

## POTENTIAL IMMER

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*"Imagine a strike not as an attempt to improve one's salary alone but rather as a strike against the very raison d'être of these institutions"* (Azoulay, 2019, p. 159)

In the book *Potential History, Unlearning Imperialism*, Ariella Azoulay begins the chapter *Imagine going on Strike: Museum Workers*, with a displacement of the idea of strike not only as a right to protest against oppression and exploitation, but rather as an opportunity to care for a shared world, questioning one's own privileges, removing oneself from them and using them in that struggle.

The proposed displacement deviates us from a capitalist, western, economic or class matrix, where the strike of museum workers, or of culture in general, would demand 'only' better working conditions. The proposal is, from a position of privilege (being able to look at each of the positions we occupy and their relationship with the hegemonic powers), to use it as a form of paralysis. Imagine, writes Azoulay, artists, photographers, curators, academics, museum visitors or simply visitors to these spaces refusing to do what they do and continuing to occupy the same places because "the field of art sustains the imperial condition and participates in its reproduction" (2019, p. 158). This position introduces the question of a historical heritage for which each one of us is responsible in the present. How we inherit and how we perpetuate the inequalities created by capitalism and colonialism becomes the most difficult question, once we consider our own position as a product of these same mechanisms. Being aware of these places of privilege, the colonial archives that inhabit us, and the social and epistemological inequalities generated there, and simultaneously of a lack of debate in our academic and cultural institutions about these heritages, led us to organize the second edition of IMMER.

We cannot help but question the different powers that we enact, the institutions to which we belong, the violence that we naturalise, but also those that we are aware of in our own practices and that we know increasingly better that it is not enough to denounce. As educators that we are, we are tired of looking at ourselves in institutions, at students, at our colleagues, still mostly white, who are artists, educators, who study art,

who work in museums, and who hardly recognize the coloniality that is inscribed in their bodies, in their gestures, in the choices, in the ways of saying, thinking, acting. It is often simply a matter of the privilege of being able to be in places, of frequenting spaces, of acting without being the target of suspicion, of structural racism; of the privilege of having a specific nationality; of having documents; of not being the target of sexism or heterosexual privilege; the privilege of having a body perceived as 'normal' and 'capable'; or of so many other privileges that are legitimized through forms of knowledge, of cultural and symbolic capitals, of hegemonic ways of being and acting, of inheriting civilizational archives taken as universal. To recognise these diverse privileges does not mean 'to victimise' the 'Others', neither can it be an 'instrumentalization' of those 'Others'. To understand from a privileged position is to understand that in the very fabrication of those 'Others' many stories, histories, fights, resistances were lost and erased, and so, to try not to repeat and reenact the relations of violence and power.

IMMER 2 emerged, then, with the purpose of questioning and as a space intended to open itself to thinking together.

## **IMMER takes place at the Douro region**

Let us move the text to present, once again, one of the geographies where this desire takes place, in Régua, in the Douro, in the interior north of Portugal. The Douro is predominantly a wine region where secular intersections of privileges and tensions accumulate and concentrate. An enumeration, necessarily brief and reductive, exposes marks, conflicts, tensions, and continuities of the crossing, in the landscapes, of the logics of capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy.

The Douro is a wine region, demarcated and regulated since 1756. Since 2001, it has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. These two dates interfere in a symbolic and operative way by pointing out the economic regimes that make up the region: the production of wine, the sense of citizenship through the idea of the nation (a 'portugality'), and

the tourism industry, intertwined in the lines of global economies.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to discuss the reduction of landscapes and people to a brand for sale, whether in exports or in tourism, which is not completely unrelated to the very designation of the 'Alto Douro Vinhateiro' property as a world heritage site. The marks of colonialism are found, since the 18th century, in the English presence that produces and gives family name brands and continues, in other ways and formats, today, in the more global logics of international vineyard and wine companies that exploit places and their economic and human powers.

