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ARTICLE

NODE «MEMORY MATTERS: NAVIGATING THE HISTORY OF MEDIA ART, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY»

Collecting and preserving media art in Portuguese museums

Eva Direito

Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Escola das Artes

Cristina Sá

Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Escola das Artes

Joana Teixeira

Universidade Católica Portuguesa - Escola das Artes

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Abstract

This research aims to map the practices surrounding the collection of media art in Portuguese museums, with a particular focus on the preservation strategies employed by relevant institutions. At the core of the study is a critical analysis of data gathered through an online survey, completed by the following institutions: Museu da Bienal de Cerveira, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Centro de Arte Oliva, Coleção de Arte Contemporânea do Estado, and Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado.

The findings indicate a significant shortage of specialized conservators in Portugal, along with a lack of standardized terminology in the preservation of media art. The brevity of the sample suggests a lack of transparency from the institutions and limited public access to digital documentation concerning our object of study. Nonetheless, this sample provides valuable insight into current practises that typically remain inaccessible to the public.

Keywords

media art; preservation; Portuguese collections; Portuguese museums

*Recopilado y preservación del arte de los medios en los museos portugueses***Resumen**

El objetivo de esta investigación es trazar las prácticas que rodean la recopilación del arte de los medios en los museos portugueses, centrándose especialmente en las estrategias de conservación empleadas por las instituciones pertinentes. En el centro del estudio se encuentra un análisis crítico de los datos recopilados a través de una encuesta en línea, completada por las siguientes instituciones: Museu da Bienal de Cerveira, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Centro de Arte Oliva, Coleção de Arte Contemporânea do Estado y Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado.

Los hallazgos indican una escasez significativa de conservadores especializados en Portugal, junto con una falta de terminología estandarizada en la conservación del arte de los medios. La brevedad de la muestra sugiere una falta de transparencia por parte de las instituciones y un acceso público limitado a la documentación digital relativa a nuestro objeto de estudio. Sin embargo, esta muestra proporciona información valiosa sobre las prácticas actuales que normalmente son inaccesibles para el público.

Palabras clave

arte de los medios; conservación; colecciones portuguesas; museos portugueses

Introduction

The object of study of this research is media art in Portuguese museums. It is oriented towards both general and specific goals. Concerning the broadest aims, it involves compiling scattered information related to the practice of collecting Media Art in Portuguese museums and contributing to knowledge about the history of collections, as there is a shortage of studies conducted in this area. The specific aims are directly related to the field of Conservation and Restoration, with the intention of understanding which preservation practices are being implemented by national institutions that collect Media Art and what the resulting state of conservation of their collections is. This article is the outcome of a larger study that also includes an analysis of Media Art preservation strategies and a glossary of the most significant concepts in the field. Our aim is to map and make available the data regarding the preservation strategies and concerns relating to a small sample of Portuguese collections, and to raise awareness about the preservation of Media Art not only within the territory but also in dialogue with global institutions that collect media art.

1. Ascertain data**1.1. Definitions**

During the investigation, to ensure cohesion in the data collected for research, the definition of Media Art that guided the research involved

a fusion of the definitions proposed by Oliver Grau and Geert Lovink. Grau argues that Media Art is a category within a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary universe, where artistic creation merges with research and techno-scientific development, establishing a bridge between the contemporary sociocultural context, digital and analogue methods, and art history (Grau 2003). Media Art artists engage in diverse and complex areas such as time-based installation art, telepresence art, genetic/bio/eco art, robotics, nanotechnology, online and offline art, generative art, space art, artificial life, interactive art, augmented reality, and virtual reality. These artistic expressions, along with several new developments in transcultural and transdisciplinary manifestations, emerged as reflections of the exploration of new technologies (Grau 2003). Lovink's definition reinforces the transitory nature of Media Art, describing it as a hybrid art form and a cloud of multidisciplinary micro-practices, produced by a community not solely composed of traditional artists, but rather of researchers, scientists, and activists who do not create art but instead test and explore the artistic means of the future for the benefit of future generations (Lovink 2008).

