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# Museological Review: (Re)visiting Museums

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# *Museological Review*, Issue 25

## (Re)visiting Museums

### **Editors-in-Chief**

Lucrezia Gigante | lg273@leicester.ac.uk  
Mingshi Cui | mc672@leicester.ac.uk

### **Editors**

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**Contact:** School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 19 University Road, Leicester LE1 7RF  
[museologicalreview@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:museologicalreview@leicester.ac.uk)

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# Portuguese museums in pandemic times: Change and adaptation through heritage-based artist-in-residence programming

Ana Gago, Laura Castro

Commissioned by the Portuguese Government, the November 2020 field report, *Museus no Futuro* ("Museums in the Future"), mentions the programming of co-curated artist-in-residence programmes as one of the recommendations for engaging local publics, particularly younger visitors. This recommendation seems of special relevance in the aftermath of extensive lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the face of an increasingly bleak scenario concerning the recovery of international tourism.

Drawing on the analysis of the preliminary results derived from the doctoral project "(Re)creating Heritage", an inquiry into heritage-based artist-in-residence programming practices in Portugal over the last decade, the article at hand will specifically focus on three artist-in-residence programmes hosted by Portuguese museums located in some of the regions hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. By doing so, we aim to promote the discussion of the potential of artist-in-residence programmes for improving resilience and participation at a local level in (post-) pandemic times.

*Keywords: museums in the future, proximity-based work, community engagement, artist-in-residence programmes, Portuguese museums.*

## Portuguese museums in (post)pandemic times: an overview

The disturbances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on a global scale are well-known by now. Similarly to many other countries, Portugal adopted very restrictive measures, which had a significant impact on many cultural organisations, including museums and monuments.<sup>1</sup> In March 2020, following the declaration of a state of emergency, Portuguese institutions had no choice but to close doors, symbolically having reopened again on the 18th of May of that same year, just in time for International Museum Day. However, a considerable number of restrictions were kept in place throughout 2020, including a reduction of opening hours and capacity limitations for museums

and other cultural spaces. Moreover, due to a dramatic peak in the number of COVID-19 cases in January 2021, Portuguese cultural organisations were once again forced to close doors for a three-month lockdown period.

The constraints imposed by COVID-19 have pushed museums and galleries to rethink their practices concerning the programming of exhibitions, cultural events, and supplementary activities, as well as to redesign engagement strategies that are geared towards local publics and communities. Furthermore, in what concerns Portuguese museums, the need to reconnect with local publics is of utmost urgency, especially considering their dependence on international tourism<sup>1</sup> a sector also heavily impacted by the pandemic in recent years.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the aforementioned structural

issues, several others were identified in *Museums in the Future*, a field report promoted by the working group of the same name (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020). Commissioned by the Portuguese Government in 2019, the initiative brought together a wide range of experts in the museological, cultural and political sectors, aiming to improve public policies in the management of national monuments and museums.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, the report highlights the importance of ensuring that greater autonomy and financial independence is given to directors of national museums and monuments, in order to, for instance, enable the diversification of fundraising strategies, and recruitment in much needed areas, such as security and assistance (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 42-45).<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, in consonance with recent controversies in the media surrounding the precarious working conditions of gallery educators, both in public and private organisations, the report signals fragilities in the labour conditions of many professionals in technical categories.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning the recommendations pertaining to one of the strategic axes outlined in the report, expressly, 'Publics and Mediation', foreign visitors continue to be viewed as a potential audience in a post-COVID scenario, especially in what concerns museums located in less populated non-urban areas, far removed from more habitual tourist attractions. Nonetheless, the main emphasis is given to domestic visitors, specifically, local publics and communities (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 70).

As a first step towards a greater involvement of local organisations and communities in the definition of long-term strategic and financial planning aligned with local or regional expectations, the report suggests the creation of consultation groups. (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 54). In addition, the promotion of volunteer programmes as a way to engage elderly visitors – a target group which presents enormous potential for

growth and mobilisation – is also suggested, taking into account the country's high population ageing rate. Considering also growing levels of education and cultural diversification within this particular group, and ever-increasing concerns with the promotion of well-being, senior audiences present additional 'challenges to museums and monuments in the context of non-formal education' (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 13).<sup>6</sup>

Taking into special consideration the need to strengthen collaboration practices between museums and universities and extend the potential collaborations to the creative industries sector, the report encourages the co-hosting of 'fab labs, residencies, workshops and awards' (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 61). These initiatives, working in close relation to another strategic axis identified in the report, that of 'Digital Transformation', could be reoriented not only towards the promotion of academic research linked to museums, but also towards technological developments with potential applications in areas such as collection management, and communication, interpretive and pedagogic content production.

