Reading through Pictures.
An interpretative study of art and design academics between 1960s and late 1970s in Porto

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Abstract

This paper stems from an analysis of the life and work of a group of artists who graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Porto during 1960s and 1970s, surrounding the social and political revolution of 25 April 1974. The study arises from an evidence of insufficient inscription and utilisation of individual knowledge and experience from these particular art and design academics. It puts forward a hypothesis that empirical knowledge derived from this

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timespan needs to be legitimised as a pedagogic asset in contemporary teaching of art and design.

An acquaintance with the life and work of these artists was made in their studios through ethnographic interviews, and through analysing a selection of visual artefacts from their creations. These have revealed intriguing facets of a generation whose practice was interwoven with handcrafting, social relations and interpersonal connections.

These artists’ testimonies provide valuable insight into their personal creative journeys in light of their commitment to education, and how their efforts have helped maintain related formal and tacit streams of traditional knowledge within rapidly changing cultural and socio-political environments. Accordingly, this study aims to establish a basis for a transformation in the way their contributions to knowledge, culture and social fabric are recognised, communicated and activated in future contexts.

The research work has been conducted within the ambit of the project “Wisdom Transfer: towards the scientific inscription of individual legacies in contexts of retirement from art and design higher education and research” (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029038).

**Keywords:** Wisdom Transfer, Silver Generation Artists, Intergenerational dynamics, Individual legacy.

**Introduction**

This article stems from an analysis of the life and work of a group of artists who graduated from the School of Fine Arts (ESBAP) in Porto between 1957 and 1986, a period surrounding the social and political revolution of 25 April 1974. The associated research is being developed
under the project “Wisdom Transfer: towards the scientific inscription of individual legacies in contexts of retirement from art and design higher education and research” (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029038).

The project stems from the evidence that there is insufficient inscription and utilization of individual knowledge and experience which retired teachers and researchers of art and design can offer.

Considering that research in art and design has only recently been validated as a scientific discipline, it can be argued that its provenance may reside in an older generation of researchers who were the first to lead the transition of mindsets regarding creative production in practice and academics. This legacy has remained largely outside the sphere of validation in current higher education and arts and design research. The alluded generation of art / design experts is often confronted with the lack of conditions for welcoming and enhancing their experiences and professional testimonies beyond the standard requirements of academic projects and curriculum.

The project thus approached prominent individuals from the reference period and community to conduct a series of informal conversations. These sessions were often held in their personal studio / home, which provided the added possibility of studying certain artefacts / art pieces that were either of the artists’ own making or shared a profound connection with their life history. These meetings also evoked a sense of the generation as being immersed in crafting by hand and extending their work and ideas through social gatherings and interpersonal connections, in contrast to the largely impersonal digital workflows and networking approaches in contemporary times.

These testimonies also lead to a conjecture whether as to such long-term dedication to teaching on behalf of the artists, either in parallel or in alternate phases to their personal work, was indeed an act of preserving their self and expertise through constantly shifting
generational realities, which the said engagement with students afforded. An inscription in this regard, that details their insights and contributions over the decades, can thus be of significant value to depth and domain of creative studies.

Correspondingly, the aim of the research is to establish a basis upon which the impact of the referred generation of art and design scholars on knowledge, culture, and the overall social fabric can be acknowledged, discussed, and reactivated in future contexts.

**Methods**

Considering the lack of inscription in the above presented context, direct and indirect methods of engagement and observation, such as interviews with open-ended questions (Quivy & Campnhoudt 2008, p.164), have played a critical role towards collecting data.

In addition to interviewing retired/retiring artists and art professors who graduated from Porto School of Fine Arts (ESBAP) during 1960’s and 1970’s, the study also incorporated insights from Professor Lúcia Matos, the present director of the Faculty of Fine Arts in the University of Porto, taking into account the scope of her studies and projects that includes this generation of artists.

A critical aspect of engagement with the target community, in a majority of cases, has been the possibility of conducting interview sessions within the artists’ personal /studio spaces. This provided means to obtain a set of exclusive observations within the interviewees’ testimonies, and the opportunity to witness first-hand, some of the practices that characterized their creative process and were also integral to the methodologies they presented to their students. In process, certain audio-visual recordings were made which
allowed further scrutiny of the collected observations in subsequence (Banks & Zeitlyn 2015, p.107-109).