The Douro was, and is, a territory that concentrates the successive politics of 'progress and civilization'. Railways in the 19th century are the personification of progress and the symbol of the advancement (or backwardness) of each nation. The Douro was, and is, desirable for photography lenses as a colonial machine. The epic construction of the Douro train line was systematically monitored and recorded by photographers. The 'Art and Nature' albums follow, contrasting the marks

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<sup>1</sup> The Douro has always been a land of inequalities and profound social injustices, and the quintas (wine-producing companies), now considered precious brands, were constituted also under extreme forms of exploit labour. From what is known, the tendency towards the concentration of property is even greater today and is accompanied by a mobilization of capital on the scale of globalization. On the other hand, the landscape of the Douro stimulated tourism and, in turn, tourism rhetoric in the field of landscape has an increasing influence on the transformation of the landscape itself or on the hierarchy of themes considered most important for the competitiveness of the sector. There are now two main mechanisms for landscape construction: the interests of wine producers and the interests of the tourist sector. Both have an enormous influence on the definition of public policies due to the nature of the arguments they use: investment, employment, competitiveness. These arguments are inseparable from the current rhetoric about the sustainability trilogy, although they guarantee nothing in terms of social justice — look at the salary levels practiced in the tourism sector or the draining of capital gains from the region to the outside world (Domingues, 2019).

and discourses of an almost unexplored northern far-west.<sup>2</sup>

Photographers<sup>3</sup> that in the first decades of the 20th century were commissioned to picture Douro landscapes were also commissioned to picture the 1934 Colonial Exhibition that took place at Palácio de Cristal, in Porto. The camera lenses and the shutter are deeply intertwined with colonialism, patriarchy, racism, and the prevalence of inequalities. The colonial expansion ties in with the investment in big technological systems. In this sense, the fascist politics of public works focuses on the production of electricity through an intensive program of dams along the basin of the Douro River.

Currently, the construction of the Tua dam, in 2012, was positively appreciated by the UNESCO commission. The 'Alto Douro Vinhateiro' property, classified in 2001 as a cultural, evolving and living landscape, interferes more clearly or more subtly in the weight of hegemonic narratives, namely the UNESCO art roadmap in the directives of heritage and cultural education, in its safeguard and in mediation with those who live in the municipalities covered by the 'property'. It is in this overlapping of economic, political, and cultural powers that it is important to be aware of how the technologies of beauty and authenticity, from the picturesque nationalist of the late 19th century to the illustrated calendar or postcard, are prolonged and found in the places where IMMER occurs. And it is in this place where, from within and living with the tension of use and conflict, we propose to ask, to listen and, inevitably, to seek suspension, the critical review in what we do.

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<sup>2</sup> The railway policy in Portugal was centred on the metropolis, from the mid-nineteenth century, and on the colonies in Africa, from the 1880s, based on the discourse of the good news of civilization through the whistle of the locomotive. In 1879, Joaquim José Machado, engineer: "There is no way that material facts, complicated [...] and incomprehensible to uncultured spirits, [...] hurt the wild man's imagination, promoting his admiration for the white race and the recognition of its superiority. A revolver [...], a steam engine [...], a railway, the hiss and the movement of a locomotive [...] produce in the indigenous of Africa much more effective action for the purposes of their intellectual improvement, of that many masses and preaching of the most virtuous missionary (Pereira, 2019); (Navarro, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> We are referring particularly to the photographer Domingos Alvão who, in 1933, was commissioned to make a photographic inventory of the Oporto wine landscapes, and, in 1934, to make the photographic reportage of the Colonial Exhibition [see, for instance: <https://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/visoes-do-imperio-a-1-exposicao-colonial-portuguesa-de-1934-e-alguns-dos-seus-albuns> ]

We wanted, above all, to talk of collaborative work, of other ways of producing knowledge, of representativity, and to stress the logics of ‘access’, ‘participation’ and ‘inclusion’ that continue to mark the agendas of cultural institutions, as if these were ‘ahistorical’ sites. The choice of our guests was, thus, guided by questions that their work, in a more theoretical or more practical dimension, had been asking us as readers or project companions. The desire was to open this space for discussion in the two days of the meeting.