Finally, as a way of bringing back local schools – whose number of visits to museums has steeply declined since 2011 – the co-curatorship of artistic residencies and exhibitions specially designed to engage secondary school students, within the scope of the National Plan for the Arts, is suggested.<sup>7</sup> With regard to this, the report specifically highlights the inherent potential of artistic and research residencies to foster 'creation, diversification in collections management and interpretation, and new ways for mediation and non-formal education'. (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 74). Additionally, special emphasis is placed on the role of heritage education as an 'instrument with significant potential for the conscientization and mobilization of young people in the promotion of sustainable

practices’. Considering the high number of art collections, managed by 82% of national Portuguese museums and monuments (Grupo de Projeto Museus no Futuro, 2020: 21), according to the report, the co-curatorship of artist-in-residence programmes combining artistic and heritage education goals seems like an appropriate proposal. Nonetheless, Portuguese museums have been a place for experimentation in artistic and heritage education long before these critical times, as evinced by previous examples of collaboration between schools and museums focusing on heritage education promoted by public initiative. An example of this was the creation of a toolkit for the collection of intangible heritage, specifically aimed at secondary school students, resulting from a protocol signed in 2013 by the governmental agency for Education and the governmental agency for Cultural Heritage.<sup>8</sup> In much the same way, Portuguese museums are not entirely new to the promotion of heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes.

Despite representing a small group, museums were among the 148 Portuguese promoters of these programmes over the last decade. In the section that follows, some of the preliminary findings from the inquiry carried out within the scope of the ‘(Re)creating Heritage’ doctoral research project, will be analysed, opening the way for discussion of the potential benefits of heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes in museums, throughout (post-)pandemic times.<sup>9</sup>

**Heritage-based artistic residencies: a growing trend**

Having begun in 2019, ‘(Re)creating Heritage’ is an ongoing doctoral research project developed within the scope of the doctoral programme in Heritage Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal (more specifically, at the School of Arts’ Research Centre for Science and Technology of the Arts), its two main objectives being as follows: 1) the identification of contemporary practices

and trends in the programming of heritage-based artistic residencies in Portugal; 2) designing, testing and implementing an artist-in-residence model programme aimed at heritage education and community engagement in a specific territory yet to be determined.

As part of the research, an initial inquiry on 148 Portuguese promoters and/or hosts of artist-in-residence programmes was carried out,<sup>10</sup> through means of an e-mail questionnaire,<sup>11</sup> covering aspects such as: the duration and in-person regime of the residencies; the identification of promoters and their main funders/partners; the financial, logistical, and technical support provided to artists; the level of participation/co-creation by local communities; thematic focuses, heritage typologies and artistic practices covered by the programmes; and, programmatic/institutional contexts. The inquiry was conducted between March and September 2020, resulting in the identification of 58 artist-in-residence programmes and initiatives, which included both single and multiple edition programmes – either completed or ongoing during this period – and almost covered the totality of national territory.<sup>12</sup> The main selection criterion for the final sample was based on programmes/ initiatives’ relationship with heritage management, heritage valorisation, and/or heritage education objectives.<sup>13</sup>

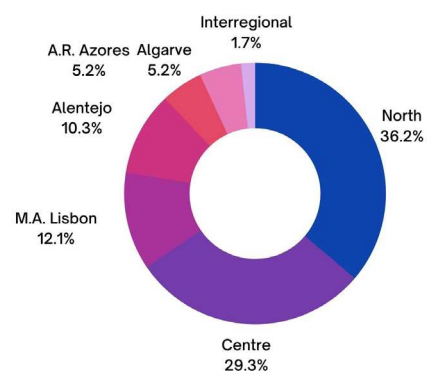


Figure 1: Territorial distribution of artist-in-residence programmes per Portuguese region

The information collected during the inquiry was statistically organised and some of the

preliminary findings already presented.<sup>14</sup> Although further analysis must (and will) be conducted, these findings allow us to identify tendencies in the programming of this type of initiatives within the context of Portuguese museums.<sup>15</sup>

The first potential conclusion drawn from the inquiry pertains to the relatively recent nature of heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes. Even though the survey identified 58 artist-in-residence programmes/initiatives carried out between 2004 and 2020, the vast majority date from the last decade, especially the latter five years (2016-2020).

The results also point to the importance of the public sector, more specifically of local authorities, given their crucial role as promoters and funders of heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes/initiatives. Similarly, museums and art centres, which represent a considerable slice of the group of partner or host entities, mostly identified as public or public-dependent institutions.

