

## *Contributions of Knowledge from Past Generations in Current Contexts of Arts Education*

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### **Abstract**

This study stems from the analysis of the professional life and work of Portuguese scholars, researchers and artists graduated at the School of Fine Arts of Porto during the 1960s and 1970s. It is considered that the testimonies of these generations are an asset for current educational contexts in these areas, but often there seems to be a lack of a framework that can accommodate and enhance this knowledge and experience. Research in art and design has only recently been validated as a scientific discipline. So we can argue that the available scientific heritage precedes the formalization of these disciplines, residing in an older generation of scholars, researchers and artists. Given the fundamentally empirical nature of this experience and knowledge, we believe this heritage has remained largely outside the validated work content in current higher education and research on art and design. Therefore, this generation of scholars, researchers and artists is often confronted with the lack of a framework that welcomes and enhances their professional experience and testimonies beyond curricular requirements and project solicitation. In the present study, developed within the framework of the project *Wisdom Transfer: towards the scientific inscription of individual legacies in contexts of retirement from art and design higher education and research*, we aim at devising possible ways of framing these experiences and knowledge of an older generation of scholars, researchers and artists within current learning contexts.

Keywords: Art; Design; School of Fine Arts of Porto; Wisdom Transfer; Life stories, Silver Generation.

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## Introduction

The present study is focused on academic experiences of the School of Fine Arts of Porto (currently Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto), in Portugal. It stems from the analysis of the professional life and work of Portuguese scholars, researchers and artists, graduated at this school during the 1960s and 1970s, a period surrounding the political, social and cultural Revolution of 25 April 1974.

This study, carried out within the framework 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), arises from the evidence that there is insufficient inscription and use of individual knowledge and experience of ageing and retired art and design professors and researchers and aims to recover a set of teaching experiences characterized by manual skills, interpersonal connections and the “learning by doing” and integrate these in current creative context. It is our goal to contribute to the inscription of these experiences and testimonies, believing that many of these practices, largely developed in faculty-student-class interpersonal relationships and characterized by handcrafting processes, can be relevant to the current context of Art and Design courses and research.

In Portugal, research in art and design has only recently been validated as a scientific subject. This is in line with international trends. It can thus be argued that the available scientific heritage precedes the formalization of these subjects and consequently lies in an older generation of researchers who led a first moment of transition of creative activity from practice to academia. Given its fundamentally empirical nature, this heritage has largely remained outside the validated work content of current higher education and research in art and design: this generation of art and design faculty is often confronted with the lack of a framework that welcomes and enhances their professional experience and testimony beyond curricular requirements and project solicitation. In this study, we focus on academic experiences of the Painting Course of the School of Fine Arts of Porto, highlighting the subject of Graphic Arts that would later give rise to the Design Course.

In the absence of written documents pertaining to the context of study, the contributions were mostly obtained through ethnographic interviews carried out with informants who attended this school during the 1960s and 1970s. This period was especially notable in this school, not only for the pedagogical practices adopted that differentiated it from other similar ones, attracting art students from all over the country, but also for the political and social scenario lived in the country that resulted in the Revolution of 25 April 1974, which led to several Educational reforms and, in the case of the Fine Arts School, several pedagogical experiences including the emergence of design as a course.

Most informants later became artists and professors in the School of Fine Arts of Porto and though currently retired, they still maintain their artistic activity. Therefore, whenever possible, interviews were carried out in their studios providing means to obtain a set of exclusive observations within the interviewees’ testimonies (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015), and the opportunity to witness first-hand, some of the practices that characterized their creative process and were integral to the methodologies they presented to their students (figure 1).