## Question the arts, question education

*‘Any museum, any museum at all, makes me sad. Ethnological museums, art museums, ethnic museums, museums of these museums. Permanent museums, traveling museums, museums as travel; museums in the rough or on the mall. Literal museums, and figurative: without walls (ambiguous and permeable, anyway), or with. Books read as a museum (some of them designed to be, some not); rituals enacted as a museum. Cities. Experience itself as a museum.’*  
(Boon, 1991, p. 255)

The musealization of experience today reaches spheres that are difficult to escape. The Douro itself, as a museum of the territory, corresponds to that musealization of the landscape, based on a colonial matrix of representation and world domination, separating two spheres: nature and culture, with direct correspondence with ways of life that are desired or considered abject. This will not be the space to dismantle this binomial and the operators of thought that it triggered, but only to point out that art and education were part of these mechanisms of separation and distinction of types of people and ways of being.

In the modern Western world, the establishment of an artistic system, from schools to museums, is inseparable from the constitution of Empires and colonizing practices, where a modern and European subjectivity was formed alongside the exploitation and trafficking of bodies across the Atlantic, in slave labour in plantations, and in the theft of objects that enriched a Western aristocracy, that would serve as a reference for modern artists and fill museum windows (Gikandi, 2011; Mörsch, n.d.). It was thanks to the money accumulated in the colonizing companies that, Mbembe tells us, “18th century England was able to finance the emerging culture of taste, the art galleries and the cafes, places par excellence for learning about civility” (2017, p. 36).

While European menus and consumption habits incorporated sugar, coffee or spices, artists, architects and composers found themselves

commissioned by patrons or philanthropists for whom the work of art became part of a symbolic and cultural capital, either through its possession, or through the habits that were then associated with the social existence of art through its financing, collecting, or exhibiting. If the idea of a museum, or of the great international exhibitions of the 19th century and which continued into the following century, for example, arise from a desire to collect the world and exhibit it (not only a distant and 'exotic' world, but also the 'exotic' within borders, and the treasures representing the genius of the nation), assuming a cataloguing role in it, in its interstices, there is also the idea of educating from the narratives and works that should reflect a European and white cultural supremacy.

Museums, along with the school institution, established themselves, in Western modernity, as disciplinary institutions dedicated to the fabrication of civilized citizens (Bennett, 1995; Duncan, 1991) and, therefore, since their inception, the educational plan cannot be disconnected from the museum, regardless of the structured existence of what we now designate as educational services or programs. The apparently neutral procedures are based on a universal aesthetic language and a universal subject imagined in a sphere of 'aesthetic sensitivity', which enabled the description and interpretation of artistic objects, the educating and civilizing narratives around these objects as part of a civilizational archive and the education of taste and construction of a civilized self, and this civilized self possessor of excluding aesthetic dispositions. These are the same ones that sustain today the discourses of organizations such as UNESCO and ICOM, in their defence of the unquestionable right to preserve objects stolen in all corners of the non-European world and trafficked, under the legitimacy angle of a history made up of experts and inspired by a will for the future. In this regard, recent debates around restitution practices show us the arrogance and European supremacy that, despite the various crimes committed, continues to want to define the criteria for such restitutions.

Numerous European museums continue to live from an idea of art generated by an Enlightenment that categorizes more important ways of life and of being a subject than others, and of artefacts from colonial violence. However, the ways in which we learn to use museums and consider the objects they contain tend to erase these stories. It is not just about the objects or images that ended up in museum collections, but also how they are displayed, what narratives are created around

them and who creates them. Alice Procter (2021), in her recent book *The Whole Picture. The Colonial Story of Art in our Museums & Why We Need to Talk About It*, highlights the ways in which curators describe pieces, how they create narratives by comparing or contrasting pieces. On the basis of that comparison or distinction there is an intelligibility code that makes each object fit within it, without this same code being called into question. The fact that the vast majority of these objects do not belong to museum spaces, that they have been removed from their people and their uses does not yet seem to bother institutions and looks from the visitors, despite the countless debates and protests that take place today around these issues. In this process, not only practices and objects are 'objectified', but also people.