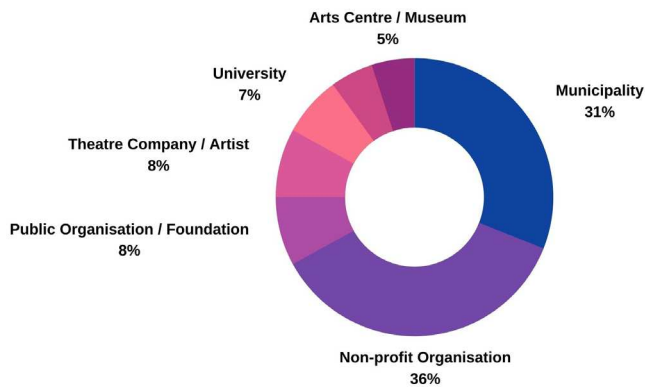


Figure 2. Percentage of promoters per typology

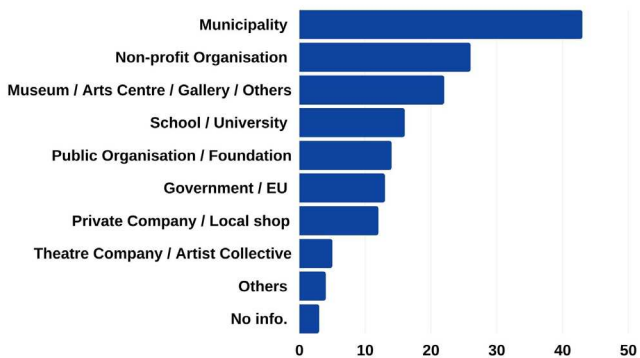


Figure 3. Typology of funders/hosts/partners per number of occurrences

In fact, all of the five museums identified as promoters, were public institutions.<sup>16</sup> Publicly managed or financed museums, art centres and galleries, were also identified as either partners or hosts in 16 out of a total of 17 programmes/initiatives.

In terms of the roles assumed by the museums and art centres identified, most concerned the hosting of public events associated with residencies, such as exhibitions, musical and other performative presentations, artistic interventions, and educational activities complementary to most of the programmes or initiatives analysed.



Figure 4. Typology of activities/events per number of occurrences

With regard to some of the tendencies identified through the inquiry, initiatives and programmes may be grouped into two predominant, and sometimes coexisting, categories: a) single edition initiatives, associated with the commission of a particular show, performance or exhibition, as well as the development of cultural, or in fewer occurrences, research projects; and, b) regular initiatives, integrated in the annual programmes of cultural organisations including museums, art centres and non-profit organisations, or as part of regular cultural and scientific events, for instance, music and arts festivals, conferences and seminars.<sup>17</sup>

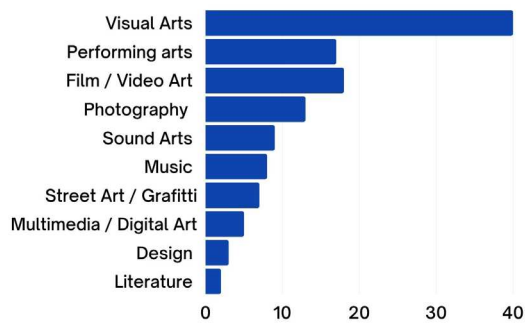


Figure 5. Typology of artistic practices identified per number of occurrences

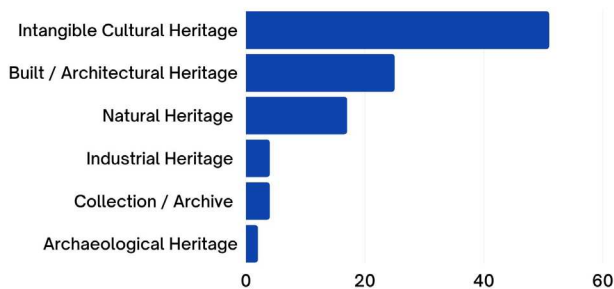


Figure 6. Typology of heritage practices identified per number of occurrences

Moreover, the inquiry revealed heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes' potentialities in the cross-fertilisation of three different, but complementary, dimensions: a) artistic experimentation with a high degree of interdisciplinarity, including practices that border on the sector of the creative industries; b) the use and valorisation of heritage, particularly of an intangible nature, a motivating theme for a large percentage of the artist-in-residence programmes; and, c) the promotion of cultural participation through the arts.

However, it also highlighted some of the structural vulnerabilities identified in *Museums in the Future*, namely, the precarious working conditions of participating artists, who in at least 50% of cases were not financially compensated for their work, even when assuming traditionally non-artistic functions linked to production, communication, or gallery education. Other critical aspects of this type of initiatives include: the short duration of residencies; the restriction of community participation in their initial and/or final stages; and, most

commonly, the lack of educational activities relative to these.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, the data collected during the inquiry revealed several examples of artist-in-residence programmes developed within the context of Portuguese museums, which showed promising results, having had a significant impact on collection management, programming of exhibitions, and cultural and educational events/activities. Furthermore, because it coincided with the first nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inquiry carried out allowed for the identification of the distinctive qualities of artist-in-residence programmes, namely, their capacity to adapt and inspire alternative ways of engaging with the public, thus serving to maintain and diversify museums' activities in unimaginably restrictive times.

### Heritage-based artistic residencies: change and adaptation during COVID-19

The main selection criteria for the examples here presented, had mostly to do with the fact that all of the host institutions were located in some of the hardest-hit Portuguese regions during the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, expressly, the northern and central regions of continental Portugal, including Ovar, the only municipality that was placed under a *cordon sanitaire*.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, all of the selected examples intended to illustrate different adaptation strategies for the constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first example, the latest edition of a museum's annual artist-in-residence programme was examined. In the second, three editions of an artist-in-residence programme hosted by the museum in question, but external to its programming activity, served as the focal point for analysis. Finally, the third and last example, consisted of two individual artist-in-residence programmes selected due to their relation to heritage valorisation objectives, as well their temporal proximity to the present moment.