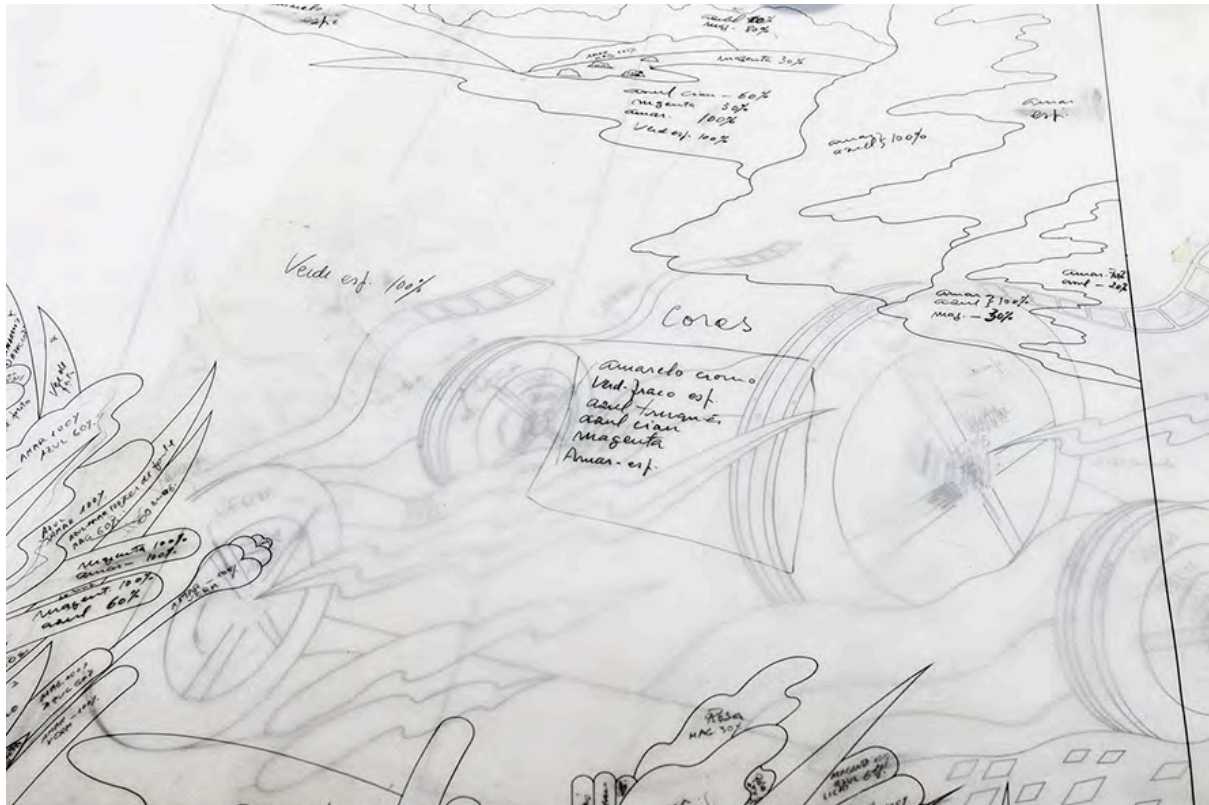


Figure 1: Poster drawings with references of color percentages by João Machado.  
Photography @Cláudia Lima.

Since December 2018 we have done 30 interviews to former students of the Fine Arts School of Porto divided mostly across the disciplines of sculpting and painting, alongside the current director of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto. It was considered she was a person of interest for this project not only because she is currently the director of this school, but also because she has done several studies on painters and sculptors graduated in the School of Fine Arts of Porto, so she has a deep knowledge on the subject. The lack of individuals with a formation in design is due to the fact that the Design Course at the school commenced in 1976, and its graduating batch falls outside the scope of the project's intended timeframe (Table 1). Nonetheless, we located and interviewed 2 informants who attended this course in its beginnings, in 1976. Our group of informants, most of them graduated in Painting and Sculpting, allowed us to verify the origins of the Design Course, which began as a discipline of Graphic Arts within the Painting Course back in 1962.