The period in question when the artists graduated, was fraught with turmoil in Portugal, however, it proved to be decisive and exceptionally prosperous in terms arts and design, and the testimonies help reconstruct a chronology of pedagogical experiences in this regard.

This article evaluates interviews with fifteen individuals which were conducted between December 2018 and March 2019 and includes seven male and seven female interviewees divided across the disciplines of sculpting and painting, alongside the current director of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto. The absence of individuals with a formation in design is due to the fact that the communication design course at the school commenced in 1976, and its graduating batch falls outside the scope of the project’s intended timeframe.

**Table 1 - List of interviewees.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Higher education teacher</th>
<th>Elementary and secondary schools teacher</th>
<th>School Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Marques</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>ESBAP/FBAUP 1977-2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of ESAD &amp; School councils at ESBAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graça Morais</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>(both)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haydée De=Francesco</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Aurélia de Sousa e Gudi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As iterated earlier, the mode of interviewing with open ended questions (Quivy & Campnhoudt 2008, p.164) proved crucial towards guiding and adapting the semi-structured conversations through a wide range of topics — with a focus on the artists’ experiences as students and teachers, curricular and extracurricular relations, foreign associations, and the influences and impacts of the political landscape on their work. The method also helped maintain a flow of narrative that was comfortable for the interviewees, encouraging spontaneous readings and interpretations of situations that were relatively personal and/or sensitive in nature.

Subsequently, a draft of the interview questions was only requested by one participant, with the rest agreeing to the open interview model. The sessions were conducted individually. Although the possibility of holding conversations with more than one participant at a time was considered, the option was not not pursued in anticipation of any dilution or holding back of insights that such an approach may incur.
In conjunction to the generated wealth of information from the encounters, the sessions that were concluded in homes and studio spaces also provided the opportunity to contextually cross reference respective correspondences with sets of visual artifacts (Banks, 2001), such as photographs (Tinkler 2013, p.188-190), archives of collected objects, and productions of other artists, thereby serving to dynamize the recorded content. Such contact allowed a simultaneous acquaintance with the artists’ past and present — in terms of work practices, ideas and ideologies, study subjects, and creative outputs. The average duration of the interview sessions was 120 minutes.

**The political landscape**

**Educational reforms and the emergence of design as a course**

Testimonies from the female participants indicate a significant prevalence of men over women in the faculty at the academy of art in the 1960’s and 1970’s. According to one of the interviewees, Elvira Leite (2019, personal communication, 15 January), despite the significant presence of female students after the 1957 education reform (Stoer 2008, pp.17-48), there was no evidence of presence of female teachers in the academy before a public tender was opened in 1975.

Before the Carnation Revolution of 1974, the prevailing dictatorial regime maintained rigorous censorship over all forms of self expression, including in the sphere of art, and were aided by ‘Little Salazars’, the local agents loyal to the regime (J.Lima de Carvalho 2019, personal communication, 31 January), who exercised additional, and at times more oppressive measures of control over people. The entailing conservatism in society emboldened gender repression, as evidenced by strict dress codes for women, such as white coats for painting classes in Elvira Leite’s student years, to different lengths and colours of attire as per the time of the year (H.Matos 2019, personal...
communication, 7 January), that were often misunderstood leading to penalties in different forms. Many female interviewees, including Isabel Cabral (2018, personal communication, 28 December), Graça Morais (2019, personal communication, 31 January), and Maria José Aguiar (2019, personal communication, 14 January) vividly remember demeaning sexist comments from male teachers and gender bias in evaluation as being commonplace.

Fig.1-Photography ©Elvira Leite - ESBAP 1961: Elvira and colleagues in their painting class.

