she has been engaged in various projects involving participatory art practices, including Teatro Íbisco, Festival O Bairro i o Mundo, theatre workshops with Dona Maria II National Theatre and the project Mutantes by Comédias do Minho. She has been the artistic director of Cusca – Cultura e Comunidade since 2018.

## Catarina Câmara

Catarina has degrees in Law and Dance and is trained in Gestalt Psychotherapy. A ballerina and professor, she has participated in various community art projects. She has been the artistic and social coordinator of CORPOEMCADEIA since 2019.

## Clara Andermatt

Clara studied dance with Luna Andermatt and is a graduate of the London Studio Centre and the Royal Academy of Dance in London. From 1984 to 1988, she was a member of the Companhia de Dança de Lisboa under the direction of Rui Horta, and from 1989 to 1991, Companhia Metros, in Barcelona, under Ramón Oller. Leading her own company since 1991, she has created and produced numerous works, which have garnered awards and seen regular performances in Portugal and abroad. She is frequently invited to teach classes and workshops, and to create works for other companies. With a unique language all its own, Clara Andermatt's work straddles two dimensions: art and inclusion.

## Cláudia Dias

Cláudia is a choreographer, performer and teacher who is a Master's candidate in Scenic Arts at the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She is the artistic director of the project “Sete Anos Sete Peças” and the founder and director of Sete Anos Associação Cultural. Her work has been performed in theatres and festivals both nationally and internationally.

## Daniela Leal

Daniela has a degree in Clinical Psychology at ISPA and is an active member of the Portuguese Association of Psychologists. She combines mentoring, psychology and education with methodologies of psychodrama, contemporary dance and theatre. Daniela is a founding member, stage

director and mediator of Lupa Grupo de Teatro. She is a collaborator of the project Orquestra Geração and Orquestra de Afectos.

### Daniela Soares

Daniela was born in Sines in 1984. She has worked in production since 2007. Beginning her professional career with *Vende-se Filmes*, she has worked in various televisual formats. Her first experience working in film began with *Uma Pedra no Sapato*.

### Gui Garrido

Gui is the artistic director of the project "Sob o Mesmo Céu". A cultural agitator and dream facilitator, he seeks to develop cultural and social projects whose driving motto is "making things happen".

### Helena Lima

Helena is the coordinator of Orquestra Geração and the director of Orquestra de Afectos. She holds a degree in Musicology from UNL (FCSH) and post-graduations in Arts Practices and Social Inclusion, and Programme Evaluation and Social Projects from Universidade Católica Portuguesa. She was a member of the Lisbon Chamber Choir and has performed in hospitals and seniors' residences. Currently, she is a lecturer at the National Conservatory Music School.

### Hugo Cruz

Hugo works at the intersection between artistic creation and civic and political participation as a creator, cultural programmer and researcher. The theme of his PhD thesis was "Community Artistic Practices and Civic and Political Participation: the Experience of Theatre Groups in Portugal and Brazil". Hugo is the editorial coordinator of *Art and Community* (2015) and *Art and Hope* (2019), published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and *Práticas Artísticas, Participação e Política* (2021) by Colibri Edições. He is a researcher at CIIE – Universidade do Porto and CHAIA – Universidade de Évora. Serves on

the external evaluation team for the PARTIS & Art for Change initiative run by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and "la Caixa" Foundation/BPI. Artistic director of MEXE\_ Encontro Internacional de Arte e Comunidade, Hugo has also served as a consultant and artistic director on various national and international projects (e.g.: Spain, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau) in municipalities, festivals and foundations (e.g.: Artistic Programme consultant for Braga'27's Bid for European Capital of Culture, Festival de les Arts Comunitàries de Catalunya and the "Cultura para Todos" [Culture for All] programme in various municipalities). He has been an artistic director in various theatrical projects co-constructed with local communities, including in schools, prisons, low income neighbourhoods and community spaces. [www.artandparticipation.com](http://www.artandparticipation.com)

### Hugo de Seabra

Hugo joined the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 2005 and is currently project manager in the Sustainable Development Programme, where he oversees interventions in two areas: arts practices with social impact (PARTIS) and migration. From 2001 to 2005, he was a consultant for the Ministry of Justice in the planning of its new judicial map. He has a degree in Sociology, a Master's in Historical Economics and Sociology and a post-graduation in Ethnicities and Nationalisms.

### Inês Lapa

Inês earned her Master's in Music Leadership at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama (London) in July 2015. Since then, she has been developing her multi-instrumental practice in projects involving collective, interdisciplinary creation in various contexts, including PELE, a collective she joined in 2012.