Table 1: List of interviewees.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>	<b>Date of the interview</b>
Ana Campos	Communication Design/Graphic Arts	1976	1981	27th June 2019
António Mendanha	Painting	1979	1986	10th January 2019
António Quadros Ferreira	Painting	1966	1971	12th April 2019
Armando Alves	Painting	1957	1962	5th December 2018
Carlos Barreira	Sculpture	1968	1973	8th January 2019
Carlos Carreiro	Painting	1967	1972	16th January 2019
Carlos Marques	Sculpture	1967	1975	11th December 2018
Elvira Leite	Painting	1957	1962	15th January 2019
Graça Morais	Painting	1966	1971	31st January 2019
Haydée De=Francesco	Sculpture	1956	1961	21st January 2019
Helena Abreu e Lima	Painting	1963	1968	23rd January 2019
Helena Almeida Santos	Painting	1961	1966	7th January 2019
Isabel Cabral	Painting	1967	1973	28th December 2019
João Machado	Sculpture	1963	1968	1st March 2019
João Nunes	Communication Design/Graphic Arts	1976	1981	26th February 2019
Jorge Pinheiro	Painting	1955	1963	16th April 2019
José Paiva	Painting	1968	1986	19th December 2019
Leonilde Santos	Painting	1981	1986	14th December 2019
Lima de Carvalho	Painting	1967	1972	31st January 2019
Lúcia Matos				24th January 2019
Manuela Bronze	Painting	1975	1981	4th January 2019
Maria José Aguiar	Painting	1967	1972	14th January 2019
Maria José Valente	Painting	1968	1977	22nd January 2019
Mário Américo	Painting	1962	1972	25th January 2019
Paula Soares	Painting	1973	1978	8th April 2019
Pedro Rocha	Painting	1967	1972	30th January 2019
Purificação Fontes	Sculpture	1964	1972	22th January 2019
Rodrigo Cabral	Painting	1968	1973	28th December 2019
Sobral Centeno	Painting	1969	1978	20th December 2019
Zulmiro de Carvalho	Sculpture	1963	1968	7th January 2019

For the interviews we used a script with open-ended questions (Quivy & Campnhoudt 2008) focusing on the artists' experiences as students and teachers, curricular and extracurricular relations, foreign associations, influences and impacts of the political landscape on their work.

All interviews were photographed, filmed and audio recorded, allowing the creation of documents to support investigators' recollection further down the research process. At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to authorize the collection of images and sound, through a document signed by them, and explained the purpose of these materials.

### **Experiences from the Painting Course between the 1960's and 70's**

In the 1960's and subsequent decades, the School of Fine Arts of Porto was nationally recognized due to the pedagogical practices adopted that differentiated it from other art schools of Portugal, attracting students from all over the country. It was known for having its own style and being more liberal and less theoretical when compared with the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon (the alternative one in Portuguese higher education), known as more academic and repressive in relation to contemporary art forms, such as abstract art. The appreciated pedagogical practices of the School of Fine Arts of Porto were partly due to its Director, Carlos Ramos, according to then-students, a modernist in his generation opened to the evolution and transformation of art. He encouraged the proximity of all school community (students-faculty-staff), believing this would foster the sharing of knowledge and the understanding of different manifestations of art. Studio classes were common and a more experimental approach was practiced. Drawing disciplines (e.g. Statue Drawing and Model Drawing) played a decisive role, traversing all school courses (Architecture, Painting and Sculpture). Furthermore, this school had a faculty of distinguished Portuguese artists, among them Dórdio Gomes, Augusto Gomes, Barata Foyo, Júlio Resende, Lagoa Henriques and Ângelo de Sousa. All these factors led students from distant geographical areas to travel to Porto and graduate at this school.

The pre revolution period (1960's and 1970's) shows a significant prevalence of men over women in the faculty of this school. In fact, according to our informants, there was no evidence of the presence of female teachers before a public tender was opened in 1975, one year after the Revolution of 25 April 1974. Indeed, according to faculty records of this school (Barros 2015), female teachers integrated the faculty only in 1977 with the admission of 3 teachers.

On the other hand, a significant prevalence of women over men among the students was verified, especially since the reform of 1957, but some of our female informants reported a discriminatory behavior by male teachers described in sexist comments, suggesting that the Fine Arts were then seen as a more male-oriented area.

The 1st year in this school was common to all courses allowing acquaintances with different backgrounds and art interests, and only in the 2nd year did students choose their vocational area. If in the 1st and 2nd year of the Painting Course the approach to subjects assumed a more traditional route with the presence of a lecturer to minister the programmatic contents, in the years that followed the disciplines, namely the practical ones, worked very much in a regime of a painting studio, allowing the

students a more experimental approach. With no closed-door classroom rigidity, the relationship and interaction between students and lecturers was close, with the faculty often teaching and accompanying students who had not formally signed up for their classes. On this, Sobral Centeno, e.g., stated that Júlio Resende was one of the faculty with whom he was most connected, despite never having been his formal student. Armando Alves also refers to Resende's legacy, though he was never his professor. Isabel Cabral recalls Augusto Gomes as an exceptional professor, although she never signed up for his classes. And João Machado recalls the sessions of painting given by Lagoa Henriques in the attic of the school at night. These sessions were open to the community of Porto, bringing together fine arts students and guests from different fields of knowledge, such as medicine, law and humanities, who shared an interest in painting. Theoretical subjects on art were then discussed and several practices of drawing and painting were undertaken in these sessions.