Let's go back to the Douro and its reduction to a 'property' and landscape. The Douro region suffers from a hyper-identity of the landscape and the person (Domingues, 2019). It is important to identify the construction of their visibility regimes that classify and ensure a truth, always binarized in norm and deviation. The label of the regional product, the discourses and hegemonic practices that reinforce the sense of belonging; the reduction of landscapes in packages and postcards for consumption, whether from internal or external tourism, due to the exoticization, romanticization and sophistication of the products of the places; the presence of the 19th century picturesque, still so evident in the ways of representing landscapes and people in the works<sup>4</sup> of visual arts subjects at school, are frames of visibility that hide or camouflage conditions of poverty and wage asymmetries. In several agricultural jobs there is still a wage gap between tasks and wages for women and tasks and wages for men.

In the 1st edition of IMMER, in 2018, for example, we included in the program a 'workshop' that consisted of walking along a deactivated railway line, permeable, either to the seduction of abandonment, or to the conversion into a bike lane of Nature Tourism. On this path, the

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<sup>4</sup> Silva, Mariana. (2011). *'Meu Douro' – Projecto com Escolas 2009/2010 – Serviço Educativo do Museu do Douro – Um estudo de caso*. Report on the Internship of the Masters in Portuguese Art History, Porto, Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto. This master's internship clearly raised markers of the visibilities that were built especially from the 19th century onwards. The work points out links between the production of advertising and landscape photography images and their influence on the production of schoolwork carried out in the dynamics of this project in schools.

temptation to pick up the mobile phone and transform the experience into an image, a mixture of nostalgia and strangeness, a feeling of abandonment and the magnitude of nature, is big. There are several layers that intersect when we see ourselves carrying out a practice like this, and only constant questioning and sabotage of each of the naturalizations, by historicizing what they are in the present, allows us a critique, on the one hand, and the possibility of contradiction, on the other.

Critique and contradiction force us, as educators in the field of arts education, to face the history and archives of the present. At the genesis of the educational concerns of museums, and in the idea of school, there was a civilizing mission, like the one that justified colonizing practices. If education, like art, can be the space for resistance and struggles, they must also be seen as the space where certain cultural elites found their own possibility of existence and perpetuation.

Let's look at a simple idea: transforming children into citizens through educational practices. The idea of the Nation-State and the formation of the modern citizen are intertwined with the modern concept of childhood as a state of underage, but under the special care of experts, institutions, or the family, so that a plan for the future and of development, imagined linearly, could be fulfilled. Not by chance, several were the figures, inside and outside the imperial states, that were made equivalent to the idea of a child: the woman, the abnormal, the poor, the deviant, the native as 'primitive', in short, all those who were objects of practices of conduct of their behaviour, and they saw these practices validated by the condition to which they were referred (a pre-civilizational state, a minor state, a state of need, etc.). The struggles and resistances of each of these positions of subjectivation were left outside of these narratives. Education and the arts, in their connection or in isolation, would stand out as instruments of a civilizing and salvationist mission of an 'Other' and, simultaneously, as heralds of progress and white and European supremacy. Official archives, themselves instruments of power, tend to limit what can be known and said, entering these 'Others' from the categories of power that archive them.

In the Douro, in the representations of the (staged) vintages and in the bodies of women and men, the exalting framings of the narratives of simple and working people – in reality, poor – are very visible. One has only to glance at the 19th century albums and the current frameworks to deduce or question it. The Douro is made up of 21 municipalities,



6 of which have indicators of greater poverty in Portugal, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) in 2017.