Notwithstanding, all three examples have shared characteristics, including the fact that they all took place in public museums or art centres. However, while the first two examples occurred in two distinctive typologies of non-artistic museums – the former in a municipal housemuseum, and the latter in a municipal museum of archaeology – the third example involved a contemporary art centre. Furthermore, each of the examples here presented serve to spark a discussion on the various possible impacts of this type of initiatives at both an institutional and programmatic level, taking into consideration different typologies of museums, and envisioning a broader timeline (beyond the current pandemic reality).

### **I always wanted to be something else: adaptation and digitalisation**

On 20 September 2020, at 10.15 p.m., a queue near the Júlio Dinis House Museum in Ovar had formed, for the second presentation of *Sempre quis ser outra coisa* ('I always wanted to be something else'), a performance by actor Pedro Damião, artist-in-residence at the HouseMuseum, from May to October 2020. Contrary to the expectations (and especially considering the extremely restrictive measures adopted by local authorities, who had implemented a cordon sanitaire due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic just a few months before), the opening of an additional session of the performance at such late hours, did not discourage the audience of a small town in central Portugal.



Figure 7. *Sempre quis ser outra coisa* – Live performance at Júlio Dinis House Museum, 20 September 2020

Credits: Museu Júlio Dinis - Câmara Municipal de Ovar (Júlio Dinis House Museum – Municipality of Ovar)

The pandemic, however, had a significant impact on the development of this artistic residency, compromising some of the activities previously programmed, namely, public workshops, cancelled due to the challenges relative to, for instance, the mandatory use of protective equipment such as masks, which would have severely limited the necessary interaction and participation with/from participants.

Moreover, the first public presentation, a performance titled *Pedras na Boca* ('Stones in one's mouth'), had to be entirely adapted to an online format, consisting in its recording and subsequent livestreaming via the project's Facebook page<sup>20</sup>. In addition, the original draft for the presentation was completely reoriented, incorporating the artist's own experience of confinement at the museum, which was forced to close to the public during the initial stages of the residency.



Figure 8. *Resquícios* – Final exhibition at Júlio Dinis House Museum, 7 October 2020

Credits: Museu Júlio Dinis - Câmara Municipal de Ovar (Júlio Dinis House Museum – Municipality of Ovar)

Coincidentally, the theme of artistic creation during a health-related period of confinement, resonates with the experience of the first unofficial artist-in-residence at the HouseMuseum, expressly, Júlio Dinis, a pseudonym of Joaquim Coelho (1839-1871), a young doctor whose stay at an aunt's house during a short period of convalescence in 1863, motivated a process of self-discovery – and subsequent consecration – as a writer, and ultimate musealisation of the house by the Municipality of Ovar in 1996. Just as Júlio Dinis had done during his 'artistic residency', more than one and a half centuries before, Pedro Damião observed the city through the window of the HouseMuseum, confronting the current reality with that of his childhood and adolescence in that city. At the same time, the writer-performer reflected on the process of writing, or more precisely, 'self-writing', within the context of an artistic residency.

Besides the connections between Pedro Damião and Júlio Dinis, we may also draw a parallel between the work of Pedro Damião and that of Xavier Almeida in the first edition of the artistic residency programme promoted by the HouseMuseum in 2014. During his residency, the visual artist documented what he described as a 'return to his parents' house'. Adopting a similar point of view as Damião's, of (non-)participant observation, the exhibition facilitated a critical and particularly ironic reflection on some of the town's trademark cultural events, such as the annual Carnival festivities.

In this sense, the primordial function and intrinsic historical value of the house museum as a place of memory is expanded, increasing its value and granting it another function, that of a place of inspiration for artistic (re)creation and critique. Furthermore, in addition to assuming a commemorative function relative to the life and works of Júlio Dinis, through its artist-in-residence programme the museum has also managed to position itself as an art centre, actively supporting local artists and enabling the promotion of contemporary arts.

Ultimately, as the significant number of

visualizations of the online performance demonstrate (having reached a total of 5059), the artistic residency of Pedro Damião serves as an example of the inherent potential of this type of initiatives to promote change, enabling artistic and cultural resilience from within museums, even behind closed doors.

### **Displacements: from the gallery to (other) reading formats**

Similarly to the aforementioned initiatives which took place at the Júlio Dinis House Museum, *Deslocações* ('Displacements') also took place at a municipal museum, namely, the Abade Pedrosa Municipal Museum, located in northern Portugal and dedicated to the safeguarding and display of an archaeological collection of items dating from the Neolithic period to the Middle Ages, which belonged to a local abbot and amateur archaeologist, Joaquim Pedrosa (1848-1920). However, unlike the previously cited examples, in this case the museum was not the promoter of the initiative, the artist-in-residence programme having been designed as a curricular project developed by Samuel Silva, Professor at the University of Porto's Faculty of Fine Arts, and curator of all of the programme's three editions thus far.