The proximity between students and faculty was indeed beyond the context of class, or even school. In certain cases, relations of friendship were established between faculty and students, with professors opening the doors of their homes and studios to students. Several students recalled, e.g., the parties given by Lagoa Henriques at his home. Outside the school, subjects were discussed in a broader way and without constraints, knowledge was shared and ideas were argued, allowing to understand aspects of art that were not possible at school.

Café de São Lázaro, a café near the school, was also mentioned as a meeting place for students and faculty. On this Lima de Carvalho, recalls he was invited to paint a mural there while still a student. Furthermore, he recalls the day he told his professor Júlio Resende he was going to do this artwork and the spontaneous offer by the professor to help him, effectively reversing the roles of master-student. Other "satellite spaces" of the community where students and teachers used to meet and engage in debates were mentioned, namely Teatro Experimental do Porto and Café Piolho.

These experiences and coexistences were practiced by faculty, even from further generations. By the end of the 1970's, Carlos Carreiro, professor in the 1st year of the Painting Course, used to provide a moment of conviviality at the beginning of the school year that allowed students, often from different provenances, to get to know each other and to establish a closer relationship between themselves and with the professor. He used to invite students to his home studio (figure 2) where he showed the space and painting materials he still uses in his work as a painter. He provided blank canvases and, along with the students, experimented with acrylic technique. At the end of this practical experience of painting in his studio, he offered a snack at his home, providing a moment of greater conviviality.



Figure 2: Home studio of Carlos Carreiro. Photography @Cláudia Lima.

The fact that the number of students in the classes in the 1960's and 1970's was reduced — for example, in the year of 1968, there were 13 students applied to the Painting course; currently there are almost 100 students — allowed a closer interaction between faculty and students as well as an intergenerational friendship, according to common interests in the field of art, politics and culture, often extending beyond the school space. The experience that existed in the School of Fine Arts, as mentioned by then-students, constituted a learning process in itself, based on the shared construction of knowledge. Students learned from faculty, and learned from each other.

This proximity and conviviality between students, faculty and staff was also due to the school's Director, Carlos Ramos, as previously mentioned. Referred to as a fundamental personality to what these artists consider the golden age of School of Fine Arts of Porto, he was referred to as an open minded architect that came from Lisbon to direct this school. Despite his position and the social political environment of these decades that encouraged to a certain extent rigid institutional demarcation, Ramos was quite accessible to the school community. With no office of his own, he spent part of his time walking around the School and garden, so anyone who wanted to talk to him would and easily find him. In order to encourage further interaction and bonding between teachers and students, he promoted several events, such as the acclaimed Magustos with bonfires jumps, singing and dancing (figure 3), the Magna Exhibitions, an annual event open to all the community of Porto, where the students' artworks from all courses were exhibited, and Extra-curricular Exhibitions where artworks carried out by students outside the school were also exhibited.



Figure 3: Magusto, 1961: Bonfire Jump. Photography ©Elvira Leite.

Furthermore, the fact that access to information was limited also provided the conditions for a closer relationship between those who attended the school. The access to information and artworks was partly done through the school's library which was small and did not have a large variety of bibliography. As reported, the books were mostly related to past art forms (such as Romanticism) failing contemporary art references. There were mainly works of Art History and Anatomy, usually in French. The reproductions of paintings in these books were often of poor quality and in black and white. Students could also resort to the city bookstores, but the books of art sold there were few and quite expensive. In this sense, it was common for professors to take their own bibliography to show and even lend to students. José Paiva recalls the example of Joaquim Matos Chaves, who not only brought his books to school but promoted discussions often “in the convivial ground outside class” (personal communication, December 19, 2018). Carlos Carreiro recalls the postcards with reproductions of Morandi that Ângelo de Sousa took to class. And Manuela Bronze remembers seeing “with passion the slide passages” presented by teachers with works of art she had never seen before (personal communication, January 4, 2019).