In the invention of these landscapes, so many entanglements come together. The advanced, and not at all peripheral, technology that marks the policies of works for the “agricultural industry”, and the *quintas* run with “project culture” supported by the scientific agriculture of the 19th century (Macedo, 2012) created along with an advertised ruralism by the fascist state, on which the traveller and amateur journalist John Gibbons writes in the 1930s of the last century in *I Gathered no Moss. Não Criei Musgo*, are an ideological compendium of the Estado Novo [New State]. This propaganda-book received the Camões Prize, in 1939, for the best criticism about Portugal in a foreign language, created by the then National Propaganda Secretariat. Centred on the daily life of a village in Carrazeda de Ansiães, in the Douro Superior, where hard life is described orally, “all the people in the village are recruited, including the two-year-olds and the school is empty. The [olive] harvest is a kind of family feast. (...) Despite the work being quite hard and forcing the back to be permanently bent, the women sing as they pick the tiny fruits” (Matos, 2012); and in the village school one could observe “[a poster] alluding to the glories of Portugal of the past (...) in the books there were pictures representing the Portuguese Overseas Possessions as the third largest Colonial Empire and [heroes such as] Vasco da Gama, the man who gave to the world the India that the Portuguese managed to conquer (...) Those children were being taught, at least, the sense of national dignity. (...) the New Portugal had once again placed the Crucifix in schools, from which it had been banned after the 1910 revolution” (Matos, 2012).

The very history of advertising and the construction of the ‘Port Wine’ brand, produced exclusively in the Douro demarcated region and exported from the piers of the city of Gaia, fed – and certainly the Port wine accompanied – coffee, sugar and cocoa, to the sophistication of the Empire’s taste. In a brief trip through the labels of early 20th century Port wine bottles (Barata, 2010), wine is the product of the association of various visibilities: the association of wine as product with a praise of the model of the traditional Western family, from the aristocratic family to the urban modern family, both patriarchal; the objectification of the woman, the fatal woman or the *bibelot* woman for everyone’s consumption, in a clear heterosexual hegemony; or, and among other examples,

'Porto' is exported as a therapeutic product, to which quinine was added, for consumption in the Portuguese colonies. (Barata, 2010).

It is rarely discussed the way in which the idea of culture (let's talk about art, let's talk about this whole network that is part of the sensitivity and taste of the 'gentleman') and empire can no longer be dissociated, that is, the cultural field cannot to be seen as a transcendent field separate from the construction of the Imperial States. Many humanists, Edward Said tells us, "are unable to make the connection between the prolonged and sordid cruelty of practices such as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression, and imperial subjection on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, philosophy of the society that engages in these practices on the other". Many humanists, Edward Said tells us, "are unable to make the connection between the prolonged and sordid cruelty of practices such as slavery, colonialist and racial oppression, and imperial subjection on the one hand, and the poetry, fiction, philosophy of the society that engages in these practices on the other" (Said, 1994, pp. xiii, xiv). Culture would appear, then, as a 'protective envelope' or subjected to an antiseptic quarantine, where the stains caused by the definition of a 'we' and a 'they', as an abyss, would not be felt, sheltered in a cultural 'wealth' and 'diversity' that neutralize the violence that they would carry. It is in this context that the arts, as representations of culture, emerge in a rhetoric of effects (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013), that presupposes a superiority in terms of sensitivity, of knowledge and of progress corresponding to hegemonic forms and to defining hierarchies of forms of life more desirable than others and, consequently, to different types of subject.

Now, this zone of arrogance and violence of cultural institutions and museums remains, today, more active than one would expect, given the theoretical developments in the field of postcolonial studies. Culture continues to appear as a sphere that is expected to be privileged because it represents the reservoir of society's exceptionality and genius, in short, that which would elevate each subject from the mundaneness of everyday life. Therefore, the self-legitimizing stories of an arbitration of taste, valid for all tastes, of the sacred art forms even when educationally based on the 'exploitation' of artistic objects in a questioning and performative way, and of participatory educational programs, but which continue to target specific target groups and not at all random, remain disassembled. Most of the time, the target groups of these programs are referred to a knowledge prior to the meeting, making them mere 'objects' of those

programs.

This second edition of IMMER brings, even more clearly, the need to confront ourselves in the places where we produce practices and discourses... “at the crossroads between affirmation, reproduction, deconstruction and transformation” (Mörsh, 2016), triggers that served to think through and organize this meeting.