In 1971, the then minister of education, Veiga Simão presented The School System Project alongside the General Guidelines for Higher Education Reform at the National Assembly. It was noted that “The purpose of the reform was to serve the people: knowing how to read, write and count is no longer enough for the people of Portugal. The criteria for social justice and demand of modern life lead us to aspire and plan for all, an education system that allows their realization in full as individuals and citizens” (Contas à Nação, January 1972, cited in
Rodrigues, 2014). In 1973, the proposal was agreed, and a corresponding decree was passed to allow certain reforms in the ambit of the education system, including the introduction of a degree of democratization - a first in the context of the prevailing nationalistic and conservative political situation. However, before Veiga Simão’s suggested reforms could be implemented, the military coup of 25 April 1974 restored the democratic state.

In 1975, the Student Civic Service was created as a foundation year to higher education, as a part of the reform agenda under the reconstitution of the country after its liberation from dictatorship. It consisted of several activities focusing on community service with a view to inculcate socially productive work culture within the student population. The universities were accordingly provided with greater pedagogical, scientific and financial autonomy. Interviewee Manuela Bronze (2019, personal communication, 4 January) remembered her starting year in ESBAP, 1975 — a year Lucia Matos termed as “a chaotic year without classes” (L. Matos 2019, personal communication, 24 January), when she received the opportunity to be integrated into a group of the service whose engagement was based on ethnographic work developed by Michel Giacometti in Portugal a few years earlier. This project was conceived during a phase of rampant social and political changes, where in people were looking at universities to address major needs and necessities, starting with further participation of students in civic activities.

Already, marked changes had begun taking effect with respect to the role and contribution of women in Portuguese society and culture. In 1976, Maria José Aguiar, together with Marta Kopzle and Maria Beatriz Alçada applied for faculty positions at ESBAP, and within a year, all three came to represent the first foray of women into arts education in Portugal.
Another interesting and to some extent controversial aspect of the ongoing reforms was regarding the access to higher education, where in students of vocational schools receiving technical education and workers over the age of 25 with proven 5 years of work experience became eligible for receiving educational degrees equivalent to traditional higher education courses (Rodrigues, 2014). In this context, students who earlier had not even met the required criteria for passing 5th grade, were presented the opportunity to appear for an examination to gain entrance into higher education.

In retrospect, this decision was criticized for the lack of rigor and for undermining quality and ethics of pedagogy. Helena Almeida Santos, who once considered enrolling for the same, saw a paradigm shift education, from a system that was once stringent and dogmatic in terms of academic conduct, to an arrangement that perceivably invited anarchy.

Post revolution teacher, João Machado (2019, personal communication, 1 March) remembers a challenging period for professors who were routinely confronted by increasingly belligerent students with undue demands. It was also a time when advocates communism held greater sway than those who still chose to defense fascism. Lúcia Matos in this context recalled how the minimum passing grade was amended from being 14 out of 20 to 10, leading to 100% approbations. Manuela Bronze, who had just been admitted to the academy in 1975, remembered her first year as one of ad-hoc courses, and points to older aged students and the prevailing reactionary mentality as catalysts for such confrontations. However, she also noted a marked enrichment of the creative/academic environment at the academy due to the coming together of different generations, vocations and experiences.
Many other artists, such as Isabel Cabral and Rodrigo Cabral who had earlier been active in the revolutionary scene through their works (such as murals and street performances with pro-democracy messages), had devoted a decade or more to the cause and, and found it pertinent to exercise patience in the current state of flux.

According to Lima de Carvalho, the 74’ reform was predominantly theory-oriented. Subjects relating to aesthetics and psychology being reinforced in order to create a basis for scientific production. Once director of Lisbon School of Fine Arts (ESBAL) the artist uses this opportunity, to expand its scientific production and ultimately gain entry into the University of Lisbon.

Results

The sense of school

From the classroom into the debates in different areas of the city.

These results are preliminary and describe the narrative context.

This is a first approach to the gathered content that will be subsequently subjected to detailed analysis.

The practice of the generation in focus was greatly influenced by skills that were manual in nature, or “learning by doing” according to Carlos Carreiro (2019, personal communication, 16 January). They also used debates as a platform to disseminate their ideas and relied on interpersonal relationships for networking. José Paiva (2018, personal communication, 17 December) also highlighted the concept of “open-door classrooms” during the time, when a “sense of class” was
absent, with teachers employing a more relaxed approach to enable open and unrestricted flow of knowledge and communication.