Though several interviewees mentioned the proximity, and even friendship, between students and faculty, it was also mentioned that not all students were part of these circles of close relationships. Several interviewees reported a certain distance from the faculty, whom they treated as *Masters* as a kind of character's glorification. On this, one of the interviewees stated, e.g., Ângelo de Sousa “was not distant from the students, he was distant from *some* students”, reinforcing the idea that these circles of friendship were limited by the sharing of common interests. While some interviewees referred to Júlio Resende as an excellent professor who encourage them in their



artistic activity, others reported he did not teach much, being very vague in his comments.

As a general rule, there were no exchanges with other schools, with lectures mostly confined to the School of Fine Arts of Porto. As an exception, visits to the Anatomic Theatre in Hospital de São João were made within the context of Artistic Anatomy, constituting valuable learning resources for the visual representation of the human body, whether in Painting or Sculpture. This was highly appreciated by students. Artistic Anatomy was then lectured by a doctor, who gave them notions about bones, joints and muscle mass. As reported, the contact with the corpse in the Anatomic Theatre helped to understand the fittings of bones and joints. It was not intended a very deep lecture in the study of the corpse, but the knowledge of the anatomy through drawing. This learning experience was especially important for those who chose the Sculpture Course, since the practice of human body sculpture was an essential part of the program and of the Aggregation Exam for those who aspire to become teachers of this course (figure 4).



Figure 4: Sculpture by Carlos Barreira for the Aggregation Exam of the Sculpture Course in 1973. Photography ©Cláudia Lima.

Opinions about learning methods tend to diverge, but there is a set of common information that allows to determine certain teaching characteristics in this school. The absence of professors for the entire period of the lesson was mentioned: they left early or arrived late. It was common for teachers to talk about painting in conceptual terms, without further explanations on techniques and practices. Teachers would walk around the classroom while students work and if a student was not correctly performing a technique, they would mention that was not correct, yet failing to explain how to do it properly. On this, one of the interviewees mentioned he had

never had a professor of Painting Technology who explained to him the technique or pointed out poorly executed procedures. Their comments were usually vague, described in statements such as “try to give more quality to the painting” or “give another flavor to the color”.

Nonetheless, appreciated approaches, names of professors and academic practices that were remarkable in the Painting Course were also referred. One of the faculty most frequently mentioned was Augusto Gomes, referred even by students who never signed up for his classes. Names such as Ângelo de Sousa, José Rodrigues or Jorge Pinheiro were referred to as knowledgeable faculty members. Jorge Pinheiro, in particular, was referred to as a master in teaching notions of color and described as a very organized and meticulous person who encouraged each one to find his/her own creativity. Abel Mendes, professor of Initiation to Painting, was also recalled by the way he used to stimulate the study and reflection on subjects, encouraging students to think and talk about their artworks and allowing them a better understanding of what they were doing.

The staff of the School of Fine Arts of Porto was also remembered by students with some nostalgia, recognizing the important role they had in academic activity. On this, one of the students recalls she used to feel a great need to be painting continuously because she was never satisfied with her work, therefore staying at school painting and trying to overcome her dissatisfaction as much time as she could. According to her, the staff was very understanding by letting her stay in the classroom by herself until they had to leave and close the school doors.

These experiences in the School of Fine Arts described by students (a significant part of whom would later become part of this school faculty), were reflected in the very way in which they understood the space of the school and its role in formation. As they relied on learnings from their experiences as students, they either reproduced what they considered good practices or counteracted the methods they found dysfunctional. Therefore, the teaching models they later developed were derived from research processes that were based on empirical evidence, resulting from observation, interpretation and transfer of active/passive experiences. As an example, we highlight the perspective of José Paiva who considers that his role as a professor is not so much to pass on the knowledge he has, but to build together with the students the knowledge he does not have; therefore, he largely rejects the lecturing mode and, through discussion and sharing of experiences, he continuously seeks a shared construction of knowledge.

### **Graphic Arts as an emerging discipline of Painting**

In Portugal, the profession of designer is relatively recent and precedes in several decades the existence of a degree in this field. The design courses in Portuguese higher education were created within the context of the Educational Reforms resulted from the Revolution of 25 April 1974. The course of Communication and Equipment Design was created in the School of Fine Arts of Lisbon in 1975 (Fragoso 2012) and the course of Communication Design/Graphic Arts commenced in 1976 at the School of Fine Arts of Porto (Nunes 2016). The design and educational activity in this scope was often performed by artists graduated in Painting, such as Armando Alves or Amândio Silva, or in Sculpture, such as João Machado.