After defining the concept of media art, it was also important to establish the concept of a museum. This established concept was based on the latest definition of a museum by ICOM in 2022 (International Council of Museums 2022). By doing so, the research excluded any independent galleries, artists' private collections, or other cultural institutions/spaces that contribute to the creation, exhibition, and conservation of media art. Although integrating these other spaces into the investigation would be more enriching, it would, in turn, introduce a degree of variability between institutions that could contaminate the

analysis. Furthermore, evidence suggests that museums allocate more resources to the collection of diverse heritage and are typically places where conservation strategies are investigated, created, and implemented more efficiently.

1.2. Preservation issues and strategies

Most object-oriented works, such as digital prints, photography, and sculpture, are within the reach of museums to collect since interactive time-based digital artworks, composed of both material and immaterial components, do not facilitate the acquisition and preservation process (Paul 2023). In other words, institutions are more readily prepared to collect and display objects that use digital technologies for production, rather than those in which technology functions as a medium: the former refers to objects traditionally considered material, such as digital prints, photography, or sculpture; the latter pertains to works produced, stored, and displayed in digital formats, employing the infinite possibilities of this very medium (Paul 2023). Over time, the acquisition of less object-oriented works has become more common but simultaneously presents a challenge for conservators, as the instability inherent to this category arises from the fact that only through continuous human intervention can the existence of these objects be prolonged (Laurenson 2003). Regardless of the type of medium, objects of this nature will invariably be subjected to deterioration processes due to interaction with the surrounding environment, whether through biological, chemical, or physical processes, or even a combination of all three (García & Vilar 2010).

Moreover, the inherent obsolescence of media art, which leads to its eventual dysfunctionality, raises fundamental questions about the values of longevity and authenticity in the context of such artworks. This issue compels us to critically examine the preservation, conservation, and display practices applied to media art. In other words, while media art often relies on the continuous interaction with or transformation of technology, this very dependence on technological tools with finite life-cycles raises concerns regarding the preservation of both the medium and the original artistic intent (Noordegraaf, Saba, Maître & Hediger 2013). How can we maintain the authenticity of a media artwork over time when the hardware and software on which it depends become obsolete or unsupported? This question is especially pressing when considering how to ensure that future generations will experience the work as intended by the artist, despite the rapid pace of technological change. The issue thus involves not only preserving physical components but also safeguarding the conceptual and temporal elements that define media art's unique form of expression (Noordegraaf, Saba, Maître & Hediger 2013).

Media Art preservation proposals lack consensus and are primarily applied on a case-by-case basis, with no guidelines readily available when needed. However, depending on the type of work encountered, one of the four most common options may be pursued: the acquisition and conservation of spare parts, migration, emulation or reconstruction.

2. Sampling criteria

Collecting data for this research required significant direct contact with institutions throughout the entire process. The starting point for defining the universe (Hill & Hill 2002) of this investigation was the list of institutions and museums that belong to the Portuguese Contemporary Art Network (RPAC). Established in 2021, this network incorporates 66 institutions across Continental Portugal and the Autonomous Regions. It serves as a platform for promoting contemporary art in Portugal, aiming to connect territorially dispersed institutions and foster synergies among exhibition spaces, collectors, programmers, curators, and visual artists (Cultura Portugal n.d). We chose to rely on a state network, and by using it as the initial basis for our sampling criteria, we are analysing its characteristics and evaluating whether this network is robust or lacks other forms of art institutions. For an institution to join this network, it undergoes a rigorous analysis, indicating that it is prestigious to be a member and highlighting the importance of examining its composition, the types of institutions it comprises, and their artworks.