Debate sessions were, however, an integral part of the academy’s culture even in the 1960’s. Interviewed artists pointed out that debates were held in spaces inside the premises of the school, as well as in certain “satellite spaces” of the community in other parts of Porto, such as Teatro Experimental do Porto, Café Piolho, and Café São Lázaro. Lima de Carvalho further suggested that ESBAP and its community was to some extent the city’s artistic and cultural centre, and a contact point for students, teachers, artists, writers, thinkers and philosophers to meet and discuss thoughts and ideas.

Other important occasions for conviviality in the 1960’s included the Magna Exhibitions that were of considerable importance to the academic community and were held around the All Saints’ Day celebrations in October. Lima de Carvalho recalled how traffic would be stopped on the street in front of the school to accommodate the crowd which would gather to see the exhibition. In the meanwhile, devout women returning from paying respects to their ancestors at the Prado cemetery nearby would walk in inadvertently and get shocked by the exhibition’s contents. Acts of embracing the community at large would also take place during the evening open classes in the attic of ESBAP, according to João Machado, when students from other disciplines such as medicine, law and humanities, with passion for drawing, would be welcomed with buckets, ink, drawing sheets and nude models.

Elvira Leite also conveyed how in her time as a student at the academy (1957-1962), architect Carlos Ramos, the director of the school at the time, would dedicate one day in a year to encourage further interaction and bonding between teachers and students. Often held in the village of Entre-os-Rios further upstream in the Douro valley, the day would be marked with celebrations, including motivational speeches, Magustos or Portuguese-style bonfires with
singing and dancing, and would typically conclude with a lamprey dinner.

**Fig.2** - Photography ©Elvira Leite - Magusto ESBAP 1961: Bonfire Jump

**Fig.3** - Photography ©Elvira Leite - Magusto ESBAP 1961: Bonfire Jump
There were additional references to how spending time together outside the confines of the classrooms, such as in the school garden or during after-hours would contribute to the rapport between teachers, students and staff.

Correspondingly, it was common for teachers to nurture such camaraderie in more restricted circles, through private soirees that were often presided by eminent artists, where in certain hand-picked students would be invited to attend. In this regard, Helena Almeida Santos spoke of the “José Rodrigues Core” while Elvira Leite recalled, with much longing, the hours spent with artist Lagoa Henriques, her drawing professor, at his house “thinking and discussing art”.

Lima de Carvalho also credited such gatherings for the good proximity that he shared with his teachers. He specifically recalled get togethers organised by painter Júlio Resende “with baskets full of food”, which were highly popular at the time.

Additionally, shared studio spaces formed a critical part of the bonding process between master artists, teachers and students, away from the school’s limits and debate hubs.

Armando Alves (2018, personal communication, 5 December), for example, shared this studio, that he maintained until 2015, with other eminent artists such as José Rodrigues, Ângelo de Sousa and Jorge Pinheiro, but also opened its doors to his students who did not have a space to work. Similarly, Mário Américo (2019, personal communication, 25 January) was an apprentice at the studio of the famous modernist painter Dórdio Gomes during his initial years upon receiving the Gulbenkian scholarship at the age of 16. Later on, when he became a student at ESBAP he would already be widely considered as a promising talent and happened to share Gomes’s studio space with Júlio Resende, José Rodrigues and Ângelo de Sousa, who were then also starting out as young and upcoming artists.
Carlos Carreiro too gave particular importance to extending this culture of amiability with his students and would transform his classes into painting studios where in everyone would feel more at ease to exchange ideas and experiences. In his time as a teacher, he was given charge of the first-year students, and every year, he would organize an event called the “freshman reception” to integrate new entrants, who had arrived from around the country, with the school’s convivial ethos. In this regard, during a day in the second week of a new academic year, he would invite the students from the starting batch to his personal studio to give a practical introduction to painting, including tips and tricks of working with acrylic, his specialty. Informal conversations over snacks afterwards in his living room would contribute further to eliminating distances between the attendees.