At the School of Fine Arts of Porto, before the course of Communication Design/Graphic Arts, there was a discipline of Graphic Arts, created in 1962 by Armando Alves within the context of the Painting course. After graduating in Painting in this school, Alves was appointed Assistant Professor assuming the discipline of Decorative Painting. This subject, whose name dated back to the 19th Century, was of little interest to him in face of the artistic reality of the time. Therefore, after a year of lecturing it, he proposed to the school's Director Carlos Ramos a discipline of initiation to the Graphic Arts as an alternative subject. The first year would be experimental and then, depending on the results obtained, the viability of its continuation would be evaluated by the Director.

From his time as a student, Alves worked in the field of design. Back then, while attendee of the Painting Course, he was asked by the School's Director Carlos Ramos to design the posters and catalogs for the great exhibitions carried out at the school: the Magna Exhibitions and the Extra-curricular Exhibitions. Furthermore, after his graduation, alongside his academic and painting activities, he did several works of design, especially in the field of editorial design. Thus, in addition to the interest in this field, he already had significant experience and a portfolio of recognized merit.

When the Graphic Arts discipline was created there was no written syllabus to follow but an idea of the type of work that could be developed. Hence Alves defined the ethos and structure of the discipline as a rather artisanal approach, making use of existing materials, including magazines such as *Marie Claire* or *Paris Match* considered, in his words, “of great importance and great graphic quality” (personal communication, December 5, 2018). These materials, which were brought to school, were analyzed in class, cut out and archived, becoming part of a library of images and types comparable, according to Alves, to those provided by current computers. Later, the collected materials (clippings of titles, texts or photographs) were reused in a “cut and glue” handcrafted process, giving rise to new graphic compositions such as album, film and book covers, often fictitious.

In fact, in a generalized scarcity of access to information, references were found in bibliography and existing work. Although bibliography in Portugal was limited (and in particular in the school library for which no interviewee referred the existence of design books), it was through this that students had contact with what was being done in national and international design circles. Works and authors of reference were analyzed, such as Sebastião Rodrigues, a well known Portuguese designer of the time and, according to Alves, one of his main references in the field, highlighting his remarkable work for *Almanaque* magazine. Furthermore, English and Italian Schools were also references in this field.

At the end of the year, the works carried out in the Graphic Arts discipline were exhibited at the Magna Exhibition. These works were highly appreciated by the academic community and this discipline, initiated on an experimental basis, became part of the Painting Course curricular structure, being taught for one year. Later, recognizing the growing value of graphic arts, this discipline was unfolded in two years, giving rise to Graphic Arts 1 and Graphic Arts 2, lectured in the 3rd and 4th years of the Painting Course by Alves and Amândio Silva, a scholar also graduated in Painting and working in the field of design alongside his academic activity.

Both years of the Graphic Arts discipline were project subjects in which the approach resembled the studio environment. Access to materials such as cameras was limited or non-existent. The proposals were handcrafted, mostly using drawing, cutting and gluing techniques. Sometimes works took on a more experimental and artistic character, partly due to the nature of the Painting Course and the school in which these disciplines were taught. In this context, Rodrigo Cabral (personal communication, December 28, 2018), who attended these disciplines in the early 1970's, recalls a poster he developed, which he named as “sculpture object”, featuring removable and rotating parts, a project that was more in the artistic and conceptual domain and not as much in the design tradition of functionality.

Indeed, the fact that the subject of Graphic Arts was born in the context of the Painting Course at a time when bibliographic and material resources were limited, influenced the approach of faculty to the discipline to a certain extent, motivating how students understood its practice and carried out the projects. This approach alongside the handcrafting processes practiced remained even when the discipline became itself a course independent of the Painting Course.