The first edition resulted in the programming of a collective exhibition, bringing together the artworks of thirteen Fine Arts and Multimedia undergraduate students from the respective faculty. For a period of two months, students were accompanied in guided visits to the museum's collections, as well as to Monte do Padrão, an archaeological site dating from the Neolithic period. The final exhibition of the artworks took the form of an in situ multimedia installation, in dialogue with the museum's permanent exhibition.

In the second edition of the residency programme, which took place around the same time in the following year of 2019, a group of twenty-five students were challenged to produce a sculpture illustrating the spiritual dimension of an object of their choice from the museum's permanent collection. The



Figure 9. *Padrão* – Group discussion at the Abade Pedrosa Municipal Museum, 3 April 2018  
Credits: Samuel Silva

final outcome was a new *in situ* installation featuring the artworks, titled *Religar* ('Reconnect'). Resorting to the use of different materials and textures – dirt, plants, ceramics, coal, paper, and even edible materials – the artworks reflected both a conceptual and aesthetic correspondence to their chosen archaeological objects, providing them with a symbolic value beyond their functional role, without losing the connection to their material and formal aspects.



Figure 10. *Religar* – Exhibition at the Abade Pedrosa Municipal Museum, 23 May 2019  
Credits: Abade Pedrosa Municipal Museum

Unlike its previous counterparts, the 2020 edition of the artist-in-residence programme was met with the additional challenge of having had to adapt to the various constraints

caused by COVID-19. Dedicated to the memory and work of Daniel Faria (1971-1999), writer and, at the time of his death, novice at the Monastery of Singeverga in Santo Tirso, this edition sought to give continuity to previous ones. After a long series of delays and postponed field visits, and the fact that students had executed their artworks solely through remote tutoring, the exhibition was cancelled even before having had the chance to open to the public in November 2020, as had been intended.

Nevertheless, as of the time of writing this article (March 2021), a (re)adaptation of the exhibition exclusively for publication is in course. This adaptation will (re)enable the presentation of the artworks, leading the artists to creatively rethink their artworks both individually and collectively, as part of another type of 'installation' – one that is to be read. Additionally, this format will provide the opportunity for the organisation and public dissemination of some of the results from students' historical and artistic research on the life and works of Daniel Faria, as well as the documentation of creative and production processes that also encompasses previous editions.

On the whole, *Displacements* is demonstrative of how artist-in-residence programmes, particularly those promoted by non-artistic museums, are able to attain four main objectives, namely: a) to contribute to socialising the collections; b) to strengthen institutional partnerships in the field at a regional level; c) to promote the diversification of exhibitions and activities; and, d) to position museums as privileged spaces for the promotion of interdisciplinary, hands-on, research practices, in the cross-fertilisation between heritage and artistic creation.

In what concerns the latest edition of Abade Pedrosa Municipal Museum's artist-in-residence programme, *Displacements* is yet another example of museums' ability to adapt while simultaneously supporting artistic creation and research. Occurring outside the physical space of the museum – although counting on its collaboration and support –

the resulting publication will nonetheless enable the museum (once again forced to close doors in January 2021), to act as a cultural agent for local heritage, by providing an opportunity to document the creative, historical and empirical research developed during the three editions of the programme.

### **Stories of a Place: supporting artistic creation through heritage-making**

Contrary to the preceding examples, the last two programmes here presented were hosted by an art museum, expressly, Quinta da Cruz – Centre for Contemporary Art, in Viseu, a historical town in the central region of Portugal. Inaugurated in 2014, the story of the Centre begins with the acquisition by the municipality of an old rural property and its subsequent conversion to a multifunctional space, dedicated to the promotion and exhibition of contemporary arts. Moreover, besides having its own exhibition and educational programme, the Centre is host to two partner institutions, namely, the Serralves Foundation, and, the national Visual Expression and Communication Teachers' Association, both having greatly contributed to the Centre's cultural dynamics and institutional relevance in recent years.

Although the Centre has yet to formalise an official artist-in-residence programme, it has already commissioned and/or hosted a few short-term residencies, as well as related exhibitions and activities. One instance of this was a short stay at Quinta Da Cruz in December 2018, by the visual artist António Silva, who was challenged to create ten large format drawings and a mural painting, inspired by different arboreal species in the forest and gardens that surround the main building.

The final exhibition, titled *Try Thinking like a Tree*, was inaugurated as part of Viseu's Festival of Artistic Practices, EDUCARTE, an annual initiative organised in partnership with the Visual Expression and Communication Teachers' Association, taking place in various museums and exhibition spaces managed

by the municipality. In this way, the artistic residency greatly benefited from the accompanying pedagogical initiatives aimed at promoting artistic education and artistic practices, always in close relationship with local heritage, which throughout the festival's history, both in in-person formats (the last having been in 2019xxi), and onlinexxii editions, has been the source of inspiration for many of the festival's activities and featured artistic interventions.