**Foreign influence**

In the mid 1960’s, although the artistic community in Porto admired and was curious about parallel happenings in cities such as Florence, London, and Paris, direct contact with outside countries was yet limited. A rare instance of a Portuguese artist receiving the opportunity to travel internationally, however, did occur when Dórdio Gomes was awarded the Paris Prize in 1910. Lima de Carvalho remembers Gomes telling him personally about how when students who traveled abroad for holidays, would often find “colleagues, artists and pseudo-artists” waiting for them at the train station upon their return, hoping to gain valuable insights from their experience. Many of these students were also fast-tracked into teaching roles in anticipation of the knowledge which they may have acquired during their foreign trips.
In terms of the influence which foreign artists or designers may have had on the local community, Armando Alves explained that while names like Sebastião Rodrigues were iconic in design from a national perspective, there existed great admiration for people, styles and techniques from England and Italy. It was still difficult to find books on the related subjects and imported magazines were usually very expensive. The books that could be found in the ESBAO library were outdated and in black and white print. Thus, for Isabel Cabral to see a Piet Mondrian painting in flesh on a trip to London in the late 1960’s was a revelation.

Lúcia Matos also added in this regard as to how in the 1960’s, the point of reference for art students changed from Paris, which had been the case since the turn of the century, to London. This phenomenon finds further mention in a manifesto “A Cidade e as Serras” (The City and the Mountains), by the collective ‘Os Quatro Vintes’ (The Four Twenties) formed by Ângelo de Sousa, Armando Alves, Jorge Pinheiro and José Rodrigues (the group was named so because each had obtained the highest passing grade of 20 at the end of their respective courses). In the manifesto, the artists write that while in Lisbon, “There's a flight to Paris”, in Porto, “There's a flight to London”, which curiously factually correct, since at the time flights to London only took off only from Porto, but it also alluded to their assertion of London as the Artistic Center of Europe (Pinheiro, 2013).
Fig.4 - Quatro Vintes Manifest 1968, “A Cidade e as Serras ou onde se fala por falar a propósito da nossa exposição coletiva no Porto.” Inova, Porto.
Elvira Leite, during her teaching years, took inspiration from the works of Bruno Munari, and once visited erstwhile Yugoslavia to attend a conference in which the Italian master would also be present. Although she went strictly as a spectator without any intention to showcase her portfolio or pedagogic work, she found an opportunity to share it with Munari. Since then, they maintained a regular line of correspondence until Munari passed away in 1998.

The relationship between the silver generation and education.

Arts and design teaching in Portugal

Teaching as a career was always a point of consideration for new graduates in Fine Arts, either borne out of natural inclination or necessity. All artists who were interviewed had a well-established relationship with teaching, full-time or part-time. Elvira Leite
discussed how her teacher Júlio Resende would organise classes for his arts students in primary schools in order to provide them with an early experience of teaching. She remembered how Resende, during a similar session at the São Vitor primary school in 1962, declared that a majority of the art students would go on to become teachers themselves, as it was the only possible way to survive, saying, “Some will be painters, others will be [recognised] artists. Possibly, only artists could survive” (E. Leite 2019, personal communication, 15 January). That day he would also suggest two books on artistic teaching, aiming to impart a basis for the students’ envisioned future. This particular experience felt momentus for Elvira Leite as she realised that becoming an art teacher could culminate in a fulfilling personal and professional path where she could justly express and manage her creative talent. After she finished her course, the artist maintained her presence at the studio that she had utilized as a student for two more years. By the second year of this phase, she had already begun teaching, however, the time designated for her private work would often coincide with the hours under her teaching commitment. Thus, "at the peak of hers acceptance as a painter" (L. Matos 2019, personal communication, January 24), Elvira Leite decided to dedicate herself exclusively to teaching. In this regard, the artist argued that although she had carried forward her knowledge and thematic discourses to the new role, the processes involved in incorporating these were different, and she had to organise her approach accordingly. In this manner, Elvira Leite found the artist within through teaching, rather than through being an independent painter. She made the classrooms her studio and considered the classes as her works of art. Consequently, the artist gained significant national and international recognition for her contribution to art pedagogy.
Dilemmas regarding maintaining of parallel lines of work between teaching and private practice emerged as a recurring theme during the interview sessions. Armando Alves, upon finishing his course, had taught in ESBAP for 12 years, when he received an invitation to manage ‘Editorial Inova’, a publishing house. He soon understood that it was impossible to sustain both fronts as each had unique and extremely demanding responsibilities, and to engage with both simultaneously could potentially compromise the expected outcomes.