In order to collect data, three criteria were established to define the target universe (Vilela Rodrigues 2008). Firstly, the sample comprised institutions aiming to collect works produced from the 1960s to the present, whether exclusively featuring foreign artists, national artists, or both. Secondly, the sample consisted of Portuguese institutions located within the national territory, which possess a collection under their permanent care, either through acquisition by the institution itself or via deposit from other entities or individuals. Thus, institutions that operate solely as exhibition spaces or for cultural promotion, whether regularly or not, were excluded from the sample. Finally, the last criterion pertained to the regularity of public display of the collection. To qualify for the sample, institutions needed to display the collection on a permanent or regular basis, with regularity defined as more than once a year, over a period exceeding three months. Consequently, private collectors or artists' collections in the private sphere, along with galleries selling works of art, were also excluded from the sample.

By applying the criteria outlined above to the list of institutions comprising the RPAC, the target universe identified in the investigation consisted of 19 institutions.

After directly contacting each institution to clarify certain data and screening the target universe, we excluded those that did not adequately meet the previously mentioned criteria or lacked the capacity to contribute to the survey. Consequently, the inquired universe was reduced to five institutions: the Museu da Bienal de Cerveira, the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, the Centro de Arte Oliva, the State Contemporary Art Collection, and the Chiado National Museum of Contemporary Art.

We did not expect to receive many responses to work with, primarily because much of media art is not collected by institutions as extensively as traditional art forms, and it remains closely tied to its authors, who often retain ownership of it (Costa Duarte 2019). We also recognized that by selecting only museums, we would exclude a signif-

icant portion of the media art produced in Portugal. There are incentives for the production of media art, such as festivals, exhibitions, and conferences, but none promote its preservation. This is why we decided to adopt the epistemology of restoration, whereby the museum plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and possesses the necessary personal and financial resources to do so. Our aim with this study is to understand what the museums – equipped with the necessary means – are currently doing with their collections, and in light of this, we excluded all non-institutionalised artworks. To conduct a comprehensive assessment of both institutionalised and non-institutionalised artworks, a broader study would need to be undertaken.

3. The survey

The survey was made available via email through a link that provided access to a Google Forms questionnaire. This questionnaire comprised 8 multiple-choice questions, 5 short answer questions, and 4 long answer questions, always allowing the option to add information if none of the multiple-choice options suited the characteristics of the collection. This created a flexible inquiry that enabled the gathering of the maximum amount of useful information without restrictions.

The survey was divided into 4 blocks. The first block consisted of a presentation of the research project and its goals, as well as the definition of Media Art that guided the research. The second block of questions addressed the nature of the collection: identification of the institution; identification of the percentage of Media Art artworks that constituted the collection, along with the most relevant decades (the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s of the 20th century and from the beginning of the 21st century to date); and, finally, the frequency and average duration of exhibitions featuring media art works. The third block of questions pertained to the state and conservation practices of the Collection, where institutions were asked to identify: the existence and percentage of works in the collection with exclusive equipment (understood as any type of hardware essential for the reproduction of the image-object); the number of artworks with equipment deemed obsolete, which, consequently, could hinder their exhibition, along with the corresponding percentage; if applicable, a description of the conservation actions undertaken by the institution was requested; a description of the preservation measures implemented in the museum; whether the Media Art artworks in the collection have dedicated storage space; and, lastly, if there is a Conservator-Restorer technician experienced in the media art genre permanently employed at the museum, and if not, how they manage. The survey concluded with a single question regarding the possibility of continuing collaboration in the investigation, where the respondent could indicate their availability to provide further information about the Media Art collection through an interview format, should it be necessary to clarify or complement any of the data collected.

The goal was to create a simple questionnaire on a platform accessible to anyone involved in this inquiry process. We aimed to extract the maximum amount of information in the least amount of time. We anticipated that a lengthy questionnaire would be more likely to go unanswered or have its responses delayed. Additionally, we sought a quick way to overview the replies. Since the sample was not very broad, the responses provided by Google Docs in a spreadsheet would be sufficient to analyse them and offer a simpler method of processing the data while comparing all five institutions.

4. Collected Data

The method for analyzing the results involved categorical content analysis, and as the aim of the study was to achieve a global analysis, the individual responses provided by the institutions will not be disclosed. However, to facilitate the reading of the data, we chose to assign numbers to the institutions: Institution 1, Institution 2, Institution 3, Institution 4, and Institution 5. This global analysis enabled an understanding of trends and the establishment of categories. The first category relates to the collection's nature, while the second pertains to state and conservation practices of the collection.