The ideas that if it is art, it is good, that art has, in itself, the potential to transform society, and that art could correct the excessively disciplinary character and the ‘evils’ of education, hide the *a priori* from which they start. These assumptions, Gaztambide-Fernandez argues, “believe the complicated role that the arts and other forms of symbolic work and cultural production play in social and cultural processes that, unfortunately, are central to producing inequality and social injustice” (2020, p. 5). The opening of cultural institutions and museums to ‘everyone’ continues to not provide equitable participation, whether due to the absence of representative referents, or of proposals with anti-discrimination concerns, or simply because it does not cross the minds of the institutions (that is, of those who are in the institutions and those who finance them) to change the rules of the game of this participation. It would be worth recalling the out-of-date, but still pertinent, text by Bernadette Lynch: “If the Museum is the Gateway, Who is the Gatekeeper?”

## The discussions

For this second Edition of IMMER we intended to bring to the table of discussion, mainly, the narratives that still configure the education field of the museums and cultural institutions, the contradiction zones that we face in our daily work, the hegemonic, paternalist and colonialist lines that continue to be so present in our institutions, with the objective of opening alternative ways of thinking and doing in our educational practices.

Undoing educational practices and discourses where IMMER takes place, we emphasise once again, can enhance recognition and agency when dealing with the internal conflict and overlapping of the 4 discourses and practices proposed by Carmen Mörsh. It is our conviction that doing IMMER implies, in the field of educational action at the museum, the implosion and critical exposure of what we do and the

attentive coexistence of the grids of civilization that govern us and that we produce. We are looking for a (fragile) possibility of suspending the practices. Talk to stop. Stop to listen. Listen to listen. And notice, like Doreen Massey, that:

*The language we use has effects in moulding identities and characterising social relationships. It is crucial to the formation of the ideological scaffolding of hegemonic common sense. Discourse matters. Moreover, it changes, and – through political work – it can be changed* (Massey, 2015, our emphasis).

For that, following what we had already done in the first edition of IMMER, we sought to invite people who, through their work in the field of education and cultural institutions, had been providing us with ways of thinking critically about this same field, and proponents of other approaches engaged with anti-discrimination concerns and attentive to the history that constitutes us. Not by chance, our three international guests, Carmen Mörsch, Alejandro Cevallos, Javier Rodrigo Montero, coming from different geographies, belong to a common network, the Another Roadmap School for Arts Education. This network was created shortly after UNESCO published the Road Map for Arts Education in 2006 and as a critical reaction to that document. In the words of Alejandro Cevallos and Nora Landkammer (invited in the first edition of IMMER), the “Another Roadmap School for Arts Education made the decision to turn its attention towards the recognition of local histories and genealogies of critical and popular education, the analysis of the transfer of European art and education concepts to the Global South to reveal colonial continuity, and the development of alternative practices in educational action and research” (2016, p. 133).

Álvaro Domingues, also a guest speaker for this edition, has collaborated closely with the two institutions represented here – the Douro Museum and the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto. Operating in education in this technological landscape of the Douro implies a particular attention to the production of knowledge in the fields of geography and the study of landscape. A critical and multidisciplinary reading about the construction of places is crucial for those who produce educational programs in this museum or for those who work in education and culture in this region, to think, in a concrete way, about where one speaks and from where is inequality produced or reproduced.

*What kind of landscape do we have in common? Approached as a common good, the landscape implies defining a perimeter and not just a site, but, instead, thinking about the common: What collective? What scale? What common values? What legitimacy in affirming those common values? What project? What forms of regulation (governance)? The common good corresponds to a category to be completed by use, negotiation, conflict.*  
(Sgard, 2018)

We retain and appropriate, in this second meeting, how the use, negotiation and conflict were, and can be, engine-words in the discussion of practices and points of view in undoing the things that we find ourselves doing, from within.

In addition to the agenda established with the guest speakers, we had the presence of participants who responded to the call for communication proposals that we launched for this edition, limited to three thematic dimensions: processes of work with communities and relationship with social activism; modes of participation and involvement of audiences; and hybrid work processes between education and artistic programming/practice. Since our purpose is to constitute the IMMER as a place absolutely dedicated to a field of reflexivity and criticism, with this call we intended, more than creating a space for the presentation of the practices and research processes that are taking place today, to guide the reflection on the possibilities for change through the concrete cases presented. Texts by João Figueiredo, Lara Soares and Marta Coelho Valente are part of the publication and refer to each of the proposed thematic dimensions.