Haydée De=Francesco (2019, personal communication, 21 January), also made the school arena her space for creative struggle. After graduating in sculpture, she immediately got assigned to faculty roles in elementary and secondary level education, and only after the educational reform of 1973, did she find the opportunity to return to her primary vocation of being a sculpture artist. De=Francesco would later be instrumental in the implementation of a course on fashion modeling at the Aurélia de Sousa Secondary School, a first such instance in the public-school system in Portugal.

Correspondingly, Helena Almeida Santos and Isabel Cabral too cited an early intent of pursuing a career in teaching, focusing their creative drive towards art education instead of strictly private practice.

In the academic year of 1962/63, Armando Alves shared an essay with Carlos Ramos, the school’s director at the time, on the initiation of Graphic Arts within the discipline of decorative painting. Ramos was impressed, and invited Alves to present it as a part of the Magna exhibitions to be held that year, thereby putting in motion the inculcation of design for the first time in ESBAP. In preparation for the same, Alves had his students contribute towards the creation of a text and image database consisting of clippings from magazines such as
Marie Claire and Paris Match. Elements from the material that was collected, including single cuts and collages, were used and reused for explaining parts of the essay dedicated to designing book covers and album artworks (A. Alves 2018, personal communication, 5 December). Alves also attributed the subsequent success and advancement of graphic arts as a standalone discipline in ESBAP to the dedicated work done by his students, in particular João Dixo and Nuno Barreto.

**The student's experience as part of the teaching model**

When discussing ties of empathy between the teachers and students, the artists pointed out that interpersonal relationships were bound to suffer if the teacher assumed a position of superiority and/or showed insufficient dedication to communicate. Lima de Carvalho termed it as the “old school of fine arts” where teachers would speak little as the students worked, and would walk around the classroom, stopping and correcting students’ works without offering relevant explanations.

Lima de Carvalho was assertive when he said that he had never re-touched a student work, in a way which suggested that a similar experience during his student years may have left a lasting impression and influenced his personal approach to teaching later on. He identified the pedagogic conduct of teachers up until the end of 1960’s as being a "philosophy of the masters, of doing as the master", implying that they may have reproduced the spirit of interaction which they had themselves been subjected to during their formative years. On the other hand, Lima de Carvalho argued that the new generation of artists who began their careers at this time (end of 1960’s - early 1970’s), bucked this trend while deeply respecting the legacies of the earlier masters, and hence, they were the real teachers.
Carlos Carreiro, referring to class called ‘Introduction to Painting Techniques’, remembered his teacher Ângelo de Sousa as being one of the most liberal figures who would give more contemporary references than other professors. Júlio Resende, on the other hand, would contribute little or nothing to his students’ works, at best providing minute observations such as “give a little flavour to the colour” or “put more quality in the picture”. In this way, Carreiro supposed, that the masters intentionally omitted certain elements of knowledge, such as methods or tools, which they believed would serve the students better to discover naturally, without being spelt out. Lúcia Matos agreed to this view, stating the absence of course preparation, methodologies and objectives as a possible reason, which invited spontaneity of action from the teachers, without any anticipation of students’ needs.

When Carlos Carreiro started his career as a teacher at ESBAP in 1977, there was no formal pedagogical training provided to guide him through the initial stages of uncertainty regarding course development and teaching procedures. The students wanting to pursue a teaching career could, in theory, access the subject of ‘Pedagogy’ at the Humanities faculty in the University of Porto, however, it was generic and contained little more than bits of information on how to apply for a pedagogical internship.

Carlos Carreiro recalled how these experiences as a student helped shape his teaching career of 26 years. He laid particular emphasis on communicating well with his own students, and the corrections that he advised or the detailed explanations that he gave in relation to techniques were always cherished. It was for this reason, according to him, that he never left the first year as a teacher. He added to such conviviality by extending invitations to his home and studio,
thereby offsetting some of the distance that his teachers may have established with him.