Regarding the nature of the collection, it is apparent from the outset that, in most cases, media art works constitute less than a tenth of the collection of each surveyed institution. From a global perspective, on average, 5.58% of the pieces in the respondents' collections are categorised as media art. None of the values presented exceeds 10%, and the lowest value is 0.6%.

The gathering of data regarding the nature of each collection allowed us to understand that the institutions' Media Art collections primarily focus on the 1990s and the early 21st century up to the present day. Among the 5 institutions surveyed, only Institutions 1 and 2 have Media Art artworks from the 1980s, Institutions 2 and 4 have pieces from the 1970s, and only Institution 1 claims to possess artworks dating back to the 1960s.

When asked which decades were most representative in the collection, in percentage terms, the responses were varied, with only Institution 5 able to quantify it, stating that 40% of the collection corresponds to the 1990s and the remaining 60% corresponds to the beginning of the 21st century up to the present. Institution 2 did not respond, explaining that, given the characteristics and constitution of the collection, it is not feasible to quantify it. Lastly, Institutions 1, 3, and 4 did not provide a quantification of the percentage of the collection but indicated which decades were most representative.

Within the scope of analysing the state and conservation practices of the collection, the first question pertains to the frequency of media art exhibitions held annually. Using multiple choice responses, the answers obtained were as follows: Institution 1 constantly holds exhibitions, Institution 4 holds two to three exhibitions per year, while the remaining

three institutions (2, 3 and 5) selected “another option”, justifying that holding exhibitions involves various works from the collection, making it challenging to determine a precise answer to this question. This information leads to the conclusion that, since these are not institutions dedicated exclusively to the media art collection, but rather national institutions with representative collections of contemporary art, their exhibitions are predominantly mixed in terms of the display of different types of works.

Following the previous question, it was important to understand the average duration, in months, of exhibitions featuring this typology. Institutions 1 and 3 state that, on average, exhibitions last for 3 months. Institutions 4 and 5 responded that they last between 4 and 8 months. Finally, Institution 2 did not respond. The institution that refrained from responding was one of those that, in the previous response, stated that it was not possible to determine a quantifiable answer regarding the frequency of Media Art artworks in exhibitions, which could be related to the lack of internal data concerning the management of the collection.

Concerning the existence of exclusive equipment and its obsolescence, the responses received were predominantly affirmative, with only Institution 5 stating that it does not possess works with these characteristics. Institutions 3 and 4 indicated that these works make up 1% of the media art collection, Institution 1 noted that they account for 2% of the media art collection, while Institution 2 did not provide data to address this question.

In response to the question “Are there works in the collection with equipment considered obsolete that no longer allows them to be displayed?”, of the five respondents, only Institution 5 replied affirmatively, while the other four answered “No”. Finally, regarding the question “Are there works in the collection that are considered lost/irrecoverable because they are composed of obsolete equipment?” and what the percentage is, all the institutions surveyed responded negatively. In other words, all institutions allegedly possess works in their collections with exclusive but fully functioning equipment.

When questioning the institutions regarding the conservation actions that had already been carried out on Media Art artworks, only Institution 3 clearly stated that no type of intervention had been executed, and that it does not possess specific and implemented preservation measures applicable to this typology. Institutions 1, 4, and 5 responded affirmatively, claiming they had conducted migrations, archival copies, digitization, and replacement of equipment parts. Simultaneously, all these institutions assert that they have implemented preservation measures, with migration, digitization, production of backups, and archival copies being common in all responses; one of the institutions even mentions the control of environmental conditions, ensuring appropriate temperature and humidity levels. However, Institution 2 responded negatively to this question, yet in the subsequent question, “Are there preservation measures, such as migrations, emulations or regular check-ups of the works, implemented in the institution or museum?” it replied positively, specifically stating, “Migration of content to digital”. This inconsistency in responses may lead to two hypotheses:

either the museum has a defined content migration/digitization plan but has not yet had the opportunity to implement it, or the institution does not regard content migration/digitization as a conservation action. Therefore, given that content migration is deemed a preventive conservation action in the field of Media Art, and since the response to the last question of the survey indicates that preventive conservation falls under the responsibility of the technicians at the institution, it is concluded that conservation actions are indeed being carried out on the Media Art works that comprise the collection.