In 1976, the Design Course was established in the School of Fine Arts of Porto without much equipment and with teachers migrating from the area of painting, such as Amândio Silva or Dario Alves (who had worked for several Portuguese design studios), the area of sculpture, such as João Machado (who had a recognizable portfolio of illustrations for the Portuguese Tele-school and for children books), or the area of architecture. The first year of the course was common to courses of Painting and Sculpture and then students would opt for this vocational area. Technical resources were very limited with the design works done mainly through handcrafting processes: drawing, use of instruments such as compass, ruler and square, gouache painting, cutting and gluing. The classes were much based on experimental processes carried out in an environment similar to the studio regime adopted in the other courses of this school. This approach that initially characterized the discipline of Graphic Arts and, later, the Design Course, became effectively a distinctive element of Design learning methodologies of this school when compared to those practiced in other similar schools around the country, a differentiating element that shaped the identity of the Design Course of the School of Fine Arts of Porto.

### **Wisdom Transfer: from Past Generations to current Higher Education**

With the materials collected several actions are being promoted aiming at the sharing of knowledge and experiences between the silver generation and the younger generations.

The dissemination of interviews through printed and online media has allowed a reconstruction of the history of design education at the School of Fine Arts of Porto which, to date, lacked of written documentation. Furthermore, best practice communication templates are being prepared for continued societal contribution of further generations: an aggregation of individual knowledge and experience that can be of further use, applicability and replicability.

Classroom workshops are being carried out in a set of northern schools with Art and Design Higher Education based on the interpretation of the artistic, biographical and

interview archives created. Art and Design students are being invited to explore new visual repertoires that offer a critical eye of this new generation on the heritage of knowledge of retired art and design professors through illustrated essays, typographic works, graphic novels, among other graphic approaches. In these workshops a set of the most valued pedagogical methodologies practiced in the 1960s and 1970s are being recovered, among them, the studio regime; the combination of students from different artistic fields and with different backgrounds; an experimental approach to the proposals with the combination of handcrafting processes and current digital media (figure 5).



Figure 5: Classroom workshop carried out at the School of Fine Arts of Porto, June 2019. Photography ©Cláudia Lima.

Furthermore, several events are being programmed in order to disseminate the findings of this research, materials collected and graphic works produced by students attendees of the classroom workshops, the first one on October 2019 in the School of Fine Arts of Porto. This event will be open to public, similar to what happened in the Magna Exhibitions, and is one of several actions aimed at establishing the groundwork for a paradigm shift in the acknowledgment, communication and activation of relevant contributions to knowledge, culture and the social fabric that art and design academics may provide in their own name.

## Conclusion

The learning methodologies in art practiced at the School of Fine Arts of Porto in the pre-revolution period became an element of differentiation of this school, attracting students from all over the country. These learning methodologies were largely influenced by experimental teaching based on cross-fertilization between the school

community. The studio classes with open doors and the possibility of students to visit and attend classes they had not signed up for proved to be very enriching as they could benefit from the contact and knowledge of several faculty as well as a wider sharing of experiences among colleagues.

Given the lack of internationalization of the time, local references and the artists of the school were the angles of orientation for the students. The result was paradoxical, on the one hand creating a distance between master and apprentice, but on the other an ideological proximity. Indeed, we found a close proximity between the school community (students-faculty-staff), which in many cases resulted in a richer educational experience, both theoretically (through discussions and debates about arts in extra-curricular spaces) and at a practical level (for example, through the evening sessions of painting). This conviviality was done mainly in the perimeter of the school, though other specific “satellite spaces” were also mentioned as meeting places. Although this proximity and socializing meetings outside the school were highly appreciated by several interviewees, these friendly circles turned out to be restricted.

The learning of graphic arts emerged within the Painting Course at the proposal of a professor without pedagogical training in this scope, but with professional experience. It was an experimental discipline whose works were carried out in a fairly rudimentary and artisanal way. This experimental discipline gave rise to the first Design Course in Porto's higher education 17 years later, a course taught by professors without academic training in the field of design, most of them graduated in Painting or Sculpture but with professional experience as designers.

This group of artists and teachers that represent the pre-revolution generation to whom manual skills, debates and interpersonal relationships were of paramount importance defined the pedagogical practices of the Fine Arts School of Porto. And although this was done in a very empirical way — with no syllabus to follow they either reproduced the good practices observed or counteracted the methods they considered dysfunctional — it determined the very particular orientation in the teaching of Art and Design.

The wisdom transfer, that gives name to this project, started in the moment the interviews took place and this data has been the drive to dissemination across different outputs, articles, web presence, publications and public events.

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