### Isabel Lucena

Isabel is an independent consultant who specialises in arts management with a focus on intersectional contexts, including cross-cultural, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary

settings. With a special interest in participatory art practices and evaluation processes based on continuous improvement, she has collaborated with the PARTIS initiative since 2016 on the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms suited to the specificities of participatory art.

### Janne Schröder

Janne studied Cultural Sciences and Dramatic Arts at Stiftung Universität Hildesheim (Germany). As a multidisciplinary performer, she has explored the dialogue between aesthetics and political and socio-cultural discourses. In recent years, she has created various installations, exhibitions and theatrical and performance pieces. Janne has been a collaborator of PELE since 2020.

### Joana Craveiro

Joana is a stage director, playwright, anthropologist, actress and professor. Director of Teatro do Vestido, she has written and directed more than 50 plays. She has a PhD from the University of Roehampton. Her poetic dramatic scripts, based on interviews, lectures and observations of the world and its inhabitants, defy categories. She has collaborated with Victor Hugo Pontes since 2012.

### João Albano Fernandes

João was born in 1989 in Águeda. He graduated in Architecture at Universidade de Coimbra – Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia in 2013. Now working in cultural production and communication, he is also an author of fiction, his first novel *Desafortunados* was published in 2020, having won the Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho Literary Prize. He has been a member of the Theatre Group at Instituto Superior Técnico since 2018.

### João Custódio

An architecture graduate, João has been practising since 2009. Following a stint as a freelancer with Teatro Ibisco, he has served as president and artistic director of YellowCusca since 2018.

### Karas

Karas has a degree in Art History from Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. He is a stage director, actor and producer for the Almada collective Ninho de Víboras. Since 2016, he has been a collaborator of the project "Sete Anos Sete Peças" in the areas of creation, itinerancy, education and editing, and has performed with the group in Europe.

### Liliana Salvador

A university lecturer and researcher at ISPA – Instituto Universitário, Liliana has a PhD in Educational Psychology and is the author and co-author of various scientific articles in national and international journals. She is a founding member and collaborator of EPSEDUSA.

### Lisete Costa

Lisete is a social worker at the Santa Maria da Feira Municipal Council and has been a manager of community art projects since 2002. She has participated in various social inclusion initiatives in Portugal and abroad, and has collaborated with artists from a variety of fields, including Miloud Oukili, Joana Vasconcelos, Eugénio Barba and Anna Stigsgaard – Odin Teatret, Acert Tondela, Urban Ballets, Celina Pereira, Aleksandar Caric and Clara Andermatt.

### Luísa Veloso

Luísa is a sociologist and associate professor at ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, where she is a researcher at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology. She has conducted research in the areas of work, professions, economics and education, and has collaborated with a wide array of artistic institutions.

### Marco Paiva

Born in 1980, Marco is an actor, stage director and artistic director of Terra Amarela. He is a graduate of Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema's acting programme and holds a post-graduation diploma in Entrepreneurialism and Cultural

Studies (cultural management) from ISCTE.

### **Maria Gil**

Maria was born in 1978 and has no idea when she is going to die, though she has had intuitions. She makes theatre of a sort, writes unfinished things and teaches. She campaigns against capital punishment and lives in Sintra.

### **Maria João Mota**

Maria João holds post-graduations in Human Rights and Democracy (Universidade de Coimbra, Faculdade de Direito) and Theatre as a tool of intervention in socio-educational contexts (Universidade do Porto, Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação). In 2007, she co-founded PELE and Núcleo de Teatro do Oprimido in Porto.

### **Marisa Marques**

Marisa is an Anthropologist and member of Beira Serra – Associação de Desenvolvimento, where she has developed community work with children, young people and their families, and addressed social exclusion and segregation among the Roma population.

### **Martin Essayan**

Martin has been a trustee of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation since 20 July 2005, when he took over responsibility from his father for the UK branch in London and the Department of Armenian Communities. He is also a trustee of the St. Sarkis Charity Trust, which was established by the founder to support two of his creations: the St. Sarkis Church in London and the Gulbenkian Library in Jerusalem. Martin attended Eton College (1972-77), graduated in engineering from Cambridge University [Emmanuel College, (1978-81)] and has an MBA from the Harvard Business School (1986-88).

### **Matilde Caldas**

Matilde graduated in anthropology at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH, UNL) and has a Master's and PhD in Cultural Studies

from Universidade Católica. She is a coordinator of Orquestra Geração and Orquestra de Afectos. She is also a lecturer at Escola Superior de Artes e Design (ESAD) and Universidade Católica Portuguesa, and a researcher at Centre for Research in Music Psychology and Music Education (CIPEM/INET-md).