When asked about the storage of media art, the responses from institutions can be categorised into three types of storage. The first type includes those that have exclusive storage space for this typology, which encompasses the replies from Institutions 2, 4, and 5. The second type, which is only claimed by Institution 1, refers to having dedicated storage for media art artworks within a space shared with other types. Finally, Institution 3 lacks exclusive storage for its media art collection.

Lastly, the final question that constituted the survey focused on the presence of a member of the museum team who specialised in Media Art conservation. Institutions 1, 2, and 4 assert that they have at least one person specialised in the preservation of this type, while the remaining Institutions 3 and 5 do not employ specialised technicians. However, all 5 institutions claim to utilize external conservation services when necessary, even if specialized technicians are employed by the institution.

5. Discussion of results

In this study, the aim was to use a clear and incisive questionnaire to provide a starting point for analysing media art collections across the country. Firstly, it is curious that among all the collections of the interviewed institutions, there is a significant representation of works from the last decade of the 20th century up to the present. This could not only be related to the gradual legitimization of media artworks in the art market, but it can also be associated with the growing artistic production in this field, a result of the technological developments that provide artists with new mediums to create. However, the percentage of media art artworks that constitute institutions’ collections remains insignificant, revealing that both the art market and Portuguese institutions have struggled to expand beyond traditional artworks, even within institutions that consider themselves collectors of contemporary art.

Helena Barranha argues that the representation of Media Art in museums, particularly public ones, is virtually non-existent, as museums are primarily interested in works classified as object-matter (Monteiro 2020). Consequently, the representation of Media Art in collections is predominantly in video format, rather than incorporating artistic practices such as net art, which are notably challenging to acquire, preserve, and disseminate by the leading Portuguese contemporary art museums. This situation can result in sections of the most recent art history remaining unaddressed at an institutional level (Monteiro 2020). Despite being recent, new media are progressively being integrated

into contemporary art and, crucially, into our daily lives. Due to the democratization and ease of access to technological tools, it is essential to recognize that museums may not be equipped to accommodate all the artistic mass production that the new millennium can generate.

From the surveyed sample, the institutions that exhibit a higher number of media art artworks within their collections also tend to have preservation strategies in place, as well as technicians specialized in the field for conservation interventions. This suggests that there is a connection between the larger number of works and the strategies implemented.

From the outset, the lack of education and specialised training for professionals in this area is highlighted, as Media Art conservators-restorers still belong to a somewhat distant reality. Although some of the surveyed institutions have a qualified technician, they all assert that they use external conservation services when necessary.

Two of the institutions surveyed voluntarily highlighted their close collaboration with artists in the process of preserving artworks. One institution mentioned involving the artist during the decision-making stage when asked about the preservation measures implemented in the museum, stating that they were currently migrating works to digital files and conserving them on a server, all in agreement with the artists and adhering to international conservation standards for the area. The other institution also identified the artist as an integral part of the team when making decisions regarding the preservation of the artwork.

When two of the institutions emphasize this collaborative process with the artists, it can illustrate that there is a commitment to preserving the narrative and interactivity associated with the work, exceeding merely the preservation of the message and the material component. Although the artist's confrontation with the preservation of their work is a sensitive matter, as they may perceive it as a living entity rather than a museum object, it is crucial to emphasize that the artist plays a pivotal role in devising creative solutions for safeguarding their works and establishing guidelines for their aging and mitigating the obsolescence process.