Figure 11. *Try thinking like a tree – Exhibition at Quinta da Cruz - Centre for Contemporary Art, 15 June 2019*

Credits: *Andrea Couceiro, Câmara Municipal de Viseu (Municipality of Viseu)*

Additionally, the residency provided an opportunity for the artistic cataloguing and valorisation of the arboreal heritage surrounding the arts centre, some of the drawings produced during the artist-in-residence programme having been acquired by the municipality, and being now part of the Centre's permanent collection.

Much in the same manner, the artist-in-residence programme, *Histórias de um Lugar* ('Stories of a Place') – hosted by Quinta da Cruz in February 2020 – also contributed to the valorisation of the institution's heritage, more specifically, of the history of the building and its previous residents. Over the course of ten days, visual artist María Jesús Agra, collected testimonies of former residents, caretakers and neighbours of the country house, some of whom are now part of the museum's staff, blending the oral retelling of their stories

with sound recordings of the river that runs alongside the property<sup>xxiii</sup>. The culmination of the artist's findings resulted in their conversion into a multimedia art installation that combined natural elements, collages, sound recordings and photographs from the family archives of some of the interviewees.



Figure 12. *Histórias de um Lugar – Exhibition at Quinta da Cruz - Centre for Contemporary Art, 27 July 2020*

Credits: *Andrea Couceiro, Câmara Municipal de Viseu (Municipality of Viseu)*

Inaugurated in June 2020, and thus in the aftermath of the first nationwide lockdown, the exhibition was able to remain open to the public for almost the entire duration initially expected, along with its respective complementary public and educational activities such as workshops and guided tours. In addition, the artworks produced within the context of this artistic residency will also be acquired by the municipality and incorporated into the Centre's permanent collection.

On that account, besides supporting the programming of exhibitions and activities, this initiative also actively contributed to the development of the Centre's permanent collection, bringing to it artworks that combine both artistic and historical value. Moreover, both local communities and some of the Centre's employees, were involved in this artistic self-valorisation and heritage-making process. This example thus demonstrates artist-in-residence programmes' potential to promote the participation and the valorisation of local heritage, including that

of museums: their buildings, surroundings, and the memories of present and former inhabitants.

Additionally, this example illustrates an alternative strategy for resilience in (post-) COVID-19 times. Through the acquisition of artworks produced by commissioned artists, not only is Quinta da Cruz supporting contemporary arts and artists, but also its own future role as an exhibition space for contemporary arts. During the lockdown periods, for instance, the Centre was able to maintain its online presence by providing filmed guided tours of outside spaces, where some of its collection's artworks are installed<sup>xxiv</sup>. In this way, by focusing on the development and socialising of its collection, in close tandem with local history, the Centre is also asserting its role in the community: promoting heritage valorisation and education through the arts.

### **Museums in the Future: a place for (re) connection through heritage and the arts**

Despite the limitations in its scope, the inquiry carried out as part of the '(Re) creating Heritage' research project, revealed the role of Portuguese museums in hosting and supporting artistic residencies. Often functioning as an interface between local heritage and contemporary artistic creation, the museums and art centres identified in the inquiry also played an important part as institutional and physical facilitators between artists and local communities, mainly by providing artist-in-residence programmes the pedagogical framework needed for both artistic and heritage education, through the hosting of cultural, scientific and educational events and activities associated with the programmes.

The selected examples of artist-in-residence programmes that took place during and between the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal (the first having occurred from March to April of 2020, and the second, from October to November of that same year), indicate

that this might be a relationship of mutual benefit. All three examples illustrated different strategies adopted by participating artists and programme coordinators in adapting to harsh restrictions, constant delays and reconfigurations. Whether by adjusting to other formats or platforms for mediation – from digital to printed editions – or by guaranteeing the future valorisation of the artworks produced during the artist-in-residence programmes, all were able to reinvent practices and fulfil their goals. Moreover, two of the artist-in-residence programmes examined, happened behind closed doors, the museums involved having been able to maintain some level of public activity by adapting and rethinking modes of presentation, and, to some degree, participation. A clear demonstration of this may be observed in the first example, where the online performance reached a number of visualizations that far surpassed the physical capacity of the museum's auditorium/exhibition room, especially considering the safety guidelines imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Further analysis is currently underway, in the form of a multiple case study involving different types of promoters, so as to evaluate the potential of artist-in-residence programmes not only relative to the management and socialising of collections, but also for improving community engagement, extended to include museums' personnel and associated professionals. In relation to the benefits that may be gained at an institutional level from the programming of artist-in-residence initiatives, these include: the strengthening of institutional partnerships; the reinforcement of museums' cultural and educational activity; and the reinforcement of their prominence at a local, regional, and even national level.