We open the body of texts with a first moment that is found geographically in the Douro. The idea of the first edition of IMMER arose from the research carried out by Marta Coelho Valente, which took as its object of study the work developed by the Educational Service of the Douro Museum (SEMD). Thus, to incorporate her analytical vision on the educational work carried out by that team would be a chance to expand the possibilities of confrontation and discussion about the work they develop there. In the context of the museum's educational programming, the presence of researchers in arts education does not presuppose the providential and academic legitimation of the educational practices developed here. The presence of research presupposes the place of undoing, of exposing naturalized practices and the conse-

quent interrogation of the coherence and contradiction of the discourses enunciated in the place of this organism within the museum to which it belongs. Here, the hypotheses of reformulation and rewriting of them are strengthened, which are, more clearly, suspended by the halt of those who ask, those who propose criticism and reading, confrontation and encounter.

Marta Coelho Valente starts from the analysis of the data collected in the field, as a participant observer, to discuss emerging points inherent to current institutional pedagogical practices, focusing on the relationships established with people and the involvement with local contexts, their challenges, the paradoxes and existing contradictions. In her text, she examines the operationalization process of a photography and video project – GRAVAR Sendim –, developed in a locality in the region (in the village of Picote and in the village of Sendim, belonging to Miranda do Douro, a municipality that borders Spain), and the relational discourses that took place. She points to, as calls for discussion, the need to rethink the objectives of the relationships that museums seek to promote, “so that the encounter that is established does not come down to an act of instrumentalization of the external constituents involved to fulfil the agendas and the programmes, and legitimize the presence of the institutions in the territory”. She also points to the need to rethink the traditional view of pedagogical performance that still follows a prescriptive guide defined institutionally without prior articulation with knowledge of the 'Other', based, in turn, on knowledge, codes and contents referring to a dominant culture that imposes itself and that disregards other possibilities of being.

In turn, Álvaro Domingues, in *Geography at the museum – a sense of place*, gives us a picture of visibility of how the geographies of the Douro are perceived, departing from a multiplied view of place and landscapes, and their possible 'sides', because, as he points out, “landscape is an irregular polyhedron with many sides”. The geographer asks: what places, events, landscapes “are we speaking about when we meet at the museum talking about the region where it is localized with people that reside there or not, knowing that these are diverse characters, with the most diverse positions and social trajectories?” And, on the other hand, he reminds us of the importance of continually questioning how museums can participate in the construction of the meanings of places and, in their diversity, how they can mediate “between individuals and very

different social collectives”.

*Le paysage identité essentialisée, il est mobilisé par un individu ou un collectif comme matériau de construction et d'expression d'identités et d'altérités, pour dire “ce paysage, c'est moi/nous”, pour construire l'accord mais aussi l'exclusion. (Sgard, 2018)*

*The essentialized identity landscape, is mobilized by an individual or a collective as a building material and expression of identity and otherness, to say “this landscape is me/us”, to build the agreement but also the exclusion. (Sgard, 2018)*

Its proposal is to develop an anti-discriminatory perspective in education and advanced training at the interface between education and the arts.

Starting the second moment of the publication, this one dedicated to international approaches, Carmen Mörsch's text leads us to reflect on our ability to implement anti-discrimination practices and criticisms of normativity. As she pointed out in her workshop presentation synopsis: “concerning the historical continuities, how do we conceive our work as a critical and anti-discriminatory research and educational practice?”<sup>5</sup>. Her proposal is to develop an anti-discriminatory perspective in education and advanced training at the interface between education and the arts and, in this context, it presents us with the assumptions, the methodological process and the challenges inherent in a project that consists of creating a curriculum and anti-discrimination educational materials, which follow a set of indicators set out in the Critical Diversity Literacy – a concept for social justice education developed by Melissa Steyn. These principles are configured as reading practices of prevailing structures of oppression, which allow the identification and recognition of symbolic and material values of hegemonic identities (whiteness, heterosexuality, masculinity, empowerment, paternalism, classism, among others). Looking at arts education practices through these intersectional lenses will allow us to begin to dismantle the various codes and heritages that underlie the

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://immer.fba.up.pt/eng/texts/carmen.html>

epistemology of the field itself, and of ourselves as actors in this field.