Concerning the issue of display time in exhibitions and storage, both are intrinsically linked and relevant as they are directly related to the deterioration of display equipment components (hardware). Beyond its functionality, the equipment plays a vital role in situating the artwork within a specific historical period, providing insights into the cultural and technical context in which it was developed and created, thereby attributing artistic value and meaning (Lorrain 2013). Institutions typically have collection preservation protocols that adhere to good preservation practices for traditional objects. However, storing analogue and digital electronic equipment presents additional challenges for institutions and conservators. While many factors that pose risks to media art works are similar to those affecting other types, such as the age of the work, ultraviolet and infrared radiation, oxygen, and humidity, which all trigger deterioration processes like oxidation or corrosion, other issues arise with the storage of this equipment, particularly concerning periods of non-use, which can jeopardize the

operation of the work. Although insufficient statistics exist to establish the relationship between electronic equipment failure and periods of dormancy, it is evident that gradually reactivating equipment stored for extended durations is beneficial for their condition (Lorrain 2013). When asked about storage characteristics, 3 out of the 5 institutions state they have exclusive storage space for media art: one institution stores this type semi-exclusively in a shared environment; the other two assert they lack exclusive storage space, indicating that not only do they fail to adapt environmental conditions specifically for this typology, but they may also hinder safe conservation control through on/off cycles of the works, as such practices typically involve extraordinary handling of the items.

When questioned about the existence of works in the collection that are deemed lost or irretrievable due to being made from obsolete equipment, all institutions replied that the works in their collections are operational and they do not consider any to be in that state. This question aimed not to assess levels of negligence but rather to understand which protocols institutions would adopt if they believed they possessed irrecoverable works in their collection. We believe addressing institutions on this topic, alongside their contradictory responses to the questionnaire, would prove beneficial in the future. However, one cannot help but wonder how institutions that lack comprehensive collection preservation protocols, significantly relevant to artworks of Media Art from the 1960s to the present, have not experienced losses in their collections. Only one institution mentioned the exchange of equipment parts, while the others with established preservation strategies referenced migration and digitization as the prevailing methods. Although migration and digitization are crucial processes for the preservation of Media Art, they invariably involve the risk of loss and alteration of the authenticity values in the artwork, as they entail replacing the original material with more modern substitutes, especially in the case of migration.

This data compels us to consider the extent to which museum collection strategies are aligned with changes in the art world. As certain types of works are not being collected due to their collecting, preserving, and exhibiting methods not corresponding to those used for more traditional works, this will result in a failure to transmit cultural heritage and lead to digital oblivion (Weschenfelder 2016).

On the other hand, it is possible to analyse this issue in relation to the values of authenticity and how the museum can act as a reliquary. Weschenfelder (2016) argues that the originals of our art and cultural history are, like architectural monuments, complex constructions of superimposed layers of material and meaning. This raises the question of what can still be considered an artwork and how the museum creates new narratives of the artwork through its gaps. Since Media Art goes beyond its materiality and primarily focuses on its conceptual and interactive relationships, sometimes the authenticity associated with the material component does not present a significant risk when interpreting it. However, when no institution indicates that it possesses artworks deemed irretrievable, it may suggest that in cases where

the materiality of the work is a relevant factor and migration is not an appropriate strategy for its preservation and exhibition, the institution may be employing a preservation strategy that does not align with the concept and materiality of the work. Thus, it does not present the original but rather a fragmented version in which the gaps were filled by the institution as it lacked the capacity to manage the loss of the work.

Finally, our small sample may spark some discussion regarding Media Art in Portugal. We used privileged channels to contact these institutions, and even through that approach, most did not respond. This could suggest that they might be overwhelmed and lack the time to provide this information.

It would be beneficial for a substantial amount of information regarding the nature and conservation status of collections in national museums to be made public, or for access to be more readily provided.