Overall, the three cases discussed had an observably positive effect on their host institutions, promoting collaborative practices such as those between museums and universities, and enabling community engagement. In this sense, they mirrored the

analyses and recommendations provided by the *Museums in the Future* field report, in which the potential of artist-in-residence programmes to stimulate 'infrastructural optimization, as well [institutions'] ability to reinvent and innovate' are highlighted (Grupo de Projeto *Museus no Futuro*, 2020: 61).

If financial and political conditions are actually met so as to allow greater autonomy and proximity to the educational sector, namely, through the National Plan for the Arts, it can then be expected that Portuguese museums will come to assume a more proactive role in promoting heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes. This could be done, for instance, by ensuring the continuity of single edition initiatives (which represented the majority of initiatives identified in the inquiry), strategically integrating them into museums' regular activity. In the aftermath of consecutive COVID-19-related lockdown periods and faced with an increasingly distant scenario of recovery for tourist activity, this may prove an adequate strategic move for Portuguese museums and monuments to follow. Moreover, the need to attract local publics may also serve as an opportunity for Portuguese museums to reaffirm their historical responsibility for the study, safeguarding and valorisation of heritage, always through the inclusion of local communities, a role that, to some extent, within the context of artist-in-residence programmes, has been transferred to artists, whose work connected to museums and heritage has paradoxically failed to be sufficiently valued. In 'Ten Principles of Values-Based Heritage Practice', Kate Clark affirms: 'Heritage practitioners come from many different backgrounds. In addition to those who hold traditional knowledge, or who are passionate about local places or things, there are many others. They include anthropologists, architects and surveyors, curators, planners, archivists, ecologists, landscape architects, archaeologists, and conservators' (Clark, 2019: 151). From what we have discussed thus far, artists could also undeniably be added to that list.

Following the same line of thought, various international studies, publications, research, and/or artistic projects, have been exploring the potentialities inherent to the association between artistic creation and the valorisation/education of heritage.<sup>25</sup> In the opening chapter of *Heritage in Action*, the authors state: 'Heritage is produced and mobilised by individuals and communities in any number of actions, including remembering, forgetting, generating, adapting, and performing' (Waterton, Watson, Silverman, 2017: 3). As has thus been demonstrated, creating, or re-creating, through the lens of museum collections, is yet another relevant means for the production and mobilisation of heritage.

If, as argued in the *Museums in the Future* field report, artistic, cultural and heritage education programmes can act as 'powerful mobilizer[s] for younger people, educators and teachers, and families' (Grupo de Projeto Museu no Futuro, 2020: 74), addressing the promotion of contemporary artistic creation could provide an opportunity for Portuguese museums to not only reinvent themselves as unique vessels for artistic experimentation, but also, as privileged spaces for the participation of local communities through artistic practices. By doing so, and in consonance with the 2030 Agenda's goal (Culture 2030 Goal Campaign, 2019) pertaining to 'cultural localisation', Portuguese museums will be able to, in post-pandemic times, actively contribute to both their own cultural and economic resilience, and to that of the territories in which they operate, supporting artistic creation, and ultimately, reconnecting with the places, people and heritage that sustain them.

## Notes

1. Multiple inquiries on the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on museums and monuments have been published. Two examples of preliminary analysis on the topic at an international level include UNESCO's report, (May 2020), and ICOM's survey on

'Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19'. In the case of Portuguese Museums and Monuments, accordingly to information provided by the Portuguese Observatory on Cultural Activities, in 2020, visitors numbers have significantly decreased, up to less 80% of visitors in previous years. Furthermore, national museums have been struggling with long-lasting financial constraints, currently presenting a serious threat to the safeguard of collections.

2. According to official sources, in 2019 the number of foreign visitors represented a total of 52,3% of visitors to Portuguese Museums, a percentage that reached 65% in what concerns national monuments and museums.

3. The *Museums in the Future* commission, constituted by eight elements from the cultural sector, six government representatives from various areas, and two museum directors, arose due to the implementation by the Portuguese Government of resolution no. 35/2019, on 18 February of that same year. Its main outcome was the production of a field report that included the conclusions of a survey on 37 national museums and monuments, and 52 recommendations for public policies in five structural axes, expressly: the management of museums and monuments; networks and partnerships; digital transformation; the management of collections; and, publics and mediation.

4. The recent and much-anticipated regulations on the administrative regime for National Museums and Monuments (Decree no. 78/2019, 5 June), are expected to provide museum directors with a much greater degree of autonomy, although on a practical level this is yet to be fully implemented.

5. Two examples of problematic situations that were denounced in the media were those related to the working conditions of gallery educators in two prominent publicly funded foundations' museums and cultural venues, both located in the city of Porto. In March 2021, the Portuguese Government announced the

intention to appoint an official representative for the gallery education sector at policy-making level.

6. Translation provided by the authors.

7. The [National Plan for the Arts](#) is a joint initiative by the Portuguese Ministries of Culture and Education, currently in place as the national strategy for the promotion of the arts and artistic education, in effect for a ten-year period (2019-2029). One of the Plan's most significant lines of action is the implementation of artist-in-residence programmes in secondary schools.