Alejandro Cevallos invites us to reflect on the challenges required for mediation and arts education in the context of the Andean region of South America, specifically in Quito, Ecuador, where the Eurocentric culture, which has shaped local institutions, has underestimated indigenous popular culture. Here, as he points out, the challenge of mediation is to find ways to articulate with local ways of doing and knowing “that resist homogenization and keep alive a political imagination external to the rationality of the Eurocentric critical theory”. And it is also to question “the universalistic claim of the culture-nature opposition underlying capitalist societies”. It is, therefore, to inhabit a zone of “uncertain space and conflict”, but where it is recognized that possibilities of a “transformative dialogue of knowledge” may arise. Starting from this particular approach, he places other questions, also opening a discussion to a vaster place: can we determine the effects of arts education in the struggles of people? Or what is transformed into our practices and our institutions through these contacts?

As a challenge, Javier Rodrigo Montero proposes questioning the ways in which museums listen to their territories and the diverse communities that inhabit them. In his text, Javier firstly analysed what happened in the workshop he promoted at the meeting, which objective was to problematize the ways in which museums listen to their contexts – and allow themselves to be affected by them –, reflecting on the issues that emerged from there. In a second moment, he introduces a series of theoretical concepts around the policies of listening that lead us to think: what other ways of doing can we consider and what possibilities for institutional change can active listening promote?

In the next moment of the publication, João Figueiredo proceeds with the discussion and the exhibition of excerpts from an image book, created for the museum’s education program. The format, inspired by the atlas of images, proposes possible connections at different times and in different images to see marks, traces that enunciate the outlines of race in conjunction with gender and class. By using categorizations, one tries to understand where the various ‘social technologies’ and discourses that intertwine the concept of ‘black’ in the 19th and 20th centuries emerged from and where they moved, and understand why this is so necessary or central to Western civilization.

In a very concrete way, the workbook in which this atlas proposal



was condensed was used as a resource for the education practices of the Douro Museum during the year 2018. After its discussion in an assembly at IMMER #2, it was criticized and reassembled.

Lara Soares thinks about different contexts of mediation in museums based on an analysis of different objects conceived by *BURILAR – Creative processes in the mediation of audiences*. The paper boat is part of the group of objects that are constituted “at the moment of the encounter”, between its creator and the audience, functioning as an enhancer of relational alternatives. The pencil, that object we commonly use in representing the world, and living in the world, is suggested here as a transformative “political tool” that questions the museological context and considers possibilities for change. The sun clock, due to its performative character, is proposed as an object that opens the way to the unknown and to “the collective construction of knowledge”. The map, a provisional map, which, being used freely, gains a power of its own and starts the construction of “another symbolic space” constituted by “layers of subjectivity and of connection to individual and collective memories absent from its origin”.

With the publication, as a record of the proposals launched by the various authors at the meeting – to think, rethink and discuss –, we believe that we will create a reflective document that will serve as a motto to continue the discussions that have been started, to encourage the development of other problematization fields and produce disruptive openings in the face of hegemonic power relations still rooted in practices and discourses in arts education.

## **Edition notes and acknowledgments**

Bringing together the texts of different authors in this publication implied defining some editorial criteria that we consider relevant to refer to. Concerning the style of bibliographic referencing, it was decided to respect the style used by each author. An additional concern to this edition was the presentation of texts in Portuguese or Spanish versions (this option for speakers whose mother tongue is Spanish), in addition to the English version. The attention given to this issue results from the desire to bring to the national panorama reflective material from international research and practices that, otherwise, would be difficult to access in Portuguese, considering the stimulating repercussions it may

bring in promoting new possibilities for reflection and discussion. In the case of texts presented in Portuguese, the option was also of following the spelling used by the authors.

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