### **Narcisa Costa**

Trained in Dance and the Performing Arts, Narcisa has spent most of her professional career as a producer and manager of artistic and cultural projects, having collaborated with various institutions and creators from different artistic fields, including dance, theatre, music, cinema and audiovisual arts. Currently, she is part of the management team at the PARTIS and PARTIS & Art for Change initiative at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

### **Patrícia Paiva**

Patrícia is a Master's candidate in Music Education in the Elementary School at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She has degrees in Audiovisual and Multi-media and in Musicology, as well as a post-graduation in Music in Early Childhood: Intervention and Research. She completed her studies in the Western Concert Flute at the Conservatório Nacional.

### **Paulo Teixeira**

Paulo is a sociologist and PhD candidate in Communication Science. As an evaluator and researcher, he has more than 25 years of experience in the planning, management and evaluation of Public Policies, Programmes and Projects at the national and international level. A former director of the European Evaluation Society, he is a member of the American Evaluation Association and various expert groups at the European Commission. He is a co-coordinator of the post-graduate programme in Evaluation of Social Projects and Programmes at Universidade Católica Portuguesa and the founder and owner-director of Logframe – Consultoria e Formação, Lda.

### Pedro Carneiro

Pedro is the co-founder, artistic director and maestro of Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa and Jovem Orquestra Portuguesa. He is an instrumentalist, conductor and composer who has studied piano, cello and trumpet since the age of five. He was a Gulbenkian Foundation grant recipient at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he earned his degree with distinction with a "Head of Department Award". He has also studied conducting with Emilio Pomarico at Accademia Internazionale della Musica in Milan. He has premiered more than 100 works and collaborates regularly with celebrated instrumentalists, orchestras and composers. He performs as a guest soloist with prestigious international orchestras and has received numerous national and international awards.

### Ricardo Loureiro

Ricardo is a sociologist, researcher at the European Prison Observatory and senior officer for the Department for Domestic Violence and Gender at the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality.

### Rui Magno Pinto

A PhD candidate in Historical Musicology at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas at Universidade Nova de Lisboa (FCSH da UNL), Rui earned his degree and Master's in Musicology at the same institution. He is a visiting assistant professor at FCSH-UNL and the Escola de Línguas, Artes e Ciências Humanas at Universidade do Minho.

### Rui Santos

Rui has a degree in history and worked as a literary critic and social sciences teacher prior to becoming involved in the world of sailing. Since 2009, he has been the projects director at Aporvela.

### Sílvia Pinto Ferreira

Sílvia is an actress and stage director. She has a degree in Theatrical Studies from Universidade de Évora and a Master's in Theatre and

Community from Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema. As the co-artistic director of Quarta Parede with Rui Sena, she works as a creator, mediator and artistic programmer.

### Teresa Simas

A ballerina, choreographer and doctoral candidate (advanced studies diploma) in dance at the Faculdade de Motricidade Humana – Universidade Técnica de Lisboa (FMH–UTL), Teresa has danced with several companies in various countries. Prior to her PhD studies, in 2009 she earned a Master's in Artistic Performance – Dance from the Russian Institute of Theatre Arts. As co-founder and director of projects and innovation at Orquestra de Câmara Portuguesa and Jovem Orquestra Portuguesa, she is the movement coordinator for the project "Body Awareness" (aimed at musicians) and director of OCP's social projects.

### Tiago Rodrigues

Tiago is a stage director, playwright and actor. He is a former co-director of the theatre company Mundo Perfeito with Magda Bizarro and was artistic director of the Dona Maria II National Theatre from 2015 to 2021. Currently, he is the director of Festival d'Avignon.

### Tiago Santos

A psychologist, Tiago has a Master's in Educational Psychology and is a founding member and partner of Associação EPSEDUSA. He also serves as an educational psychology coordinator and evaluator on various PARTIS and DGArtes projects.







P A

R T

I S

This book registers, reflects on and shares the experiences of a distinct set of community and participatory artistic practices, from 14 PARTIS projects, developed in various parts of Portugal between 2019 and 2022. In the process, we sought to highlight the uniqueness of each project in its relationships with the social and the artistic, avoiding homogeneous perspectives on this field of action, and on the contrary, reinforcing the fundamental characteristics of these artistic practices - the richness of their diversity and the activation of critical thinking.

Rooted in the experience of continuity in the PARTIS initiative, amidst the accelerated and complex changes occurring in the world today, this book seeks to reflect on the relationship between art and the creation of multiple presents and other possible futures. This publication reflects a special moment in the co-creation of an emergent vision of community and participatory artistic practices in Portugal, an exercise in continuous construction.

Hugo Cruz