Conclusion and future work

Based on the information collected in the survey, it is possible to conclude that there are currently five museums in Portugal that collect Media Art, with another seven institutions yet to be determined. Access to a larger pool of data would be necessary to ascertain, through comparison, whether the number of institutions that collect Media Art is greater or fewer than those that collect what are considered traditional typologies. In terms of collection preservation, Portuguese museums tend to be conservative regarding the type of Media Art they collect, resulting in basic preservation strategies that do not require a large multidisciplinary team or extensive resources for implementation. However, if the institutions aim to acquire a greater volume of artworks or those with a higher degree of interactivity and dynamism, then an investment in both technical and human resources will be essential.

The justification for Media Art to represent less than 10% of the total collections in which it is integrated may be related to the discrepancy between the number of artists dedicated to the production of Media Art and the number of institutions that acquire it. Taking this study as a basis, it is possible to conduct a deeper and more extensive collection of data, starting from the highlighted institutions and also covering galleries, studios, artist estates, private collections, or other types of institutions, and using this data to compare the preservation methods implemented in them and create a generic preservation plan. This study aimed to analyse the strategies currently implemented; to draft a generic preservation plan, it is necessary to apply them to practical cases and perform a comparative study on the applicability of each. A generic preservation plan could help establish lines of support not only during the exhibition and storage of the work but also at the moment of acquisition within the national territory.

The main challenges of this investigation were the limited availability of information on the subject and the difficulty in establishing communication with art institutions. It is understandable that some

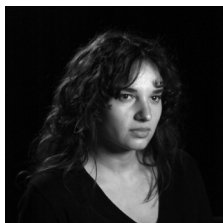
institutions may lack the staff or resources to respond to detailed questions about their collections. Consequently, it was not possible to present clearer information on the conservation policies in place, especially when such policies are not clearly defined internally, as reflected in the contradictory responses provided by some institutions in the questionnaire. This lack of clarity defines the current Portuguese panorama concerning preservation and collection. The present study would have benefited exponentially if all institutions in the sample had responded to the survey, providing a more grounded global view of the practices of collecting, conservation status, and preservation measures relating to Media Art in Portugal. However, the fact that they could not respond is treated as a response in itself. Therefore, the importance of this research stems from its contributions of relevant data that can instigate future investigations, as well as contribute to the current discussion related to the issues of producing, collecting, and preserving Media Art cultural heritage.

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CV

**Eva Direito**

Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Escola das Artes
mediart.eva@gmail.com

Portuguese researcher and conservator, possessing a degree in Conservation and a master in the Preservation of Media Art. With a robust interest in interdisciplinary approaches, she has engaged in work across various fields, including conservation, cinema, photography, and illustration. Her research centres on how new materials and evolving methods of communication impact the creation, perception, and preservation of cultural heritage. These ongoing changes render the role of the conservator increasingly complex and dynamic, necessitating continuous adaptation and innovation.

**Cristina Sá**

Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Escola das Artes
csa@ucp.pt

Cristina Sá is an Assistant Professor at the School of Arts of Universidade Católica Portuguesa, boasting over 20 years of extensive teaching experience in the field of Digital Culture and New Media. Her long-term research includes international experience at UC Berkeley and UPF Pompeu Fabra, focusing on the ontology of the interface and its mediating operations in both digital participative media and experimental media. She has a keen interest in community-based artistic research, recognizing the potential of artistic practices for social innovation. There is a strong propensity for interdisciplinarity across fields such as Communication, Art, and Technology, stemming from her hybrid training in Engineering (BE), Art (MA), and Communication (PhD).

**Joana Teixeira**

Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Escola das Artes
jcteixeira@ucp.pt

She is a researcher in contemporary art conservation. She works as an assistant lecturer at the School of Art of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa and serves on the management team, in addition to being the coordinator of the master degree in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage. She also conducts research at CITAR (Research Centre for Science and Technology of the Arts), specializing in the conservation of contemporary art, with a focus on the relationship between theoretical reflection, practical action, and documentation processes. She holds a PhD in the Conservation and Restoration of Pictorial Heritage, concentrating on the theoretical exploration of the artist's role and limitations in conservation and restoration interventions. She collaborates with contemporary artists and various institutions, including the Serralves Museum and the Faculty of Fine Arts in Porto, on the conservation of their works.