8. The toolkit and further details on the project may be found at the Portuguese governmental agency for Cultural Heritage's [official website](#).

9. '(Re)creating Heritage' is an ongoing doctoral research project developed within the scope of the doctoral programme in Heritage Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal's School of Arts, expressly, at the Research Centre for Science and Technology of the Arts. This project is publicly funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology, through a three-year individual research grant (2019-2022) attributed to the author, Ana Gago. The co-author, Professor Laura Castro, is part of the project's mentoring team, conjointly with Professor Helena Silva (University of Porto).

10. The 148 Portuguese institutions identified as promoters of heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes or initiatives, including municipalities, universities, non-profit organisations, cultural associations, artist collectives, and theatre companies, were previously selected through online research, through the use of keywords and Boolean operators, and search engine optimization tools, so that the results compiled websites and documentation in the Portuguese language, within the desired time period (2020-2020). The results were then fine-tuned through a search on Arquivo.pt, an online archive of discontinued Portuguese webpages, as well as via means

of an exploratory search in the documental archive of a private collection managed by the Catholic University of Portugal, centred on cultural programmes, leaflets and other communication materials, dated from the first decade of the period in question: 2000-2010.

11. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent restrictions on mobility and physical contact, the questionnaire was exclusively conducted online/remotely.

12. COVID-19's impact affected promoters' ability to respond in due course, especially smaller institutions such as regional museums, artist collectives, cultural associations, and non-profit organisations, given their reduced human resources and greater susceptibility to financial constraints. These constraints may also have affected territorial representativeness. As a result, it was not possible to include any programme or initiative developed in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, for instance.

13. This relationship was sometimes directly perceived from the thematic orientation of the residencies, although very often, the themes and objects that were the focus of residencies were not officially classified as heritage sites or practices.

14. Some of the preliminary results from the inquiry were presented during an oral (online) communication at the 2nd Memory for All Conference on 18 November, 2020, titled '(Re)creating Heritage: Artist-in-residence programming for local development'. Presentation available in Portuguese [here](#).

15. During the following stage of the survey, a multiple case study analysis will be conducted, combining field work and qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Exploratory interviews have already been conducted in order to pre-select case studies.

16. The museums and art centres identified as the main promoters of the selected artist-in-residence programmes/initiatives were as follows: Arquipélago – Contemporary Arts

Centre (São Miguel Island, Autonomous Region of the Azores), which promoted two of the selected single edition initiatives; José de Guimarães International Arts Centre (Guimarães, Northern Region of Portugal), promoter of two of the selected single edition initiatives; Júlio Dinis House Museum (Ovar, Central Region of Portugal), promoter of a multiple-edition artist-in-residence programme featured as one of the examples analysed in this article; Douro Museum (Northern Region of Portugal), promoter of an intermunicipal cultural project's artist-in-residence programme; and, Quinta de Cruz – Centre for Contemporary Art (Central Region of Portugal), promoter of two single edition initiatives also examined in this article.

17. 55% of the heritage-based artist-in-residence programmes were single edition initiatives such as commissions of exhibitions/shows, or less frequently, cultural/research projects. 44% of the identified initiatives with multiple editions were part of the regular (annual or biennial) programming of music and art festivals, or other types of cultural/scientific events. Further information may be found in a project-related conference poster presented at the Encontro Ciência 2020 science and technology conference, in November 2020, available [here](#).

18. Although 60% of the identified artist-in-residence programmes comprised in situ or in-person moments, the majority were short in duration, lasting less than one month in 62% of the cases. Furthermore, only 19% of the artist-in-residence programmes included co-creative practices, expressly, those involving the participation of local communities during the creation of artworks/performances/artistic interventions.

19. The municipality was put under a strict cordon sanitaire between March and April 2020, during which the circulation in and out of that territory was prohibited, and a mandatory curfew for the residents of that municipality was in place. Nonetheless, the severe limitations to mobility, economic, and cultural activity, remained after the lifting of

the cordon, following an extension of a state of emergency at a national level.

20. The video-performance may be found [here](#).

21. Link to the 2019 edition's programme may be found [here](#).

22. Link to video with information on the festival's online activities may be found [here](#).

23. Video from the opening, including a testimony from the artist, may be found [here](#).

24. Video tours and other online activities may be found at the Municipality's Facebook page, [here](#).

25. Some examples being: *Quand la création contemporaine réactive le patrimoine rural – Rencontres Art et Culture en Territoires Ruraux* (2017), *Contemporary Art in Historic Contexts* (2018), *Mapping contemporary art in the heritage experience* (2017-19), or *World Heritage Artists in Residence Program* (2015-2020).

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Ana Gago

PhD Candidate in Heritage Studies,  
Universidade Católica Portuguesa, School  
of Arts, Research Centre for Science and  
Technology of the Arts  
algago@gmail.com

Laura Castro

Assistant Professor, Universidade Católica  
Portuguesa, School of Arts, Research Centre  
for Science and Technology of the Arts  
lcastro@porto.ucp.pt