

OPEN CALL

CONTEXT

Bauhaus of the Seas Sails

ART & SCIENCE

A CALL TO THE SEA

FUNDED BY



PARTNERS



CONTEXT OF THE RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

A Call to the Sea

GENERAL CONTEXT

BAUHAUS OF THE SEAS SAILS

The 'Bauhaus of the Seas Sails' is a pioneering project within the New European Bauhaus, conceptualizing it as a triangle of sustainability, inclusion, and designcreativity always locally grounded. 'Bauhaus of the Seas Sails' is an interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and interspecies movement focused on reimagining our relationship with nature in coastal cities and communities, aiming to promote healthier oceans, seas, and other bodies of water. 'Bauhaus of the Seas Sails' encompasses a consortium of 18 academic, cultural, and territorial partners located in 7 European cities (Malmö, Venice, Genoa, Lisbon, Oeiras, Hamburg, Rotterdam) with distinct aquatic ecosystems: estuary, lagoon, gulf, strait, river, and delta. The consortium's main objective is to demonstrate how a co-design and culturally-led process can generate innovative and concrete proposals that address critical environmental and social challenges. In Portugal, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, through CAM – Centro de Arte Moderna Gulbenkian, is the Cultural Partner for the implementation of 3 pilot projects developed in collaboration with the municipalities of Lisbon and Oeiras and Instituto Superior Técnico. These innovative projects, entitled *A Call to the Sea* – Ocean literacy, *Eating Between Tides* – a Regenerative Menu, and *Radical Waters – Concrete Matters* – Blue Makerspace, aim to provide an interdisciplinary understanding of how we can contribute to a more conscious sustainable future, through a public program of activities, artistic and scientific residencies, and art exhibitions in cultural spaces.

OEIRAS MUNICIPALITY AND ITS CONNECTION WITH TAGUS ESTUARY & ATLANTIC OCEAN

Oeiras, situated within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, lies along the northern bank of the Tagus River. It is bordered by Sintra, Cascais, Lisbon, Amadora, and the Tagus Estuary. Covering an area of 4588.3 hectares divided into five parishes, it stands out for its extensive green and blue infrastructure. The rich maritime heritage has imbued the Tagus River with a contemplative dimension, evident in the daily lives and conversations of Oeiras' inhabitants—a true maritime experience. As the Tagus River flows into the Atlantic Ocean, the profound connection between the river, the ocean, and Oeiras territory becomes apparent. This connection is deeply ingrained in the community's oral traditions and cultural heritage, reflecting a long maritime history that continues to resonate today. Oeiras is home to special communities, including fishermen whose tales echo through generations, and surfers who embody both courage and modernity, playing a crucial role in preserving the Tagus River. A major undertaking in this regard is the upcoming Tagus Museum, which will be in Oeiras and will serve as a tribute to the area's maritime legacy and cultural significance.

ABOUT THE RESIDENCY

The primary ambition of the Oeiras Pilot project is to serve as an initial source of information and inspiration for shaping the future of the 'Tagus Museum' in Oeiras. This museum departs from the conventional idea of a physical structure and instead embraces an immaterial concept, with the Tagus River itself serving as its space. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the necessity for physical spaces dedicated to interpretation, exhibitions, and programmes. These spaces could range from natural environments to existing local infrastructures that maintain a close relationship with the river. By embracing the Tagus River as the central element of the museum, the aim is to create a unique and immersive experience that transcends traditional museum boundaries. A concept that challenges conventional notions of what a museum can be, paving the way for a transformative cultural institution that reflects the intrinsic relationship between humans and nature. However, at this stage, the specifics of what could constitute this museum, including its vision, strategy, content, and plans, are still being defined. To delve deeper into its unique cultural heritage and history, the pilot of Oeiras is initiating a collaborative residency program, specifically focused on *Ocean Literary*. This programme will serve as both a foundational subject and methodologic approach for the museum's development.

The Art & Science Residency *A Call to The Sea* focuses on research-based artistic projects, fostering collaboration between visual artists, scientists, and the local community. In this first edition of this residency, centred on the theme of more-than-human geographies, will specifically focus on one of the oldest aquariums in the world – the Vasco da Gama Aquarium. This research museum has deep historical roots, making it a vital link between the museum, the river and the citizens. Therefore, we are inviting artists and scientists to submit collaborative proposals that stimulate a critical educational and public program aiming to reimagine future, uses, and impacts of the aquarium and its zoological collection. Projects that challenge conventions, stimulate reflection and inspire inventive solutions that advance the role of museums in society while fostering a renewed connection between humans and nature. This entails recognizing our interconnectedness with nature and understanding that every action reverberates throughout ecosystems. We seek proposals that fuse artistic and scientific fields, delve into collaboration and communication with non-human species, reweave multispecies histories, address more-than-anthropocentric problems, and bring forth the less visible water narratives and intelligence beyond human perception.