Mário Américo inferred, in consideration of his personal experiences, that as a teacher it was important to support students’ individual growth pertaining to intellect, imagination and creativity. While respecting the students’ individual space, the teachers should encourage thought before action. Américo had previously experienced a semblance of the same as a young apprentice in Dórdio Gomes’s studio, where he would gain valuable insights on the subject from illustrious artists who would be present. In 1962, when Américo commenced with his education, Ângelo de Sousa, recently graduated, joined the academy as a teacher. Américo remembered attending one of de Sousa’s classes in which the teacher observed and commented on artworks of all his colleagues, except Américo’s, who was seeking an approach to dead nature, superimposed with multiple vanishing points in a stained-glass technique.

At the end of the lesson, when Américo approached de Sousa with his queries, the teacher explained that the subversion of his model could only happen later. Although de Sousa recognized his students’ early maturity, he understood that this should not be considered as a factor for developing a proper learning path. The experience was a setback for Américo leading to demotivation, and a sense of time lost that could never be recovered. When years later, he would begin his own teaching career, he promised to himself to “never tell any student to draw only what was in front of him.”

Armando Alves as a student often lamented on the low productivity and the time wasted during the ‘Statue Drawing’ class. In ideal situations, the most devoted of students would produce six to seven drawing a year, rounded off with an exam at the end. With the respective teacher being absent most of the time, the students would
inevitably spend their class hours in the school garden. Carlos Marques also spoke about this issue, when in absence of the teachers the class would often be presided by technicians like "Mr. Gonçalves " (2019, personal communication, 11 December). In 1962, when Armando Alves started his teaching career at ESBAP, he was given charge of this discipline alongside decorative painting. Despite his relative inexperience in the subject, he made it a point to introduce sweeping changes to the course that would help increase the quality and quantity of work produced. Correspondingly, in addition to depicting statues in school, Armando Alves took the students to the street and gardens of Porto, with a view to improve their work with charcoal and light essays, instituting "street drawing" as a new activity.

Abel Mendes, who was Manuela Bronze’s painting teacher in ESBAP in 1976, once made a resolve to experiment with new models of teaching. At a time of great change and uncertainty, she decided to teach painting to the same batch across 5 years of their degree. Although Bronze acknowledged the quality of Mendes as a teacher, she argued that this was not a positive move, as it limited her means to access different perspectives and opinions that were vital to her intellectual growth. Carlos Marques too agreed with her in this regard, and in 1993/94, collaborating with Carlos Barreira and Zulmiro de Carvalho, he organized a workshop to update teaching methods in sculpture, with a view to guarantee a constant renewal of practices.

**Discussion**

If the first half of the 20th Century can be characterized by stories of romance of a distant country, the figure of Master deified by his chosen disciples as a “a kind of a character's glorification” (A.Alves 2018, personal communication, 5 December) with whom he
communicated with minced words, the second half represents a new and extensible vector of communication.

This group of artists and teachers have made a profound influence on pedagogy of art and design in Portugal. It represents a generation to whom manual skills, debates, and in particular, interpersonal relationships were of paramount importance. The teaching models that they developed were derived from research processes that were based on empirical evidence, resulting from observation, interpretation and transfer of active/passive experiences. These models were tested in live scenarios, before being adjusted and implemented as practice-based methodologies.

As higher education students of art, this generation experienced a significantly different school environment to the one that they would foster as teachers. Their formative years were fraught with experimentations and their resulting uncertainties; however, the situation also allowed a certain openness towards the cross-fertilization of knowledge within and outside of the school premises. The learning process often progressed according to the richness of the relationships established between the teachers and the students. The classrooms, the school garden, the Café of São Lázaro, and the masters’ studios became simultaneous spaces of transference and reciprocity. By virtue of “learning by doing” (L.Carvalho 2019, personal communication, 31 January), the school stimulated the act of thinking.

The prevailing sense of school was particular. “Open-door” classrooms invited entry and participation from outside, however, despite some receptiveness from the community at large, this was, in practice, limited to a small circuit of participants because of personal and political restrictions. Local references in art, including the artists based in ESBAP, were the only sources of orientation for students, since access to relevant international media and individuals was poor.
The result was paradoxical — on the one hand creating a considerable distance between masters and apprentice, but on the other, nurturing an ideological proximity.