Food for thought:

- How are museums, namely natural history museums, addressing and narrating the story of climate change? In what ways are museums combating nature loss and advocating for environmental guardianship? How is Art being utilized within museological collections to raise awareness of climate change, foster innovative approaches and promote sustainable futures? What imaginaries should a museum of this kind preserve, activate or problematize?

- The interpretation of natural history collections often overlooks narratives related to the history of collecting. How can we decolonize discourse and exhibition displays in natural history museums with zoological living collections? How do we accurately and critically present colonial histories within these collections? Can the Vasco da Gama's Aquarium collections shed light on Portuguese operations in colonial contexts?
- Considering the sea's transformation post-industrial revolution, how does King Carlos I's collection reflect this pivotal period, and what alternative narratives emerge when imagining a world where industrialization never occurred?
- How can we rethink museums in the 21st century, how can we collect and curate for the future, ensuring inclusivity, questioning human exceptionalism, and considering the voices of other-than-humans?
- Can sea creatures serve as vehicles for discussions on gender identities and social norms? How can we understand the complex histories and politics of species through new modes of display and conservation?
- How can we foster new modes of interaction between visitors and the living organisms within aquariums? Is it feasible and desirable to promote a two-way interaction, allowing visitors and organisms to engage with each other? How do recent technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence deal for such approaches?
- Can we perceive Aquarium contents through multi-sensorial approaches, integrating sound, smell, touch, and other senses alongside vision?
- Would it possible to observe and interpret the reactions of aquatic organisms to visitor interactions? How can we incorporate these reactions into a discourse that bridges the human/non-human divide?
- Can we gain insight into how distinct species within Aquariums perceive human visitors? How can we enhance visitors' understanding of the physical realities experienced by Aquarium inhabitants? Given the increasing concern for animal welfare, how might we construct Aquarium experiences without traditional "live tanks"?

ABOUT THE RESIDENCY LOCATION

The Vasco da Gama Aquarium, established in 1898, is considered one of the oldest Natural History museums globally, featuring a diverse collection celebrating the seas in all their forms, notably marine life. Constructed to mark the 400th anniversary of Vasco da Gama's arrival in India, it has consistently served as a place to honour the sea's richness. Initially managed by the Portuguese Geographical Society, it was later transferred to the Portuguese Navy in 1901. Originally intended for both permanent and temporary exhibitions, it received King Carlos I's Oceanographic Collection in 1935, leading to the establishment of a permanent museum. It also had a Marine Biodiversity Station, pivotal in training Portuguese researchers of the 20th century. Despite the demolition of part of the building during waterfront construction, it was relocated along the Cascais line, giving rise to the current IPMA – Instituto Português do Mar e da Atmosfera. Currently, the aquarium comprises two main sections: a *Museum Collection*, dedicated to King Carlos I's scientific contributions and the history of the Aquarium, alongside a *Live Exhibition* displaying aquatic ecosystems from various regions of the globe and their inhabitants, raising awareness for their preservation.

The Museum Collection of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium focuses on the assets of two Natural History collections: the Oceanographic Collection of King Carlos I, comprising over 2000 specimens (animals) gathered during his 12 oceanographic campaigns from North to South of the country (1896-1907), and the collection of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium, which contains animals collected throughout its 125 years of history. It's worth noting that the King's work occurred in a period preceding the Industrial Revolution, presenting characteristics that distinguish it from others. Additionally, it holds several animal collections donated to the Aquarium over the years. These contributions encompass not only the Portuguese coast but also other regions of the globe where Portugal held colonies such as Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique. The exhibited pieces are mostly animals preserved in a liquid medium, with also some dry-mounted animals and thermoplastic replicas of larger beings like whales and sharks. It also displays the personal library of King Carlos I, displaying the works that supported the King's studies as well as his bibliographic productions. This regional oceanographic collection is considered one of the most comprehensive in the world due to its diversity and number of items.

The Live Exhibition of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium has undergone several changes throughout its history. Today, it is organized to provide an educational insight into aquatic ecosystems and their inhabitants. The journey begins with a corridor dedicated to invertebrates, the simplest animals of the ocean, followed by the vast world of fish. Here, the exhibition is divided into regions of the globe: the warm waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the temperate rivers of Europe, and the tropical waters of South America and Southeast Asia. There is also a space dedicated to the evolution of fish on their path to land conquest and a room dedicated to amphibians. However, the centrepiece of the exhibition is the Portuguese Marine Fauna. This gallery holds about 50% of the specimens on display and aims to introduce visitors to the seas closest to us, which bathe the national coast. The Live Exhibition of the Vasco da Gama Aquarium stands out because its smaller-sized aquariums, and therefore less populated, allow for greater intimacy with the beings that inhabit them, inviting visitors to establish a closer relationship with the animals and, thus, be willing to invest in their conservation. Like other zoos and aquariums, the Vasco da Gama Aquarium is dedicated to biodiversity preservation, focusing on conservation projects and the breeding of endangered species, both saltwater and freshwater, such as the Undulated Ray, the Portuguese Chub, or the Western Chub.