Three major areas, Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, started as one in the first year, only to branch out and then come together, again, in the final year. Such contamination allowed an exchange of knowledge and experiences between the students and teachers, and deeply influenced the life and work of these artists.

In terms of preparing for a career in art education, the artists, as recent graduates, relied on learnings from their experiences as students, and they either reproduced the good practices that they had observed or counteracted the methods they considered dysfunctional. External support was limited to a visit to the humanities faculty at the university or a senior teacher who would occasionally show interest or concern.

Most of the artists and teachers interviewed spoke about experiencing ‘sterile’ classrooms as students, and how they sought to learn from the flaws which they had identified in their teachers. They implemented these learnings towards developing their personal approaches to teaching, and suggested changes to ongoing practices whenever possible.

As iterated before, this distinguished group brought paradigm changes to the practice of teaching art and design in Portugal. Each contributed a unique dimension to the process during the course of their engagement: Lima de Carvalho’s transition from Art mastery to professorship; Carlos Carreiro’s nurturing of conducive interpersonal relationships within classrooms; and Mário Américo’s attention to individual needs of students that did not undermine, in any way, his iconic status, and his vision towards the advancement of graphic arts education which sensitized artists to the concept of design. This
contributed greatly to the implementation of design as a discipline at ESBAP in 1976, placing Armando Alves as one of the foremost proponents of design in Portugal.

The advent of digital media did not come as a hindrance to the safeguarding and active dissemination of knowledge for this pioneering generation. In light of their historical adaptiveness, new methods and devices were adopted without much repression, at times with the help of younger assistants as in the case of Armando Alves. In some cases, certain manual practices were persevered with in the interest of preservation.

It is thus hypothesized that the key to reinventing the role of each of these artists in contemporary times lies in their creative drive. This neuralgic point is common to all participants, and has allowed them to constantly re-adapt and re-apply their knowledge in a diverse set of areas. The personal or professional pleasure or conflict which they found in their vocation during the act of creating and transferring knowledge, is at the root of their intellectual wealth, and continue to motivate them.

Armando Alves maintains his connection with the academy through keeping in regular touch with former colleagues such as Jorge Pinheiro, or though invitations from the faculty to develop art or design projects. Additionally, the Cooperativa Árvore is an initiative through which students can meet and exchange notes and queries with him. Isabel Cabral maintains an art gallery with Rodrigo Cabral, which allows her constant visibility and means to disseminate her work. She also is regularly invited by the faculty for jury work related to masters and doctoral theses. Elvira Leite is currently a consultant for the Portugal dos Pequenitos Education Service. She seeks to establish this space as an educational one, moving from memorial to
real, as a space that represents gaps in the history of Portugal that are fundamental to the construction of its future.

Although most are retired or of retirement age, they remain active, and in harmony with art. Some are still active in education, such as José Paiva and Manuela Bronze; others like João Machado, Mário Américo, Carlos Barreira, Carlos Marques, Armando Alves, Graça Morais, Isabel Cabral and Lima de Carvalho run their studios, many of which are cult spaces where they continue with creative production; while some others like Carlos Marques, Lima de Carvalho, and Elvira Leite maintain administrative or consultancy positions in educational institutions, foundations, and educational services.

For the generation, teaching is/was an interface for their creative drive, and a dominant factor for fulfilment gained through contact with process and techniques, and through interpersonal relationships at both emotional and intellectual levels. The constant contribution of colleagues — older/younger, Portuguese/international, students from different generations, and the individual ethos of all the various schools in which they taught, allowed constant updating and renewal of knowledge.

Their testimonies forward the hypothesis that the continuous dedication to teaching, either in alternate phases or in parallel to their personal work, allowed constant adaptation and preservation of the artists’ expertise. The inscription and legitimization of this knowledge has the potential to contribute greatly to the understanding of the involved depth and evolution of the respective disciplines, from both local and global points of view.
References


*Whenever references, quotes are made in the body of text or situations in which the authors are paraphrased occur, they always report to these interviews. In order to avoid excessive noise throughout the text we only make one in-text reference in the first entry of the author.*


Eliana Santiago

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